

Woodfuel WIG Applicant Guidance

1 Purpose

Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant (Woodfuel WIG or WF WIG) will fund work that establishes wood supplies from currently undermanaged or inaccessible woodlands. The grant supports the measuring and marketing of wood, and infrastructure needed to extract wood for renewable energy purposes, or as any other wood products.

1.1 Objectives of Woodfuel WIG

- Improve the economic value of forest and woodland through wood production;
- Increase wood production volume, particularly Woodfuel, to the timber market;
- Bring undermanaged and / or inaccessible woodland into a wood production cycle;
- Increase the area of woodland in England that is in sustainable management;
- Improve the environmental and social benefits of woodland.

2 Timber and Roads Funds

Woodfuel WIG will support woodland management using two specific funds. These funds can be used individually or together, depending on your circumstances.

Fund	Description of work supported	Contribution rate
Timber	Collect accurate woodland inventory data; marketing of wood and wood products; management and supervision of harvesting and processing operations in neglected woodlands.	60% contribution*, based on published standard costs.
Roads	Creation, repair or upgrade of access routes and infrastructure, as required in areas of inaccessible woodland, for the purpose of extracting wood economically and sustainably.	60% of actual* costs - the receipted invoices for work agreed up to a maximum value, as set out in the EWGS contract following competitive tender.

* Note that, unlike other EWGS grants, the income derived from the sale of wood is not taken into account when determining the amount of Woodfuel WIG support.

£10 million of funding is available across England, for work completed and claimed by 30th September 2015. Applications are accepted on a first come first served basis while funds remain.

3 Eligibility

The general rules of [EWGS](#) and [WIG](#) apply, notably:

- The land being entered into Woodfuel WIG must be registered on the [Rural Land Register](#), and the owner must have a valid Single Business Identifier (SBI) linked to that land.
- Funding is still available.
- Proposals meet the [UK Forestry Standard](#) and associated guidelines.
- Work must be completed and grant claimed in the agreed financial year.

3.1 General Woodfuel WIG eligibility

In addition to the general EWGS eligibility rules, there are criteria specific to this grant:

- There **must be** an approved, up to date woodland management plan in place before applying for WF WIG. This may mean you have to update your existing management plan before making a WF WIG application. The updated plan must include basic information on the proposed volume of wood to be harvested over the next 10 years (see [section 3.5](#)).
- The maximum value of WF WIG support available is directly linked to the estimated volume of wood (and its associated carbon value) to be harvested. This is capped at £50 per m³ (a carbon valuation) of wood being harvested in the eligible area of woodland over the next 10 year period. For example, if a proposal involves the harvesting of 300 cubic metres of wood, the maximum level of WF WIG support is £15,000.
- All grant work must be completed and claimed within the agreed Claim Year; there will be little scope for rescheduling to a new claim year. The last effective claim date for WF WIG funding will be 30th September 2015 (Claim Year 15/16).
- All of the harvesting work identified in the management plan, and which is associated with the WF WIG work proposals, must be completed within 10 years of contract approval.
- WF WIG is subject to EU *de minimus* rules. An enterprise (a business) can receive a maximum of €200,000 of *de minimus* regulated grant aid over a 3 year period; the current year and the previous 2 years. This EU rule may affect the amount of grant you are able receive (see [section 3.6](#) on *de minimus*) if you have had certain types of RDPE funding.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary permissions from other organisations. This may include planning or development permissions for infrastructure from Local Authorities, and permissions relating to land drainage from Environment Agency.

3.2 Situations not eligible for Woodfuel WIG

WF WIG applications will not be eligible if there is no harvesting proposed within the next 10 years. Wood production is an absolute requirement of this grant.

3.3 Woodfuel WIG Timber fund – eligibility criteria

The WF WIG Timber fund is to support work in under-managed woodlands. An eligible woodland area must have missed two or more conventional thinning interventions.

These are indicated by the following periods:

- Conifer woodland 10 years
- Broadleaved woodland 20 years
- Coppice woodland 30 years

Undermanaged woods within a managed estate are eligible for WF WIG support.

The FC will contribute 60% of the cost of work (see [section 4](#)) that is undertaken in eligible woodland, based on unique standard costs that relate to WF WIG – Timber (see [Appendix 1](#)). These standard costs cannot be used with any other EWGS grants.

3.4 Woodfuel WIG Roads fund – eligibility criteria

The WF WIG Roads fund is to support access work in inaccessible woodlands. An eligible woodland area must be able to demonstrate evidence that the cost of harvesting wood is prohibitive because of the lack of suitable haulage and extraction access infrastructure.

The FC recommends that professional advice is sought from an experienced forestry agent or civil engineer, with a proven track record in woodland access infrastructure, and WF WIG Roads will contribute to such costs.

An offer of grant is made by comparing a minimum of three independent, competitive quotes for provision of access infrastructure. Once agreed which quote offers best value, the FC will contribute 60% of the actual costs incurred, based upon receipted invoices, to a maximum value established by the preferred quote.

The eligible woodland area must produce wood within 10 years of the agreed access infrastructure being put in place, in line with the management plan – plan of operations.

3.5 Management Planning

Your woodland management plan will help justify your need for WF WIG investment by:

- identifying undermanaged or inaccessible woodland areas;
- providing basic woodland inventory data;
- identifying a felling / thinning programme for at least the next 10 years;
- providing analysis of existing access, and / or the need for new access, for the purposes of extracting wood.

A detailed woodland inventory is not needed, but the plan must contain a realistic assessment of volume in the eligible area (ha), detail the principle tree species, and estimate the yield class (WPG template - Plan of Operations).

If your existing management plan does not currently contain the necessary information to support the woodfuel grant application, particularly for wood volume, or access and infrastructure needs, then this will need to be provided separately.

It is recommended that you liaise with your [local woodland officer](#) to determine what information changes are required.

Where a suitable woodland management plan does not exist, one can be funded through the [EWGS Woodland Planning Grant \(WPG\)](#). However, a new management plan must be completed and agreed with the FC before you can apply for WF WIG.

3.6 Grant funding rules & *de minimus* regulations

WF WIG is wholly funded under the [Rural Development Plan for England \(RDPE\)](#), Axis 1 (improving competitiveness), unlike all other components of the EWGS which are funded under RDPE Axis 2 (environment and countryside). As a result, the WF WIG is subject to the *de minimus* regulations of the European Union. The *de minimus* regulations limit the amount of EU subsidy an enterprise can receive in a given period.

The Regulations currently limit an enterprise to receive up to €200,000 of *de minimus* grant aid over a 3 year period - the current year, and previous 2 years. Note that an 'enterprise' is, in effect, a whole company or organisation - it is not permissible to split it into a number of subsidiaries (e.g. a farming side and a forestry side). Likewise an organisation like the National Trust is considered as one enterprise - it can't be split up by property.

When applying for support from the WF WIG you must provide details of any existing *de minimus* grant aid you have received, or are due to be in receipt of, in the current and preceding two financial years. You will have been informed, by means of written confirmation from the grant giving body, if the grant aid they provided is subject to the *de minimus* regulations.

If you have already had substantial *de minimus* regulated payments within the last 3 years, you may want to consider looking at when you want to claim grant from the WF WIG. For example, if you delay making a claim for WF WIG until the next EWGS claim year, it may reduce the amount of *de minimus* regulated aid we need to take into account when judging an application.

3.7 Woodfuel WIG budget management

Each WF WIG project fund is cash limited within each region, and within each claim year. Work must be completed and claimed in the agreed and approved claim year. The last effective claim date for WF WIG funding will be 30th September 2015 (Claim Year 15/16).

The rules governing the WF WIG funding allocation, and how applications are considered, are contained in Operations Note 7 – Grant Budget Management Policy, which is available on the [FC Operations Note webpage](#).

4 Operation of Woodfuel WIG - Timber

The **Woodfuel WIG – Timber** fund supports activities that help the woodland owner or manager prepare wood for marketing and sale, and managing of subsequent harvesting operations, bringing under-managed or neglected woodlands into productive management in the process.

Over and above the level of inventory information required and contained in the woodland management plan, this work may include:

- Woodland inventory data collection - basal area and volume assessments
- Compartment record keeping (Excel compartment database)
- Tree marking in sample plots
- Drawing up sale contracts or tender documents, or auction details
- Preparing the sale contract, and initial site induction for the contractor
- Management and supervision of wood harvesting and processing, to ensure adherence to UKFS and health and safety law
- Bringing appropriate harvesting and processing machinery to the woodland
- Supervision and recording of sensitive site conditions with regard to wider environmental and social benefits e.g. ecology, cultural heritage.

As outlined in [section 2](#), contributions can only be made for WF WIG – Timber fund activities where the work will be completed and grant claimed by 30th September 2015. This may mean that some applicants will, for example, only apply for the timber measuring or sales particulars work, but exclude harvesting operations that are scheduled to take place after this date, as they will not be an eligible part of the application.

4.1 Processing the Woodfuel WIG - Timber application

WF WIG – Timber applications and claims operate, and are processed just like any other Biodiversity or Access WIG application. See [section 6](#) and [section 7](#).

5 Operation of Woodfuel WIG - Roads

The **Woodfuel WIG - Roads** fund will support construction and maintenance of well-specified extraction tracks, haulage roads for road going vehicles and other related infrastructure, where it is shown that a lack of access is a key constraint to the harvesting of wood.

Through the management plan the applicant will be able to identify specific woodland areas that are affected by poor access, and propose appropriate solutions to allow economic wood production from that area.

The level of investment to be delivered by WF WIG – Roads will be determined by the estimated volume of wood expected to be produced, and by the actual costs of the infrastructure required.

The main operations that are expected to be supported are construction or maintenance of extraction tracks, haulage roads and timber stacking / loading / transfer areas, along with associated culverts, bridges and drainage.

The work associated with these types of access infrastructure may include:

- Professional services from an experienced civil engineer to advise on / support planning and implementation of access infrastructure.
- Felling and stump clearance along agreed proposed routes.
- Creating extraction tracks for mechanised timber extraction to a transfer point.
- Creating purpose built haulage roads and turning points for 44 tonne haulage lorries.
- Creating haulage road entrances or lay-bys adjoining the public highway that meet planning requirements.
- Creating, profiling and paving timber transfer points and stacking areas.
- Installing culverts and other road and track side drainage.
- Obtaining appropriate stone products for the formation of access infrastructure.
- Woodland security, such as gates, for new entrance points.
- Undertake fixed point photography during construction, as a record of progress.

Infrastructure planning and implementation normally involves significant ground disturbance and the use of heavy machinery, so careful planning is required to avoid excessive environmental impact or permanent damage.

It is recommended that professional advice is sought from an experienced civil engineer with a proven track record in woodland access infrastructure.

[Operations Note 25](#) also provides basic guidance on planning, design and construction of forest road and track infrastructure. The FC will expect any infrastructure work supported under WF WIG – Roads to meet the standards described here. The Operations Note also gives guidance on what permissions / consents you need to obtain before work is carried out.

5.1 Processing the Woodfuel WIG - Road application

The WF WIG – Road fund differs from other EWGS grants in terms of both the application and claim process. The offer of grant is established by comparing a minimum of three, independent, competitive quotes for the proposed work, and grant payment is based on the production of receipted invoices showing actual costs incurred.

This approach may be unfamiliar, so a description of the basic process follows:

- The application is submitted using, in part, the [Woodfuel WIG Roads calculator](#). This Excel worksheet specifies what work is proposed, and the quantities required e.g. overall length of track or road, or the area for stacking/loading/turning.
- Provided the application is complete, as per normal WIG rules, the FC will register it.
- The FC will then visit the site to discuss the proposals, and agree the type and quantity of work that will be supported, using the Roads calculator.
- The applicant will then use the agreed Roads calculator to obtain a minimum of three quotes from civil engineering contractors for the work types and quantities agreed, and submit them to the FC indicating the applicants preferred quote.
- The applicant should also gain the necessary regulatory permissions and consents at this stage, based on the work types and quantities agreed.

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- The FC will review the quotes, agree on the 'best value' quote, and issue a draft EWGS contract detailing a grant offer for the applicant to accept, as normal.
- The grant offer will be 60% of the selected 'best value' quote. Normally this will be the cheapest quote, but an alternative quote may be used where best value can be demonstrated. NB: The grant offer is the maximum grant contribution that the FC will make, even if the actual costs incurred exceed the grant offer.
- Once the agreed work is completed the claim is submitted, along with receipted invoices and a map indicating the location of the work. See [section 7](#).
- The FC will normally inspect the work before approving payment.
- Payment will be 60% of the receipted invoices (actual costs), up to a maximum of the grant offer in the EWGS contract.
- The harvesting work associated with the grant support must be completed within 10 years of contract approval. If the harvesting is not carried out, the FC reserves the right to fully recover the WF WIG grant paid.

5.2 Access work undertaken by the applicant

There are occasions where an applicant may wish to carry out the work themselves. If so, applicants must provide their own quote using the [Average \[England\] Civil Engineering costs](#) sheet on the WF WIG web page, and must still obtain two other independent quotes for the work. If the FC is assured that the applicant's quote offers best value for money, and that the work will be carried out to the standards required, we will accept it.

However, please note that in this situation, funding rules dictate that any offer of grant is made at 80% of the indicative costs shown on the Average [England] Civil Engineering costs sheet, to account for 'work in kind' contributions e.g. using your own labour or machines. The WF WIG contribution is then 60% of that total.

Example:

- WF WIG Roads calculator shows the roading project will cost will be £12,500.
- 80% of that cost is £10,000.
- The FC will contribute 60%: a maximum grant offer of £6,000.

6 How to apply for Woodfuel WIG

To apply, the following information must be provided:

- EWGS 1 form.
 - Details of any other grant funding recently claimed or being provided e.g. HLS.
 - Details of any de minimus linked funding received or due to receive. If you do not receive any de minimus funding, please write "*no other de minimus funding received or due to receive*" in section 15.
- EWGS 5 form.
 - Give brief details of what work you propose to undertake.
 - Ordnance Survey MasterMap, annotated as per the EWGS guidance and showing:
 - the boundary of the eligible woodland areas that the grant will apply to;

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- which woodland, within the eligible area, will be harvested, and when;
- detail of the proposed work e.g. location of infrastructure planned.
- the locations for fixed point photography.
- An up to date copy of the management plan, showing eligible woodland areas, basic woodland inventory and wood volume data, and justification for WF WIG eligibility. If the FC already has a copy of the approved management plan e.g. it was funded through Woodland Planning Grant, please give the relevant reference number.

6.1 Woodfuel Timber applications

- Additionally, for WF WIG Timber, complete the [Woodfuel WIG – Timber calculator](#).
- The calculator is a Microsoft Excel file, and instructions on how to complete it are contained in the excel file.
- For further information on standard costs and how they are used in EWGS please refer to [Operations Note 9](#).

6.2 Woodfuel WIG - Roads

- Additionally, for WF WIG Roads, complete the [Woodfuel WIG – Road calculator](#) and [EWGS 5b – VAT Declaration form](#). The VAT Declaration form must accompany the [EWGS5 application form](#).
- The calculator is a Microsoft Excel file, and instructions on how to complete it are contained in the excel file.
- The proposals should meet the guidelines set out in [Operations Note 25](#), with sufficient information in the application for the FC to assess the proposals.
- Provide detailed maps or technical drawings of road and track locations and structures, such as culverts, drains, cross section profiles etc.
- Provide detailed maps or technical drawings of proposed road and track locations and associated infrastructure
- Further advice on work specifications and cost information can be found on the [Average \[England\] Civil Engineering costs](#) sheet.

6.3 Application processing in the Regions

In **South East and South West of England and in Cumbria**, external contractors (Ngage) have been recruited to deliver the Woodfuel WIG.

Ngage will process applications for WF WIG Timber and WF WIG Roads, agree the contract details, and process the grant claim documentation on behalf of the FC.

Applicants for Woodfuel WIG in these areas: Please email your grant applications to: mike.furness@ngagesolutions.co.uk: or post to:

Mike Furness, Ngage Project Officer, The Saunderton Estate, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Bucks. HP14 4BF

To speak direct to Mike his telephone is: 01494 568970 Mobile: 07795 515 413

NB: Ngage are not contracted to administer other EWGS grants – if you want to carry out under other schemes, please apply, as normal, to your local FC office.

In other parts of England, please submit applications to [your local FC office](#), where existing Woodland Officers will process applications and claims.

7 Woodfuel WIG claims

WF WIG Timber and Road grant claims will be treated separately from other EWGS claims as they have different funding rates and processes. In general:

- Only one claim should be submitted for all of the WF WIG work carried out, unless an alternative option has been previously agreed with the FC.
- Claims **must be submitted by February 28th** in the correct claim year, and the final deadline for WF WIG claims is 30th September 2015. Claims received after that cannot be paid.

7.1 Timber fund claims

- Claims must be submitted using the [EWGS 8 claim form](#), as with other WIG grants.
- The FC will pay 60% of the Standard Costs specified for WF WIG – Timber. The FC may ask for documentary evidence to support the claim – on a case by case basis.

7.2 Roads fund claims

- Claims must be submitted on the WF WIG – Roads claim form, and be supported by original receipted invoices, and records from fixed point photography.
- Claimants must declare if they are VAT registered (see Section 7.3).
- The FC will pay 60% of the eligible receipted invoices, up to a maximum grant stated in the contract. If the receipted invoices total less than the grant contract, the FC will pay 60% of the lower amount.

Example:

- If the project cost quote is £20,000 the FC will offer 60% grant - £12,000
- If receipted invoices total £21,000 the FC will pay 60% of grant offer - £12,000.
- If receipted invoices total £18,000 the FC will pay 60% of actual cost - £10,800.

NB: The original grant offer is the maximum grant contribution that the FC will make, even if the actual costs incurred exceed the original quotes

7.3 Value Added Tax (VAT)

- The WF WIG – Roads claim form will itemise the individual receipts and invoices, and identify where VAT has been paid, how much, and at what rate.
- The FC will not contribute to the VAT element of a claim where the claimant is already VAT registered.
- Therefore, where the claimant is VAT registered, the grant contribution will be 60% of the non VAT element of the claim.

7.4 Amendments to Woodfuel WIG contracts

The scope for amending work is limited by the availability of funding and the fact that the WF WIG grant budget is ring fenced over a short timescale. Therefore it is unlikely that there will be rescheduling of work where it is not completed within the agreed claim year.

At the pre EWGS contract stage, it is still possible to make adjustments to the work proposed, subject the agreement of all parties, including the contractor.

However, major specification changes or changes that involve significant adjustment to the grant value are unlikely to be approved, and we recommend the proposals be well thought out and accurate from the outset. It is recommended that you employ a professional civil engineer to help plan your proposal from an early stage.

Further details regarding budget management and how we will deal with changes is contained in [Operations Note 7](#).

8 Woodfuel and other EWGS grants

WF WIG is the main form of support for roads and tracks. Biodiversity WIG support for roading will only be allowed if an applicant is ineligible for WF WIG *and* the proposed work will deliver core government biodiversity targets.

It is recommended that you apply for WF WIG separately, rather than include other EWGS grants in the same application.

9 Further advice

The FC will offer advice and help you come to decisions about your options and opportunities for woodland management, but cannot help you draw up your application.

The Forestry Commission website contains all of the information regarding EWGS and the forms needed to apply, in particular:

- www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs – EWGS homepage
- www.forestry.gov.uk/england-ewgsdocuments – EWGS document library
- www.forestry.gov.uk/england-lis – The Land Information Search tool, telling you about special designations, features and other grant schemes that are displayed in map form
- www.forestry.gov.uk/england-grants – FC England Grants and Regulations homepage. This provides links to all aspects of woodland regulations, grants available and public registers of felling/planting proposals.

If you do not have access to the internet, you can request any of the information from your local Forestry Commission office.

We recommend getting professional advice on woodland management and grants. A list of national and regional professional organisations is listed at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-advice or available from your [local FC office](#).

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This document is for information only and does not constitute an agreement of any form nor does it confer any rights. It is intended as a guide to help applicants decide whether the grant is applicable to them and whether the main requirements of any grant agreement can be met. The information is subject to change. Full and current details of the grant scheme and the requirements of any EWGS grant contract that may be made between the applicant(s) and the Forestry Commission arising from an application to the grant scheme can be found at www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs.

Revision History

Date	Version	Comments
19.08.11	1.0	First issue
31.08.11	1.1	Woodfuel East contact details added
18.10.11	1.2	Change of wording: WF1 & WF2 in Appendix 1
08.11.11	1.3	Text changes in sections for new WF Road calculator. Addition of extra Standard Cost in Timber fund.
05.12.11	1.4	WF WIG branding added
26.01.12	1.5	New contact number for Mike Furness
08.02.12	1.6	Addition of link to EWGS5b – VAT Declaration form which needs to be completed when submitting a WF WIG Roads application
08.03.12	1.7	Added information about East England processing WF WIG Timber applications
10.02.14	1.8	Revised claim dates to match final claim date of 30 th September 2015 and removal of Woodfuel East text

Standard costs for Woodfuel WIG Timber Fund

Code	Activity	Cost / Unit	Units	Comments
WF1	Inventory work: Establish basal area and volume from relascope sweep plots. Forest Mensuration handbook or Thinning Control (Field Book 2) apply	£8.50	Per plot	Number of plots must be agreed with FC at application stage. Retain mensuration records as evidence of work completed, if required at claim stage. Can be claimed by 30 Sept 2015, even if no wood has been produced
WF2	Inventory work: establish basal area and volume from measured sample plots. Forest Mensuration handbook or Thinning Control (Field Book 2) apply	£17.50	Per plot	Number and size of plots must be agreed with FC at application stage. Retain mensuration records as evidence of work completed, if required at claim stage. Can be claimed by 30 Sept. 2015, even if no wood has been produced
WF3	Management of wood sale process (e.g. tender / auction). Example - Drawing up contract docs; Pre commencement work meeting	£300	Per harvesting contract	Agree nature and scale of wood sale with FC at application stage. Retain documentation and sales details as evidence, if required at claim stage. Can be claimed by 30 Sept. 2015, even if no wood has been produced
WF4	Marking of standing timber (at Forest Craftsman rate)	£20	Per hour	Number of hours must be agreed with FC at application stage. FC to be notified of when marking is complete, prior to felling taking place. Can be claimed by 30 Sept. 2015, even if no wood has been produced
WF5	Contract management and supervision costs (up to 300m3)	£300	Per harvesting contract	Estimated wood volume must be agreed with FC before contract stage. Can only be claimed when the agreed woodland area is harvested, and by 30 Sept. 2015
WF6	Contract management and supervision costs (more than 300m3)	£1.00	Per m3 harvested Per harvesting contract	Estimated wood volume to be agreed with FC before contract stage. Can only be claimed when the agreed woodland area is harvested, and by 30 Sept. 2015
WF7	Low loader delivery of harvesting & processing machinery	£350	Per woodland Per harvesting contract	Normally only one low loader delivery for large machinery per woodland site in any one year. Nature of machinery to be agreed with FC at application stage. Can be claimed by 30 Sept. 2015, even if no wood has been produced

The FC may ask for evidence of any of these activities being undertaken, should you claim a grant. You should keep appropriate records of work undertaken e.g. mensuration calculations or fixed point photography, until such time as the claim has been validated and paid.