

Operations Note 029

Updated: 2 October 2014

EWGS and RDPE Transition

1 Purpose

This operations note explains how Forestry Commission England intends to handle English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) business during the transition from the current programme (2007-2013) to the new programme (2014-2020).

2 Context

Defra Ministers have confirmed what they intend to offer during the 2014 transition year, prior to the start of the next Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). Ministers want to offer a package of Rural Development Programme support in the transition between programmes in 2014 that reflects the need to target funding more in the new programme and that avoids building up excessive commitments now.

Ministers have also committed to fund 2000 ha of woodland creation in 2014/15.

The following arrangements take into account the rules of the new Rural Development Regulations.

The following arrangements also take into account and are constantly subject to budget availability.

3 Key Dates

- **30 September 2014:** This was the cut-off date to submit applications for EWGS. We are now closed for any new EWGS applications.
- **31 December 2014:** All current EWGS grant applications must be approved by 31 December 2014.

4 Interim grants in 2015

Final decisions and approvals are still to be made on the New Environmental Land Management Scheme that will replace EWGS.

To enable priority work to be undertaken we are envisaging at this stage opening in early 2015 with interim NELMS grants for:

- Woodland Creation for the 15/16 season.
- Plant Health (with NELMS grants analogous to EWGS Woodland Improvement Grant and Woodland Regeneration Grant)
- Woodland Management Plans

Further details will be issued in a revised update of this Operations Note and in an e-Alert as soon as they are confirmed.

The full suite of RDPE schemes are expected to be available later in 2015. Further information of the full extent of CAP schemes is available at www.gov.uk/cap-reform .

5 Grant Types

Woodland Management Grant (WMG)

Now closed to new business.

Woodland Improvement Grants (WIG's)

- Now closed for new applications.

Work in Progress

Applications for Biodiversity WIG (received, and date stamped as such, before the 5 June, 2014)

- These applications will continue to be processed

Applications for Plant Health WIG (received, and date stamped as such, before the 1 October, 2014)

- These applications will continue to be processed

Applications for Woodfuel WIG (received, and date stamped as such, before the 1 October, 2014)

- These applications will continue to be processed

Amendments

- Requests for items to be amended within agreements will result in those requests, relative to those items, being treated as new applications

Approved WIG's with Non-Fundable Items payable in 15/16 and beyond

- We are aware that there are a number of WIG's that have been approved before the criteria for a non-fundable item under the new programme had been decided. If your WIG contains one or more of these items (see Appendix 1) and they are likely to be

claimed **after** 30 September 2015 then we will be writing to you shortly in order to outline what options will be available.

FC approved Management Plans will be required to support first claims from the 1st April 2015 and any claim from the 1st January 2016.

Woodland Regeneration Grant (WRG)

New Applications:

Now closed to new business.

Work in Progress

Applications received and in Glos by 10 March, 2014:

- Applications will continue to be processed but 14/15 non plant health applications will have to move to 15/16 as the ONLY available claim year

Applications for Plant Health WRG (received, and date stamped as such, before the 1 October, 2014

- These applications will continue to be processed

Amendments:

- Requests for items to be amended within agreements will result in those requests, relative to those items, being treated as new applications

FC approved Management Plans will be required to support first claims from the 1st April 2015 and any claim from the 1st January 2016.

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

WCG

- Currently closed for new applications;
- **It is important that applicants notify us promptly if they intend to abandon, or wish to amend the claim year of, approved schemes.** This will allow us to make maximum use of the funds available;
- We will open an application window for new woodland creation applications for the

2015/16 season in early 2015, when the new programme has been approved.

FWP

Applicants are reminded that in order to receive farm woodland payments we need to receive your claim for 1st instalment of woodland creation grant by 30 September 2015.

Woodland Planning Grant (WPG)

- Currently closed for new applications.

Management Plan Requirement

- All funding for existing woodlands under the next Rural Development Programme for England will be dependent on having in place a Forestry Commission approved management plan;
- FC approved management plans will be required to support **first** claims for WRG and WIG after 1 April 2015;
- FC approved management plans will be required to support **any** claims for WRG and WIG from 1 January 2016.

2013-14 year claims

- We are now closed for any 13/14 claims.

2014-15 year claims

- We **must** receive your claim by the 31 March 2015. We can no longer accept late claims.
- Email claims: we will accept up to midnight on the 31 March 2015.

Amendments

- Any requests to amend currently approved contracts to a different claim year will result in the amendment being considered under the new application rules outlined above;
- It is imperative that if you are considering amending your claim year then you contact us as soon as possible so we can outline the implications and whether or not it will be acceptable.

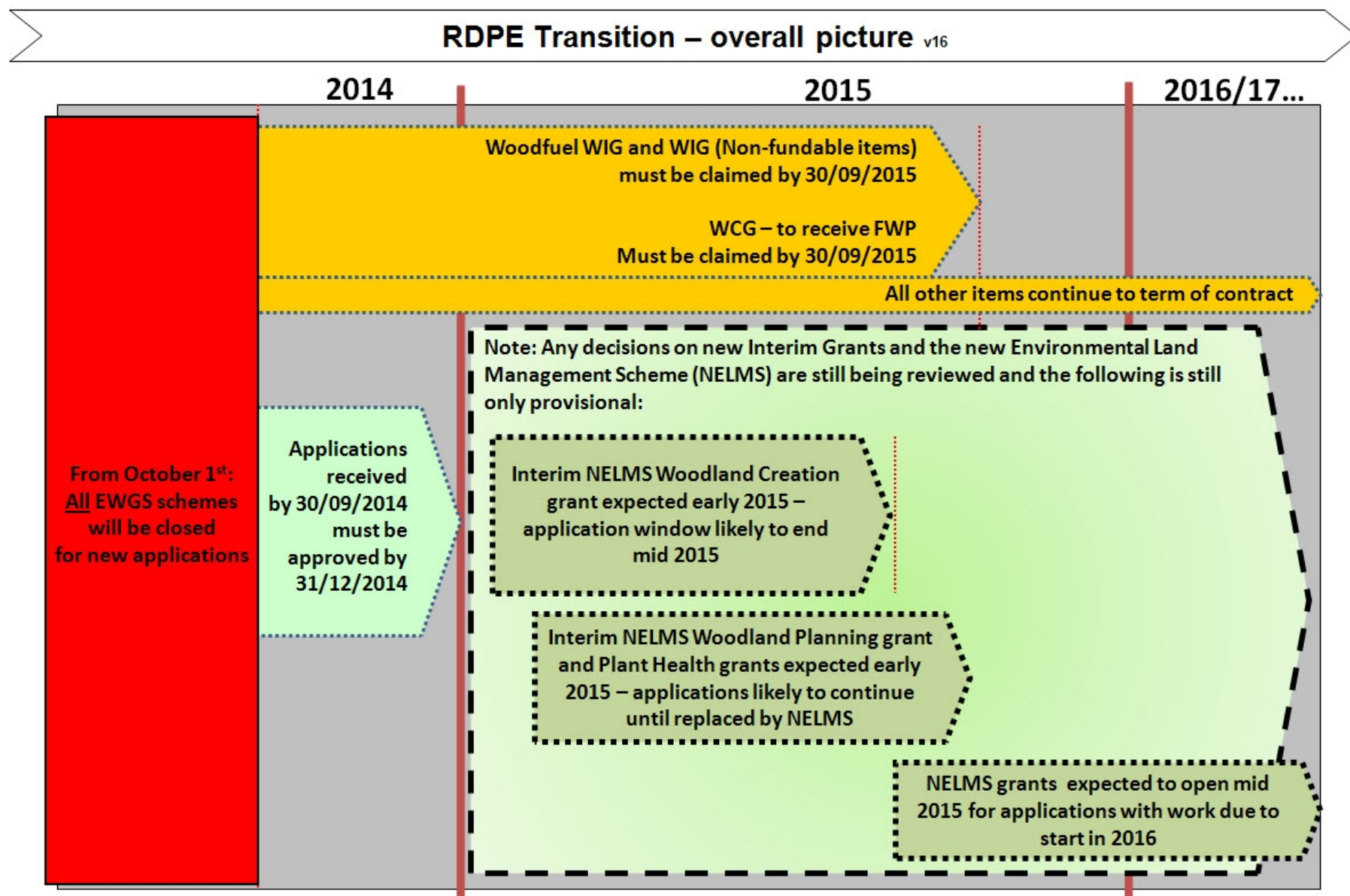
6 Transition Table

| Grant type | Current contracts | New applications / approvals | Claims from 01/01/2014 | New applications | Comments |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EWGS -WAG | Continue to term | Now closed for new applications. All contracts must be approved by 31 December 2014 | Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures | No | |
| EWGS -WPG | Continue to term | Now closed for new applications. All contracts must be approved by 31 December 2014 | Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures | No | New management plan templates now available |
| EWGS -WMG | Continue to term | Closed for new applications | Contracts approved by 15/05/2014 continue to term | No | Closed |
| EWGS –WIG (plant health related only) | Continue to term | Now closed for new applications. All contracts must be approved by 31 December 2014 | Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures | No | Plant health related agreements only 14/15 and 15/16 claim years No new offer for 16/17 and beyond Claims beyond 30 September 2015 will need to be eligible items (Appendix1) Applications with claims in 15/16 will require a management plan. |

| Grant type | Current contracts | New applications / approvals | Claims from 01/01/2014 | New applications | Comments |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EWGS -WIG Wood-fuel | Claims required by 30/09/2015 | Now closed for new applications. All contracts must be approved by 31 December 2014 | Continue until 30/09/2015 | No | Claims required by end of September 2015 |
| EWGS -WRG (plant health related only) | Continue to term | Now closed for new applications. All contracts must be approved by 31 December 2014 | Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures | No | Plant health related agreements only for 14/15 and 15/16 No new offer for 16/17 and beyond Claims from 15/16 onwards will require a management plan |
| EWGS -WCG | Continue to term | Continue to approve those schemes already in GLOS. See comments column re new application windows. | 1 st WCG claims required before 30/09/2015 to be eligible for FWP Second and subsequent claims okay | N/A | Applications now closed. There will be an application window early 2015 for 15/16 claim year. |
| FWP | Continue to term | FWP will be unavailable if first claim for WCG is not received by 30/09/2015 | 1 st WCG claims required before 30/09/2015 to be eligible for FWP Second and subsequent claims okay | N/A | FWP will be unavailable if first claim for WCG is not received by 30/09/2015 |
| FWS/ FWPS legacy | Continue to term | N/A | Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures | No | Successions handled as normal |

| Grant type | Current contracts | New applications / approvals | Claims from 01/01/2014 | New applications | Comments |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| WGS | Continue to term | N/A | Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures | No | Scheme unaffected by RDPE transition |
| Dedication | Continue to term | N/A | Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures | No | Scheme unaffected by RDPE transition |

The chart below provides a timeline for RDPE transition and is correct as of August 2014.



7 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](#).

You can subscribe to email notifications of significant grant, regulatory and tree health updates by contacting us at: grnationalteam@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

8 Versions

Version 1 issued 14 November 2012

Version 2 issued 9 August 2013

Version 3 issued 14 December 2013

Version 4 issued 10 January 2014

Version 5 issued 10 March 2014

Version 6 issued 20 March 2014

Version 7 issued 5 June 2014

Version 8 issued 7 August 2014

Version 9 issued 2 October 2014

Appendix 1 – 15/16 Non-Fundable WIG Standard Costs

The list below shows those standard costs currently available within EWGS that will **not** be fundable under the new programme rules. Such items will need to be claimed before the 30th September 2015 to receive payment.

| Standard Cost Code | Activity | Units |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| A18 | Safety inspection | hourly rate |
| L1 | Forest Craftsperson | per day |
| L2 | Forestry Agent | per hour |
| L3 | Tree surgery, 2 + chipper | per day |
| L4 | Tractor & chipper/flail with 1 man | per day |
| L5 | JCB hire & mini excavator | hour |
| L6 | 360 excavator | hour |

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**English Woodland Grant
Scheme**



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The scheme is supported with European Union and Defra funding