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South East England
Conservancy

PROSPECTUS 2005



A regional approach to supporting England's woodlands

The new English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) is part of the wider changes in rural delivery announced in the Government's Rural Strategy published in 2004. This strategy sets out a new devolved and targeted approach. In response to this we are now producing a brief Prospectus for each of the English regions, each having its own forestry framework. To provide continuity in the long term sustainable management of our woodland we believe that the rate of change in our programme should be gradual and considered.

As each part of England is very different, each region will have its own framework outlining the opportunities for woodland management and creation in that region. The introduction of targets and associated grants at this level represents our first step in responding to these opportunities and the needs of our applicants. At the same time, the Forestry Commission continues to deliver national targets such as the England Rural Development Plan woodland creation target of 30,000 hectares by 2007.

This Prospectus seeks to take forward regional agendas alongside our commitment to six key national targets, which are described in detail in our Applicant's Pack. The introduction of regional budgets will improve our ability to focus and control our overall budget, thus working more effectively with other government agencies and applicants to deliver Government's targets for forestry.

Our allocation of grants to the regions is based on historic trends for recent financial years. **All our grants will be subject to cash limits once targets have been met during the current financial year.** As new targets are developed and programmes change we will need to respond appropriately. We will be working with applicants and our other partners as we respond to the opportunities under the new Rural Development Regulation from 2007 onwards.

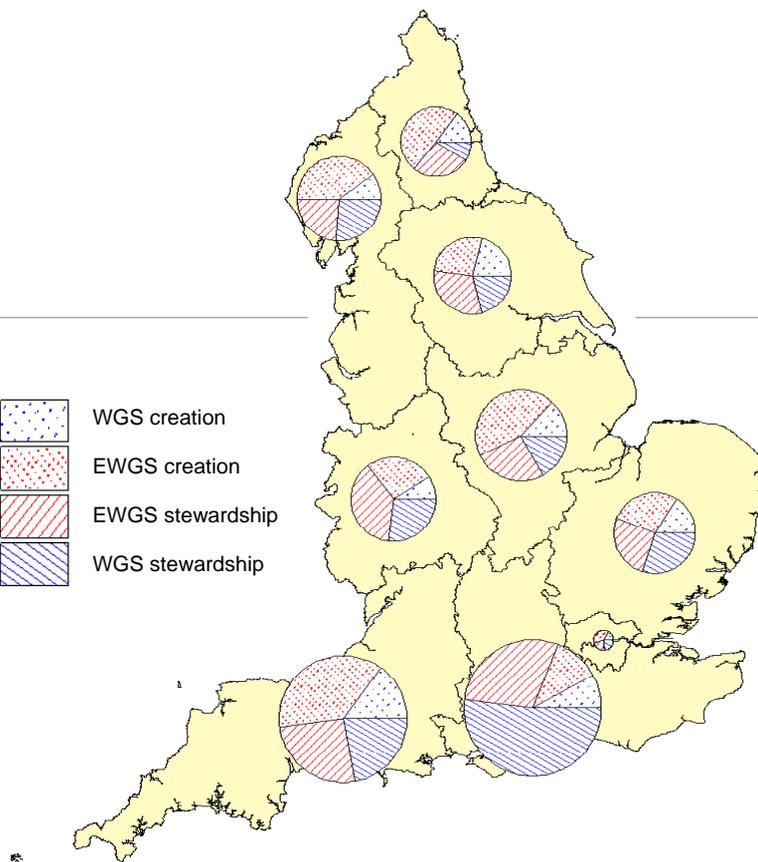
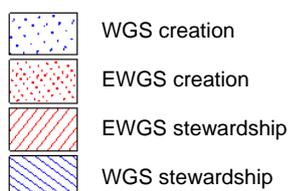
Government's commitment to support forestry in England remains strong as evidenced by the recent spending review settlement of £17.5 million for grants to woodland owners and £2 million for national and regional partnerships. However existing long-term commitments to owners will mean that the introduction of EWGS and the resources immediately available will vary from one region to another.

We look forward to working with you all, continuing to build on the strong links developed with the owners and managers of England's woodlands over many years.

Richard Britton
Head of Forestry Authority and the Regions
Forestry Commission England

The map shows the proposed allocation of grant spend by region for 2006/07, which is based upon historic spending trend. Each region has funds available for new agreements ('EWGS') and funds committed to existing contracts ('WGS').

By way of example, the South West England pie chart represents around £3.5 million, with over 50% allocated for the planting of new woodland and about 40% committed through existing long term agreements under the now closed WGS.



What this will mean for woodlands in South East England

The South East regional grant allocation for 2006/07 financial year of £3.8 million for new business and existing agreements will mean:

- 45,000 hectares of woodland continuing in management under existing long term agreements – some until 2010. In cash terms this means £1.6 million is already allocated in the financial year beginning April 2006.
- Up to 10,000 hectares of woodland will be accepted into EWGS contracts under the Woodland Management Grant ('WMG') component in 2005/06, for payment in 2006/07.
- 210 hectares of new woodland creation will be supported under EWGS. A further 30 hectares of new woodland creation has already been agreed under existing contracts.
- Approximately £150,000 will be made available to fund woodland regeneration following felling.
- New planning and assessment grants ('WPG' and 'WAG') will be introduced, with up to £80,000 available in 2006/07.

In addition:

- £250,000 will be targeted to improve the condition of woodland SSSIs in private ownership;
- £100,000 will be targeted for specific work on public access and biodiversity priorities to improve woodlands;
- £150,000 is available for a pilot Harvesting and Processing Marketing Grant (HPMG) within selected parts of the region;
- £90,000 will be made available to continue support for the Woodland Welcome access pilot.

The Conservancy will continue to provide a range of non-grant support to the sector in South East England in addition to these grant budgets, including the use of partnership funding. The detailed budget for this is agreed through a business planning round later in 2005.

This is the first year where regional grants support the delivery of the widest range of public benefits within the framework of sustainable woodland management and creation. They will be deployed to meet national priorities as well as regional priorities outlined in the South East England 'Seeing the Wood for the Trees' - www.forestry.gov.uk/england-rff.

Each grant component of EWGS is subject to clear eligibility and application rules. Please speak to your Forestry Commission area manager about your proposals.

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EWGS contracts offered in 2005/06 will have a first payment year of 2006/07. Where a shortfall in targets is identified, FC England may transfer funding between regions in order to respond to its national priorities

EWGS Grant summary table

Woodland category	Grant name	What the grant is for
Stewardship of existing woodlands	Woodland Planning Grant (WPG)	Preparation of plans that both assist with management of the woodland and meet the UK Woodland Assurance Standard
	Woodland Assessment Grant (WAG)	Gathering of information to improve management decisions
	Woodland Regeneration Grant (WRG)	Supporting natural regeneration and restocking after felling to achieve desirable change in woodland composition
	Woodland Management Grant (WMG)	Contribution to additional costs of providing and sustaining higher-quality public benefits from existing woodlands
	Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG)	Work in woodlands to create, enhance and sustain public benefits
Creation of new woodlands	Woodland Creation Grant (WCG)	Encouraging the creation of new woodlands where they deliver the greatest public benefits, including annual Farm Woodland Payments to compensate for agricultural income forgone