

Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulation.

S e Coilltearachd na h-Alba a' bhuidheann-ghnìomha aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba a tha an urra ri poileasaidh, taic agus riaghladh do choilltearachd

Forestry Grants for woodlands on Common Grazings

The Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) offers a range of grants to support the management and expansion of woodlands in Scotland. Common grazings which have a Business Reference Number (BRN) are eligible to apply for FGS grants. Scottish Forestry staff and the Croft Woodland Project advisers can provide advice and information to grazing committees on the available grants; but those grants most likely to be of most interest are:

1. Forestry Co-operation Grant. Common grazings can access grant support of up to £10,000 from the FGS Forestry Co-operation fund to investigate the opportunities for larger scale woodland creation or the management of woodland. This can be wholly within a common grazings or in cooperation with neighbours. A grazings committee or sheep stock club, or a third party can apply on their behalf for a co-operation grant. A facilitator will need to be appointed (usually a forestry agent) to lead the project. To be eligible for the co-operation grant a common grazing will require to have a grazings committee and at least 4 participating shareholders or a sheep stock club with at least four members. The fund can be used for example to; assess the condition of existing native woodlands and identify future management e.g. woodland regeneration, or to identify areas suitable for woodland creation. Funding supports feasibility and site survey work to produce and submit a project plan to Scottish Forestry. The committee or sheep stock club, or individual crofters can then apply separately to FGS for funding to deliver the actions identified in the project plan.

2. Woodland Creation. Grants of up to £3,600/ha are available for the planting of new native woodlands within a target area, which includes much of the Highland region. For small woods (<3ha) on exposed sites in the crofting counties grants of up to £6,720/ha are available. In addition, where deer fencing is required this can be supported at a rate of £7.60/m with a high cost deer fence of £9.90/m available over much of Highland. New woodlands may also be able to attract additional carbon funding from private investors through the Woodland Carbon Code.

<https://woodlandcarboncode.org.uk/>

Care needs to be taken when considering ground for planting to identify and address any constraints e.g. peat deeper than 50cm cannot be planted, and to ensure that the site is capable of establishing woodland to the standard required under FGS. It is also worth considering if the site could produce timber. The FGS capital grant is usually claimed in two stages – after the fence has been constructed, and after the planting is complete. It is paid directly to the BRN, usually within 3 months of the claim. The annual management grant is claimed each year on the common grazings' Single Application Form (SAF) and is paid a year in arrears. Early contact with a professional forester, the Croft Woodlands adviser or your local Scottish Forestry Conservancy is recommended to discuss potential sites. Progressing woodland expansion on common grazings will also require a Crofter

Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulation.

S e Coilltearachd na h-Alba a' bhuidheann-ghnìomha aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba a tha an urra ri poileasaidh, taic agus riaghladh do choilltearachd

Forestry application to the Crofting Commission <http://www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/crofter-forestry>

3. Natural Regeneration Establishment. FGS can provide grant support of £300/ha for establishing new natural regeneration, with an expectation of a minimum stocking density of 400 trees /ha at year five. Fencing and deer management grants are available in conjunction with this funding to encourage and protect emerging regeneration.

4. Woodland Improvement Grants and Sustainable Management of Forests. To support the management of existing native woodlands FGS offers a range of Woodland Improvement Grants to fund capital spend on activities to improve the condition of woodlands and annual management grants of £25/ha to support the costs of deer management and monitoring in native woodland and £43/ha for livestock exclusion.

FGS is a competitive grant scheme and there is high demand for funding in 2020. Applications will be assessed and scored by your local Scottish Forestry team and early dialogue with your Local Conservancy is recommended to establish funding availability. The Highland and Islands Conservancy can be contacted at highland.cons@forestry.gov.scot. Details of all the grants and how to contact your local Scottish Forestry Conservancy office can be found at <https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/forestry-grants>

The Croft Woodland Project advisers can be contacted at crofting@woodlandtrust.org.uk

The Highland and Islands woodland handbook produced by the Croft Woodlands project contains a wealth of information on planning and developing woodlands
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/44068/highlands-and-islands-woodlands-handbook.pdf>