



English Woodland Grant Scheme

Email Alert May 2007

Grant Prospectus for England

The [national grant prospectus](#) has now been published. It provides details of the total grant budget for the 2008/2009 claim year, how that money is divided amongst regions and how within regions it will be divided into the major grant types. In summary, there is £17.7M available for grants, of which £10.9M is available for new EWGS applications.

Further details of how the grant budgets will be broken down in regions will be published on the regional web pages shortly. We anticipate providing more detailed information on partnership funding later this year, subject to this year's comprehensive spending review.

EWGS open for 2008/2009 applications

We are now open to receive applications for all EWGS grants with first payment year of 2008/2009. There are no significant changes to the grants except Woodland Creation Grant (see below). The closing date for applications for all grants except WCG will be the 29th February 2008, or when the funding available is fully subscribed, whichever is sooner.

Woodland Creation Grant

Closing date:

The closing date for applications is the 28th September 2007 (though see fast track score below)

Fast track score:

In response to applicant suggestions we are introducing a 'fast track score' for WCG applications in each region:

East England - 6

East Midlands - 14

North East - 14

North West - 16

South East - 14

South West - 14

West Midlands - 15

Yorkshire & the Humber - 18

If applications achieve the fast track score and there are funds still available, the application will be processed before the 28 September 2007 deadline. The final grant offer is subject to progress with RDPE approval (see section below).

Applications that fall below the fast track score will be held until the 28 September deadline. The highest scoring ones will be accepted up to the budget available. Low scoring applications that deliver little public benefit will not be accepted, even if there is funding available. Acceptance of low scoring applications is at the FC's discretion.

The [Woodland Creation Grant page](#) gives the threshold scores for the past 2 years, and the fast track score for this year. If application levels are similar to previous years, we would expect the threshold score to be lower than the fast track score so it's still worth applying.

Farm Woodland Payment - possible change of rate for non-farmers

As part of the RDPE process we are seeking State Aid approval that enables non-farmers to receive the same rate of FWP as farmers. In the absence of such approval non-farmers will be limited to a maximum FWP rate of 150 euros per hectare per year. The definition of a farmer is a person who derives at least 25% of their gross income from farming, taking account of all the land that they farm in England.

Full eligibility details of FWP can be found on pages 6-8 of [EWGS7 WCG Guide](#) (PDF 113kb)

RDPE Update - implications for the prospectus and applications

Taking account of when the programme was submitted by Defra and the time it takes to gain approval, RDPE approval by the EC is unlikely before late 2007 at the earliest. We are unable to issue contracts until RDPE approval, but recognise that such a delay will have a significant impact on forestry activity this financial year, including the planting programme this coming Autumn/Winter. With this in mind, we continue to try and minimise impact on applicants in the following ways:

- we committed the majority of 2007/2008 funds prior to 1st January 2007 (formal start of RDPE) to help ensure continuity of forestry operations through the transition to RDPE
 - we are planning to issue WRG only contracts before RDPE approval and have increased the national WRG budget to support increased interest in regeneration of woodlands linked to stronger market demand for roundwood supply
 - we are looking into the possibility of offering provisional contracts in advance of RDPE approval, and will review the position with Defra in early Autumn 2007
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