

Operations Note 029

Date 14th November 2012

EWGS and RDPE transition

Purpose

This operations note explains how Forestry Commission England intend to handle English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) business during the closing stages of the current RDPE programme (2007- 2013).

Context

Our objective, so far as possible, is to allow existing commitments and ongoing applications to continue with minimum change and to secure the benefits already fully/partly delivered or planned.

However, this has to be done in a way that is compliant with:

- Current RDPE programme approval;
- Transitional regulations, currently being negotiated at EU level;
- The new Rural Development Regulations, also under negotiation at EU level, and once agreed subject to a new England Programme Plan yet to be developed and approved.

As two of the three requirements are fluid it can be seen we are in an uncertain environment, but the aim is to give as much certainty as possible. The following is our interpretation based on the latest negotiations etc. This may change as transitional rules and plans for the next programme become clearer.

Key Points

Woodland Management Grant (WMG)

To allow payment of multi-annual agreements to continue into the next programme first payments must be made within the current programme. Therefore, WMG contracts must be approved by 15th May 2013 to allow a 2013 payment. In support of this we would encourage all new applications to be with the Forestry Commission by 31st December 2012.

Woodland Regeneration Grant (WRG) and Woodland improvement Grants (WIG)

Contracts for capital payments with **First** payments in the new programme will need to adhere to rules of the new programme i.e. in the case of WRG and WIG, they will need to be supported by approved management plans.

Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant (WWIG)

New contracts for WWIG will need to be approved by December 2013. To allow payment to be made all claims must be submitted by 30th September 2015.

Farm Woodland Payments (FWP) and Woodland Creation Grant (WCG)

FWP is associated with our WCG. FWP claims are linked to the claim for WCG. To allow FWP payments to be made into the next programme WCG schemes will need to be planted and claims will need to be made by 31st December 2013. Any claims received after this date will be subject to the rules of the next RDPE programme and will therefore not qualify for FWP.

Applicants need to be realistic in assessing the time taken to process a claim to contract stage and, once a contract is signed, the time required to plant. Therefore we would advise applicants to submit complete applications as soon as possible.

Although we have not set a deadline as such, realistically any application received after 31st August, 2013 may not be processed in time.

Budget

Budget pressure across RDPE programme as a whole **may** mean we have to cease accepting applications before 31st December 2013.

Management Plan requirement

All woodland grant activity (except woodland creation) funded under the next RDPE programme **will** require a management plan.

Existing agreements

Any existing or new agreement where all the work is completed and claimed for by 31st December 2013 will be unaffected by any of these changes.

Transition Table

Grant type	Current contracts	New applications/ approvals	Claims from 01/01/2014	Comments
EWGS - WAG	Continue to term	Continue to 31/12/2013	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	
EWGS - WPG	Continue to term	Continue to 31/12/2013	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Working group currently developing new template

ON028 – Interim Management Planning Guidance

Grant type	Current contracts	New applications/ approvals	Claims from 01/01/2014	Comments
EWGS - WMG	Continue to term	Continue to 15/5/2013	Contracts approved by 15/05/2013 continue to term	
EWGS – WIG	Continue to term	Continue to 31/12/2013	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Applications with a first claim after 31 st December 2013 and new applications under the next programme will require a management plan
EWGS - WIG Wood-fuel	Claims required by 30/09/2015	Continue to 31/12/2013	Continue until 30/09/2015	
EWGS - WRG	Continue to term	Continue to 31/12/2013	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Applications with a first claim after 31 st December 2013 and new applications under the next programme will require a management plan
EWGS - WCG	Continue to term	New agreements will include a standard clause to specify that FWP may be unavailable if first claim for WCG is not received by 31/12/13	1 st WCG claims required before 31/12/2013 to be eligible for FWP Payments of any 2 nd instalments claimed after 01/01/14 will be paid	

Grant type	Current contracts	New applications/ approvals	Claims from 01/01/2014	Comments
FWP	Continue to term	New agreements will include a standard clause to specify that FWP may be unavailable if first claim for WCG is not received by 31/12/13	1 st WCG claims required before 31/12/13 to be eligible for FWP 2nd and subsequent claims okay	
FWS/ FWPS legacy	Continue to term	N/A	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Successions handled as normal
WGS	Continue to term	N/A	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Scheme unaffected by RDPE transition
Dedication	Continue to term	N/A	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Scheme unaffected by RDPE transition

Sources of further advice

The [Grants and Regulations website](#) contains all the information you need to apply for grant support. Alternatively, you can request this information from your local [Forestry Commission office](#).

Versions

Version 1 issued 14th November 2012

e.wgs



The scheme is supported with European Union and Defra funding

English Woodland Grant Scheme