

GUIDANCE NOTE 24 **DEVELOPING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SFGS**

Purpose

This note sets out how the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (SFGS) will be used to fund Stewardship Grant 8 - Developing Community Involvement. Under S8, grants can be provided for feasibility assessment and training/community involvement.

Feasibility assessment

This grant provides 90% of costs up to £5,000 per assessment. The grant (Operation reference 800) will be paid in 2 instalments with 50% of the grant paid up front upon approval of contract with the remaining 50% being paid once an acceptable assessment is received.

As soon as the FC receives an approach for the above grant from a community group/crofting township the content and scope of the assessment should be discussed with the applicant(s).

The brief for the assessment will cover the areas which are to be developed in the Business Plan, the methodology and costs. It should state clearly who will undertake the work (including professional input) and how information will be assembled with clear indications as to the nature of proposed community involvement and stakeholder consultation. Once agreed with the FC, this brief will be the basis of the contract, which will allow the release of a grant for 50% of the estimated costs.

Feasibility assessments should follow a clear methodology, which will provide for effective community involvement, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the issues involved.

A Business Plan should be developed as the main output from the feasibility assessment, The Business Plan should include:

- Site description and background
- Community interest/perspective
- Neighbouring interests
- Other regional interests
- Woodland potential
- Opportunities and constraints
- Training needs & training programme
- Developing community involvement
- Funding opportunities
- Financial overview
- Summary and recommendations.

Training/community involvement

This grant provides 90% of costs up to £5000 per year for up to five years. The training grant (Operation reference 801) will be paid upon receipt of invoice. Local conservancy staff will pay 90% of each submitted invoice up to the total approved per claim year in the contract.

Groups applying for this grant will be expected to provide an outline training plan covering up to 5 years, using estimated costs. The plan should be based on a local training needs analysis. Following delivery of the training the group should submit claims of actual training costs.

In addition, an estimate should be made of the funding required for community involvement per year. This need only be an overall estimate, within which the group can detail their expenditure. However eligible expenditure can be defined under the following headings which the group should use when submitting claims against actual expenditure:

- Events
- Meetings
- Networking
- Facilitation
- Advice

Set costs for community time, travel and subsistence should be provided. Indicative figures (as at June 2003) are:-

Community time spent organising involvement projects/activities - £10 per person per hour

Travel- standard FC rate for official committees (currently 40p per vehicle mile)

Subsistence – standard FC rate for official committees (currently up to £45 per person per night).