



English Woodland Grant Scheme

Operations Note 22

Date 24 June 2010

Enabling Woodlands to Comply with Government Timber Procurement Policy

Purpose This Operations Note provides guidance to woodland owners in England, and suppliers using wood from English woodlands, to help them meet the requirements of Government Timber Procurement Policy. This note is specific to the Category B option only and may not be directly relevant to those owners or agents who are using the Woodland Planning Grant (WPG) route for other management purposes.

Timber Procurement Policy

From the 1st April 2009 there was a change to the UK Government's Timber Procurement Policy. From this date all Central Government Departments, their executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies are required to procure **either** legal and sustainable timber **or** Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) – licensed timber. For this purpose 'timber' covers any wood based product, which includes all solid wood products, furniture (whether solid or chipboard based), paper and wood chips for woodfuel.

Local Authorities are reviewing their position and some have already adopted a similar procurement policy. The policy presently only applies in England but is expected that the devolved authorities in Wales and Scotland will adopt a similar approach.

The Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) is funded by Defra to provide free advice and guidance to all public sector buyers and their suppliers to aid compliance with the policy. For further information regarding the procurement protocol go to the CPET web site at: www.proforest.net/cpet.

Demonstrating compliance with the policy

In order to demonstrate that timber is from a legal and sustainable source it is necessary to prove:

- **The source of the timber (chain of custody).** As the policy applies to legality and sustainability *in the forest* it is

necessary to know the area where the timber originated.

- **That the forest source was legally and sustainably managed.** Once the source of the timber is known, then it is necessary to show that the forest is being managed legally and sustainably.

Therefore, evidence related to both management of the forest and the chain of custody is required. There are two main types of evidence that are accepted:

Category A evidence. Where woodlands are managed under an independent certification scheme, such as Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC), they will automatically meet the new procurement requirements.

Category B evidence. This is documentary evidence (other than Category A evidence) that provides assurance that the source is legal and sustainable.

Timber growers may also be able to supply timber through:
Supply of controlled wood or FLEGT Timber.

**Category B
evidence**

Forestry Commission England can provide an alternative route to owners whose woodland is not certified under the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS). This route provides the necessary evidence to meet the Category B criteria, and is achieved through the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) using an updated Woodland Planning Grant (WPG) process.

The WPG has been updated in line with the draft revision of the United Kingdom Forest Standard (UKFS)¹. CPET has confirmed that the new WPG and associated monitoring process set out in this note fully meets the legal and sustainable criteria for supplying timber, through the Category B option. Both the WPG template and relevant guidance documents can be viewed and downloaded at www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs-wpg.

The WPG Category B route is not compulsory and owners are at liberty to provide their own evidence in order to meet the legality and sustainability criteria if they wish. Our WPG Category B option is open to owners with less than 100 hectares of woodland and more than 3 hectares, whose woodlands are not certified. It is envisaged that owners with more than 100 hectares will pursue the Category A, full certification option, if they wish to supply any timber through a Government contract.

Owners may also meet the requirements of Category B timber by gathering and providing their own evidence. It is down to the main supplier of the Government contract, to decide if the evidence provided, is adequate and sufficient for this purpose. The Government department, or agency offering the contract, may ask for independent checks to be made if they have any concerns about either the legality or sustainability aspects of

¹ UKFS is currently being reviewed, with an agreed updated version due at end of 2010

How do I use the FC process?

any timber being supplied.

The process is set out in a flowchart at [Appendix 1](#).

1. The application

You should make an English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) application for WPG (and Woodland Assessment Grant (WAG) if appropriate) using the standard EWGS 1 and 2 forms. Complete the forms and return them to your regional office.

We will reference the scheme and process, confirming that the scheme has a valid Single Business Identification (SBI) number and that the land is registered on the Rural Land Register (RLR). If you require details on either of these, go to www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgscustomerregistration. We will issue an EWGS contract for the Woodland Planning Grant.

2. The woodland management plan

You then draft the management plan, using the current WPG template in line with the guidance document. There are a number of worked examples on the web site that will assist with this process. When the plan is complete it should be returned to your regional office for approval.

3. Additional grant and felling approvals

When the management plan is approved you may provide details of any work, that is identified in that plan, and that you wish to add to your EWGS contract. In the event of any harvesting work being identified, the details should be entered on the **felling and thinning schedule (part 10 of the template)**. Felling can be approved for up to 10 years. Any other work within the plan requiring grant aid, should be applied for using the relevant EWGS form(s) and submitted to your regional office with the completed plan.²

Assuming the proposals are acceptable, we will process them in the usual way, and the case will be placed on the public register where necessary for consultation on felling proposals.

Provided there are no comments or issues that need to be addressed, we will produce an amended contract and send it to you for signing and final return to us. At this point you should also submit a claim for the **WPG element only** using the grant claim form ([EWGS 8](#)).

In order to help prove the chain of custody, it is essential that all planning and work proposals are referred to by a single reference number. This will be your EWGS case number.

² Other grants that we would expect to see included (if appropriate) are Woodland Assessment Grant, Woodland Improvement Grant and Woodland Regeneration Grant (subject to grant availability).

Woodland Management Grant and Woodland Creation Grant should not be included. These should be applied for as a stand-alone application for ease of processing, due to specific time-scales for these grant types.

4. Amendments and claims.

Any further amendments can be made to the contract in the usual way, provided they meet the aims of the plan. Similarly claims for any further work should be submitted using EWGS 8.

5. Inspections

Category B WPG schemes and all linked grants and felling approvals for the property will be subject to a slightly enhanced Forestry Commission inspection process. If selected for inspection (e.g. as a result of submitting a claim for payment) our inspector may visit any part of the property and may undertake checks on items such as health and safety or correct use of herbicides. This is necessary to be able to verify compliance with the revised UKFS. In the event that an inspection highlights a compliance problem, we will write to the main contact. Letters will make it clear where the failings are perceived to be. No other action will be undertaken, unless the inspection result materially affects a claim for grant.

In addition our administration of Category B schemes may be subject to an additional, 'independent verification' regime. This may involve a desk review of the application, plan and any other relevant paperwork, as well as a field inspection. This independent review process will be paid for by us.

Chain of Custody The WPG Category B process only provides evidence that the woodland is a legally and sustainably managed source. Suppliers will still need to provide additional chain of custody evidence to connect actual supplied timber products to that woodland source.

Being at the beginning of the chain it is easy for woodland owners to achieve this. We provide a simple form that should accompany each load of wood that leaves the forest (see [Appendix 2](#)). This can then be used further down the supply chain as necessary.

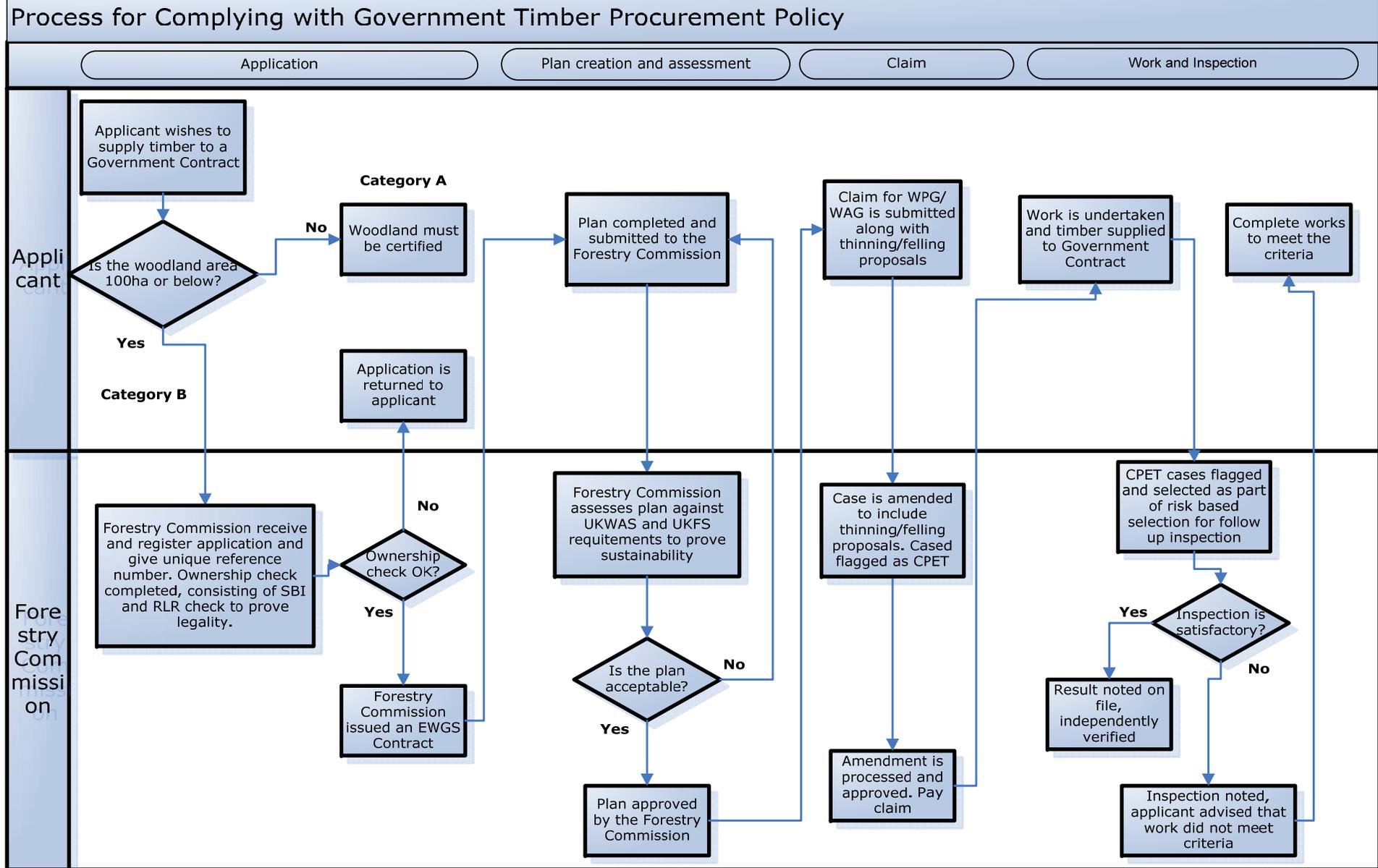
Further Advice The EWGS website www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs contains all the information needed to apply for grant support. If you do not have access to the internet, you can request any of the information from your local Forestry Commission office.

The WPG template will be reviewed on a regular basis and any necessary amendments made as appropriate. Applicants should ensure that they download the current template, guidance etc. from the web site to ensure that the latest version is being used.

We recommend getting professional advice from an agent experienced in woodland management. A list of national and regional professional organisations is provided at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-advice or available from your local Forestry Commission office.

Versions Version 1.0 issued 100624

Appendix 1 Process Flowchart



Appendix 2 Supply chain information (To be sent with each timber dispatch)

| | | | | |
|--|---------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Product | | | | |
| EWGS case number and felling site (Cpt name/number) | | | | |
| Supplier/Company | Name: | | Contact details: | |
| Contact person responsible for information provided in checklist | Name (print): | | Date and Signature: | |

| Supply chain stage | Supply chain description | | | Controls for preventing mixing or substitution <i>How is it ensured that the timber from the previous stage in the supply chain is not mixed or substituted with timber from other sources?</i> | Mechanism for verification <i>What is the level of verification? Self declaration, management system?</i> | Evidence available or provided <i>What documents are available to support the claim?</i> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| | Location <i>Where?</i> | Product <i>What?</i> | Volume in m ³ <i>How much?</i> | | | |
| Forest <i>(example)</i> | Scots Pine | 16.00 | 10a | <i>None required. No risk of illegally felled timber from this woodland entering the supply chain.</i> | <i>Forestry Commission Approved Management Plan and Grant Scheme.</i> | <i>Copy of plan and EWGS available to view, along with chain of custody evidence</i> |
| Forest Stage 1 | | | | | | |

| Supply chain stage | Supply chain description | | | Controls for preventing mixing or substitution <i>How is it ensured that the timber from the previous stage in the supply chain is not mixed or substituted with timber from other sources?</i> | Mechanism for verification <i>What is the level of verification? Self declaration, management system?</i> | Evidence available or provided <i>What documents are available to support the claim?</i> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| | Location <i>Where?</i> | Product <i>What?</i> | Volume in m ³ <i>How much?</i> | | | |
| Stage 2 | | | | | | |
| Stage 3 | | | | | | |
| Stage 4 | | | | | | |
| Stage 5 | | | | | | |
| Stage 6 | | | | | | |
| Stage 7 | | | | | | |

Note: Please use as many 'Stages' as necessary. One checklist should be completed for each forest source. A composite product will require the completion of more than one Checklist. Please refer to *Practical guides: supply chain information* for information on how to complete the above Checklist.