

Operations Note 029

Updated: 12 December 2013

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. Ministers want to offer a package of Rural Development Programme support in the transition between programmes in 2014 that reflects the likely need to target funding more in the new programme and that avoids building up excessive commitments now.

The following arrangements have also taken into account budget availability for the claim years 13-14 and 14-15. The start date of the new programme is uncertain but for the purposes of managing EWGS agreements covered by this Note we are assuming new rules (where relevant) will apply to any payments made from certain dates in claim year 15-16 onwards as specified below.

3 Key Points

Application windows quoted here are as currently envisaged, but are **subject to budget availability and any further updates**.

Woodland Management Grant (WMG)

- WMG offering public access: This grant is now closed to new applications where they specifically target public access.
- WMG for biodiversity purposes: We can continue accepting new applications up to 31 December 2013.

We are unable to plan to offer any new Woodland Management Grant (WMG) during 2014. However there will be a higher level of budget available for Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) for one-off investments to recognise the withdrawal of WMG.

Woodland Regeneration Grant (WRG)

- We will continue to accept new applications for WRG until September 2014.

Woodland Improvement Grants (WIG's)

- We will continue to accept new applications for WIG's until September 2014.

New contracts for capital payments in the new programme (from claim year 15-16 onwards) will need to adhere to the 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)

- We will continue to accept new applications for WWIG until September 2014. New contracts for WWIG will need to be approved by 31 December 2014. To allow payment to be made all claims must be submitted by 30 September 2015.

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

WCG

- We are not accepting any further applications. Those applications reaching Draft Contract (DCT) status by 31 December 2013, i.e. where we have offered a contract for the applicants signature, will qualify as an RDPE contract and can proceed as normal to claim and payment.
- The ability to offer woodland creation grants in 2014 is subject to clarification of the implications of the EC transitional regulations due to be approved on 16 December 2013 and Ministerial decisions arising from that.

FWP

- FWP is associated with our WCG. FWP claims are linked to the claim for WCG. In order to allow FWP payments to be made into the next programme WCG claims will need to be made by 30 September 2015. Any claims received after this date will be subject to the rules of the next RDPE programme and will therefore not qualify for FWP.

Management Plan Requirement

All woodland grant activity (except woodland creation) funded under the next Rural Development Programme from 15-16 onwards will require a management plan.

Existing Agreements

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

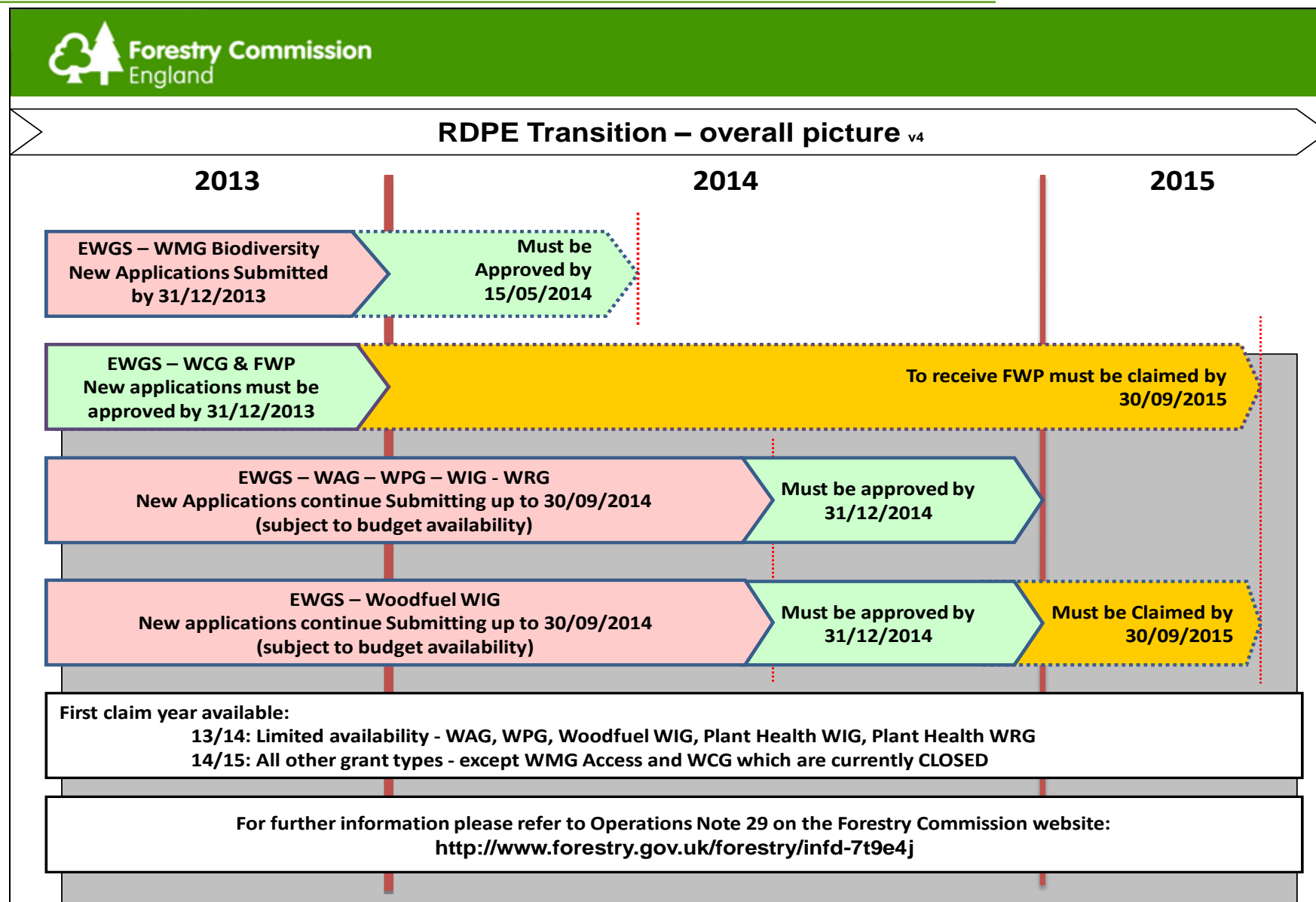
4 Transition Table

Grant type	Current contracts	New applications / approvals	Claims from 01/01/2014	2014 applications*	Comments
EWGS -WAG	Continue to term	Continue until September 2014	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Yes	
EWGS -WPG	Continue to term	Continue until September 2014	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Yes	Working group currently developing new template
EWGS -WMG	Continue to term	Public Access: Closed Biodiversity: Open until 31/12/2013	Contracts approved by 15/05/2014 continue to term	No	
EWGS -WIG	Continue to term	Continue until September 2014	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Yes	Applications with claims from 15/16 onwards and new applications under the next programme will require a management plan
EWGS -WIG Wood-fuel	Claims required by 30/09/2015	Continue until September 2014	Continue until 30/09/2015	Yes	Claims required by 30/09/2015
EWGS -WRG	Continue to term	Continue until September 2014	Claims will be processed using existing timescales and procedures	Yes	Applications with claims from 15/16 onwards and new applications under the next programme will require a management plan

Grant type	Current contracts	New applications / approvals	Claims from 01/01/2014	2014 applications*	Comments
EWGS -WCG	Continue to term	Continue to approve up to 31/12/2013	1 st WCG claims required before 30/09/2015 to be eligible for FWP Second and subsequent claims okay	No	Applications now closed
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
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

*2014 applications subject to normal budget management, the detailed rules for 2014 have yet to be agreed by EU/Defra and as such could be subject to change

The chart below provides a timeline for RDPE transition and is correct as of December 2013.



5 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.

6 Versions

Version 1 issued 14 November 2012

Version 2 issued 9 August 2013

Version 3 issued 14 December 2013

e.wgs

**English Woodland Grant
Scheme**



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The scheme is supported with European Union and Defra funding