



Forestry Commission Scotland  
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

# Woodland Creation

Application guidance







## Contents

- Section 1** Introduction
  
- Section 2** Process for preparing a woodland creation application
  - Stage 1 Proposal
  - Stage 2 Environmental Impact
  - Stage 3 Assessment
  - Summary of Woodland Creation Application Process
  
- Section 3** Further advice
  
- Appendix 1** Key findings of the UKFS implementation review
- Appendix 2** Maps for a woodland creation grant application
- Appendix 3** Example Issues Log
- Appendix 4** Information and data sources

This guidance document and the woodland creation application process has been refined and developed as a result of the James Mackinnon CBE report commissioned by Scottish Government in 2016: *'Analysis of Current Arrangements for the Consideration and Approval of Forestry Planting Proposals.'*

The most significant amendment has been to highlight the importance of stakeholder engagement, to ensure that all constraints are identified and considered, prior to committing to the submitted woodland design. Identifying and protecting key natural and cultural heritage assets is a high priority and should be progressed through a process of due diligence that is recorded and evidenced in an Issues Log.

You should follow this guidance;

- If you are applying for grant support to create a new woodland.
- To comply with the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 for afforestation.
- If you are seeking Forestry Commission Scotland approval for a woodland compensatory planting scheme required as a condition of a planning permission.

# Introduction



# Introduction

The process of preparing a woodland creation proposal brings together management objectives, silvicultural prescriptions and environmental, economic, and social factors into a comprehensive plan to deliver woodland creation through sustainable forest management.

The output from this will normally be either:

- A request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) opinion
- A grant application for funding assistance (A grant application may also require an EIA opinion)

**A woodland creation proposal is an effective management tool that:**

- Sets out your objectives
- Provides an understanding of site constraints and opportunities
- Identifies mitigation against potential impacts
- Provides information for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion (if required)
- Takes account of any grant requirements you may wish to apply for

**The detail you provide in the output should be in line with the scale, complexity and sensitivity of the proposed woodland site.**

A woodland creation proposal should provide an understanding of the broader context within which the woodland creation is envisaged and describe the precise balance of objectives for sustainable forest management between economic (e.g. timber production), environmental (e.g. biodiversity) and social objectives (e.g. recreation provision). It translates the strategic and management objectives into a detailed design with the required site operations via a site level assessment and analysis.

## When do I need to follow the recommended process?

**A woodland creation proposal may be required for different purposes.**

- If you are applying for grant support to create a new woodland
- To comply with the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 for afforestation
- If you are seeking Forestry Commission Scotland approval for a woodland compensatory planting scheme required as a condition of a planning permission.

If you are applying for grant support you may also require an EIA assessment.

If you are looking to create any new woodland you are advised to follow this guidance.

By demonstrably following the guidance and using an issues log it will also speed up the whole application process by providing clear evidence of what has been considered and why proposals have been chosen.

## UK Forestry Standard

Your woodland creation proposal must meet the requirements and follow the guidelines set out in the [UK Forestry Standard](#). The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) sets out the criteria and standards for the sustainable management of forests and woodlands in the UK and aims to promote good forestry practice.

Sections 5 and 6 of the UKFS describe the legal and good forestry practice requirements. The requirements are categorised into different elements of sustainable forest management, each supported by Guidelines for managers. They form the basis for assessing proposals.

It is a condition of any grant approval for a woodland creation proposal that it is implemented in accordance with the UKFS. Where significant breaches of the UKFS occur, forest managers must take appropriate corrective action and/or any grant money that has been paid may be reclaimed.

Appendix 1 provides some Key Findings of the UKFS Implementation Review 2014/15

## Customer Charter

We will assess your application in accordance with the customer charter which can be found at [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants)

## Grant Support

[Grant support](#) is available for helping with the costs associated with woodland creation. In addition to complying with the UKFS woodland creation proposals seeking grant funding must also meet the grant scheme requirements.



You can view a copy of the UK Forestry Standard at [www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs)

## Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and Forestry

Forestry Commission Scotland has specific responsibilities under the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 for afforestation, deforestation, forest roads and forestry quarries. Where the effects of such projects are considered to pose a **significant impact** to the environment then an EIA report will be required.

**An EIA screening opinion may be undertaken as a separate process or as part of the woodland creation grant application and you should include full details of afforestation, deforestation, forest roads and forestry quarries projects as part of this.**

If in any doubt, it is advised that you seek guidance from FCS to determine if your project will require a screening opinion and if so when to apply.

### Prior Notification of forestry private ways

If you are considering the formation of forest roads in your woodland creation proposal they are subject to local Planning Authority control through 'Prior Notification of forestry private ways'. This is administered by local Planning Authorities through the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Order 2014 (SSI 2014 No. 300).

This Order came into place on 15 December 2014 and requires that prior to the formation or alteration of agricultural or forestry private ways the developer or landowner must notify the relevant planning authority to ascertain if the proposal can be considered as permitted development or if prior approval is required. This process is known as 'prior notification'.

See [FCS Briefing Note 3](#) for specific guidance on this process.

### FCS Consultation Process

Before deciding whether to approve woodland creation applications, FCS has a formal Public Register consultation process with local Planning Authorities and other organisations with statutory powers such as Scottish Natural Heritage in particular for designated sites and European protected species, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency for Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) and diffuse pollution issues, Historic Environment Scotland for archaeology and where relevant National Park Authorities and Scottish Government Agriculture Rural Economy Division. These bodies have up to four weeks to comment on proposals. During this four week period whilst details of your proposal are on our Public Register anyone may provide comments on the proposal.

We aim to only consult once on any application. This can take place at one of two stages in the process - either as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process, if an EIA report is called, or as part of the grant approval process.

*Full details on our consultation arrangements can be found on our [FCS website](#).*

Where woodland creation proposals have been developed in accordance with this guidance it is expected that most potential issues will have been identified and resolved or mitigated as part of the initial due diligence and engagement with stakeholders. The Public Register consultation is the final stage in the approval process. This stage allows us to review any issues raised by consultees and check they have been considered and appropriately resolved or mitigated by the woodland creation proposal.

### Tree planting and Permitted Development

Where tree felling is required to be undertaken as part of permitted development formal planning permission will be required. In some situations, such as windfarms, compensatory planting may be proposed as part of the mitigation for the development scheme. In such circumstances developers would be encouraged to use the approach laid out in this guide to demonstrate the compensatory planting plan has been properly assessed and that the proposals comply with the UKFS.

### Getting expert advice

The woodland creation proposal process places an emphasis on quality and accuracy. We will not approve a woodland creation grant application produced from a superficial survey or poor analysis of the information. We recommend that you engage the services of a professional forestry agent to help prepare your woodland creation proposal. You may also want to consider seeking other expert advice where there are environmental or landscape sensitivities to be dealt with in the proposal.

### Public Access

You must make provision for public access, where it has been customary or where there is local interest, and management of public access to woodland must be in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.



# Process for preparing a woodland creation application



# Getting started

This section provides a step by step guide to help you prepare your woodland creation proposal. You are encouraged to provide concise descriptions with a clear rationale for management decisions. Good use of tables and maps will reduce the need for long text explanations. Where possible you should use the templates provided which will enable individual elements of your plan to be assessed by a FCS Woodland Officer and consultees.

The level of detail required will depend on the size and complexity of your proposal. Some of the stages below may not be applicable. If in any doubt it is recommended practice to agree what is required with your woodland officer.

If you are not applying for grant funding but for a screening opinion under the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 for afforestation you would be expected to follow step 1.1 (Prepare initial proposal) and 1.2 (Due Diligence). When you have sufficient information you may then complete stage 1.3 to request an EIA screening opinion. The level of detail required will depend on the sensitivity of the scheme.

If you will be applying for grant funding you will be expected to follow steps 1.1 and 1.2. You may then either follow step 1.3 or if there are no significant issues go straight to step 1.4 and submit a grant application. We would recommend that if you have any doubt if an EIA report will be required you complete step 1.3 and request an EIA screening opinion.

## Issues Log Example, see appendix 3

EXAMPLE ISSUES LOG					
Issue description and related	Applicant's Comments	FCS Comments	Significance of Impact High Medium Low	Status Open Closed	Agreed Mitigation
High biodiversity - Scheduled Woodland at 00120000 - 00121000	High biodiversity within the woodland area. Mitigation as per IES provided 20/10/19	High biodiversity within the woodland area. Mitigation as per IES provided 20/10/19	High	Open	High biodiversity within woodland
Population & Pastoral Health					
Cultural Heritage					
Soil					
Biodiversity					
Landscape					
Watercourse					
Water					
Air					
Climate					
Wildlife					

Use Process Guide opposite. Follow your route using colour code:

- Applicant led activity
- FCS led activity

# Woodland Creation Application Process

## Stage 1: Proposal

## Stage 2: Environmental Impact



### Stage 1: Proposal

#### Step 1.1 > Prepare Initial Proposal

##### Consider your management objectives

Within the context of the UKFS, the first stage of developing a proposal is to clarify what the short and long term objectives for your forest are. These will inform the remainder of the process and may, for example, include sporting use, revenue requirements, capital appreciation, recreational areas or to provide for wildlife habitats. See pages 10-11 of our 'Design techniques for forest management planning' practice guide. This is available to [download](#) from our website or to order.

##### Consider what information you have and identify any new requirements

You are expected to collect and provide information about your land. The relevance and degree of detail you provide will depend on the context of the woodland. Assessments should include appropriate aspects of the biodiversity, historic environment, landscape, site designations and public access.

It is recommended that you summarise any survey data you hold, such as aerial photographs, soil, wayleaves and conservation surveys. Ensure you record the source and date of the survey and where any full survey data is kept.

If there are designated sites or features that influence your woodland creation proposal, additional information may be required; these could include historic environment, biodiversity, landscape, water environment or other interests. It is recommended you refer to pages 12-13 of our 'Design techniques for forest management planning' practice guide.

The table on page 20 provides an indication of the topics you should cover. A guide to the level of detail required and possible sources of information can be found on our website [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants)

##### Create an Issues Log

We would advise that you start producing an "issues log" at this early stage of the process. The log will provide a record of your journey through the application process, considerations and any actions taken. A concept map that complements your log may prove useful. Please refer to appendix 3 for an example of what an issues log may look like.

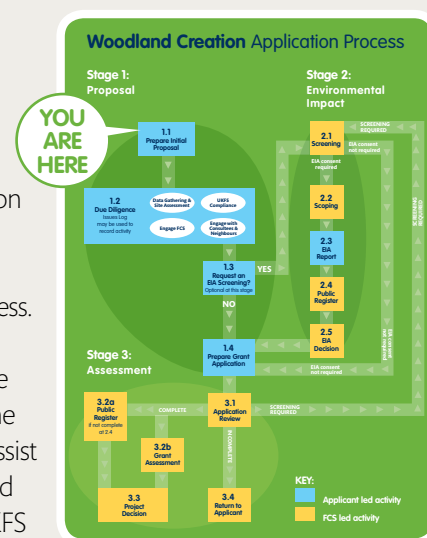
Reference to your log can provide a basis for stakeholder engagement and discussions with the woodland officer on the appropriate next steps. Recording what has been considered

and reviewed can answer stakeholder questions even if nothing has been found or no mitigation is planned, reducing correspondence at a later part of the process.

Continued use of the issues log through the whole process will assist the EIA screening and scoping opinion, UKFS assessment and final assessment of any woodland creation proposal. Your issues log and concept map can also be used to provide consultees with site specific information allowing them to provide targeted responses.

The use of an issues log and/or concept map must be proportionate to the proposed scheme and should only be used where they add value to the process. A short log which highlights the checks that are completed, even if no significant issues were found, can prove very useful for public consultation and reducing time later in the process. Good use of these documents will evidence a transparent and professional approach which will help facilitate assessment of your proposal.

The issues log can also help to simplify the process, for example where a number of stakeholders raise the same issue, this only needs to be included once, clearly explaining the actions and decisions made and the response to the specific issue.



#### Summarise your position at end of step 1.1

A summary of this data will provide the information required for different purposes.

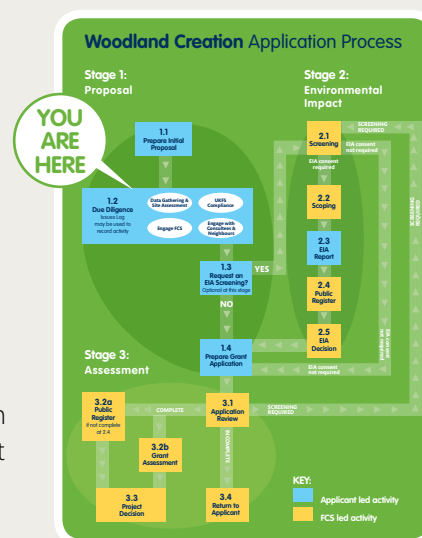
- To provide a base line to consider the objectives for the site and realistic opportunities
- To provide basic information for discussion with FCS
- To inform what additional information, if any, may be required to produce a woodland creation grant application or for EIA screening
- To provide a basis for discussions with stakeholders

### Step 1.2 > Due Diligence

There are different aspects to completing Due Diligence as shown in the 'Woodland Creation Application Process' diagram. Depending on the level of information gathered / presented and the sensitivity of the site the order for completing the steps and the level of detail required can vary.

If you have not already done so you may consider creating an issues log to record information as it is gathered.

Experienced forestry professionals may be able to conduct much of this stage without significant interaction with FCS. We would however advise that FCS are engaged at this point to help ensure potential issues are captured at an early stage in the process. This can prevent costly amendments to woodland creation proposals at a later point in the process.



### Engage with Consultees & Neighbours

#### Introduction

Stakeholder engagement provides an opportunity to explain your objectives and plans to other relevant parties and for you to take account of their views. Stakeholder engagement is an informative process that helps to identify the key factors that should be considered within the woodland creation proposal. It seeks to avoid any unexpected issues arising during the later formal consultation and public register process. It is important to engage local and neighbouring interests in your plan. It is your responsibility to carry out the stakeholder engagement exercise but we will be happy to advise you if particular stakeholders should be included and the type of engagement that should take place. The ConFor guidance note 2015 "Stakeholder engagement" is a useful reference.

This is the opportunity for stakeholders to raise issues so that they can be addressed in the woodland creation proposal process. If stakeholders decide to raise issues at a later stage these points may not receive the same level of scrutiny within the proposal.

To add value to this part of the process, it is important that woodland officers are familiar with the proposed woodland creation area. A site visit would normally be undertaken at this stage of the process.

Sharing your issues log and concept map (if produced) with stakeholders gives them the opportunity to see what you have considered and what factors have been

identified. Stakeholders can then add detail to your knowledge or add any new factors that have not been identified.

Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Historic Environment Scotland request that you ask specific questions if you require their input at this point. The use of your issues log highlighting the specific issues you are consulting on, will help these organisations provide targeted responses and also show that you have looked thoroughly at the site. Our woodland officer will be able to advise you if you should engage with any of these organisations at this stage.

#### Preparation for Stakeholder engagement

Information to Stakeholders – Short summary, issues log and concept map

You must give sufficient information to allow stakeholders to consider the issues. You are advised to provide a copy of your issues log and concept map together with a short summary of your key proposals such as management objectives, potential timber transport access and public access. It is critical that the information given to stakeholders is clear and understandable. You may find it helpful to involve woodland officers at this stage.

## Section 2 - Process for preparing a woodland creation proposal

### Short summary

You are encouraged to prepare an assessment of the impact any woodland creation proposals may have on the local community and local interests and identify steps to be taken to mitigate such impacts. (Issues log and associated concept map) This is part of good forestry practice as articulated under the UKFS. The assessment will help clarify and summarise likely impacts and mitigation proposals and demonstrate that you have factored these aspects into your proposals. The assessment should cover such things as:

- Neighbours likely to be affected by proposed forestry operations
- Specific legal interests (eg water supplies, servitude rights of access, rights of way, etc)
- Impact/opportunities for existing biodiversity or designated sites
- Impact/opportunities for local amenity (visual, recreational, access)
- Impact/opportunities on neighbouring communities such as the potential for increased timber traffic on minor rural roads or improved leisure facilities

In many situations this may simply require a short statement whilst in other locations the scale and likely impact on local communities may be much greater. In either situation it will be important that you have fully assessed such impacts and factored mitigation into your plan as required by the UKFS and other FCS good practice guidance.

### Issues log



As outlined in Step 1.1.

### Concept map

If it will help facilitate stakeholder engagement, particularly on larger or sensitive proposals, you should consider producing a concept map. (A map showing location and scheme outline alongside the issues log can help facilitate discussions with stakeholders on simple schemes.) This map should show the main factors that will impact on the design of the woodland. Highlight the constraints (factors which reduce the freedom of action) and opportunities (factors which allow greater flexibility). The map should complement the issues log and show all the factors that have been identified.

This should include relevant aspects of the physical conditions (deep peat, water), biodiversity, historic environment, landscape, timber transport access and public access.

A broad indication of activities such as ground preparation technique could be included at this stage. An overview of woodland type (not necessarily individual species) and open ground would be useful. The detail on the concept map must be clear with well identified keys and legends.

A concept map will not be expected for most proposals and should only be used where it will add clarity particularly to stakeholder engagement or consultation. If in doubt ask your woodland officers if it is suitable for your proposal.

Appendix 2 provides guidance on Maps for a woodland creation grant application.

### Stakeholder engagement method

The method of stakeholder engagement will need to take into account the size, extent of operations and sensitivities in your woodland creation proposal. You should provide information to stakeholders proportionate to the sensitivity of the proposed scheme and allow sufficient time for them to consider and respond to your proposal. Where a meeting is to be held this should take place early in the process to allow interested parties adequate time to respond. For particularly sensitive sites this meeting could be part of the screening/scoping process.

### Conduct stakeholder engagement

Interested parties should be given sufficient time to provide their comments. Potential contentious issues and how these can be presented should be considered, for example through a simple draft landscape plan.

### Review responses

You should record the issues you have identified and any issues raised through stakeholder engagement on the issues log, or directly to the operational plan.

It should include all the issues raised, their relevance, and how they will be addressed and followed up within the woodland creation proposal.

### Addressing the Key Issues

- Try to make an objective assessment of the likely impact that each issue could have on the planting, management of the forest, or on the existing land use. This should recognise and highlight areas of potential conflict between the various objectives of the participants and the proposed management objectives.
- State how each issue could be planned for within your woodland creation proposal and how you might resolve any conflicts (this might include any proposed amendments to management policies).
- The issues log can be used not only to record comments about issues raised but also issues which have been identified but are not expected to be resolved. It can also be used as a prompt for follow up action.
- Give an outline of any surveys to be undertaken as a result of the stakeholder engagement exercise.

### Agree issues log and follow up action with woodland officer

- You should send a copy of the issues log to your woodland officer along with a copy of any responses received.
- It may not always be possible to resolve every issue raised whilst still delivering the objectives for the scheme. Where this is the case, a rationale for response should be provided and discussed with the woodland officer.
- FCS will make the log available during formal consultation.

### UKFS compliance

When looking at your woodland creation proposal you should consider the UKFS at all times. This will ensure your final proposal will comply with the standards expected and will also provide key information on how to mitigate for potential issues. FCS and statutory consultees will look to compliance with the UKFS as a minimum standard for any proposal and/or grant application.

### Engage FCS

Agree key issues, interested parties and stakeholder engagement method with woodland officer

It is advisable to discuss the findings of your initial proposal with your woodland officer. You may find a site visit helpful at this stage. This can shape the direction you take your proposal forward and help identify key issues that may require further analysis and when it would be best to conduct stakeholder engagement.

The woodland officer may also be able to provide information on neighbouring or similar sites that could prove valuable when working up the proposal.

Before undertaking stakeholder engagement it would be advisable to agree with the woodland officer the key issues, level of detail, and interested parties such as consultees, neighbours and local communities.

If in any doubt about what will be required in your final proposal speak to your woodland officer **early**.

### Data Gathering & Site Assessment

The need for specific surveys such as particular species or historic environment surveys will usually be highlighted during the stakeholder engagement process. We will not normally expect you to fund surveys simply to look for features of interest. Additional surveys should be agreed with the woodland officer before they are undertaken.

Evidence suggests that areas with a high sensitivity may benefit by providing additional information for stakeholder engagement in order to assist in the preparation of the proposal. For example, in areas of high landscape sensitivity it is advisable to provide a draft landscape appraisal

### 1.3 > Submitting a request for EIA screening opinion

Forestry Commission Scotland has specific responsibilities under the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 for afforestation. It is not always easy to assess potential cumulative effects particularly when other proposals may not have been planted. If you have any doubt if your woodland creation proposal will require screening under the EIA legislation you should ask your woodland officer who can advise if a screening request will be required and when to apply.

The applicant can apply for an EIA screening opinion in two ways:

- 1) Complete the EIA screening form and submit to Conservancy or
- 2) As part of submitting a grant application to FCS (Step 3.1)

If you have not already requested an EIA screening opinion or advice from a FCS woodland officer the grant application will be taken as a request. While not part of the grant approval process this could impact on the time taken to provide a decision on grant funding. (EIA consent is a prerequisite of grant approval.)

To ensure a screening opinion can be made you must submit sufficient detail depending on the sensitivity of your proposal. Completing steps 1.1 and 1.2 and completing your issues log and, if relevant, concept map can provide much of the required information.

### 1.4 > Producing the woodland creation grant application

At this point with the management objectives, constraints and opportunities identified you will be able to outline how your new woodland will take shape and if you will be applying for grant assistance.

Grant funding supports the creation of new woodland that will bring economic, environmental and social benefits.

These benefits include:

- meeting planting targets
- helping mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration
- restoring 'lost' habitats through developing forest habitat networks
- supporting a sustainable forest industry by providing a reliable timber supply
- protecting soil and water
- providing community benefits through public access
- enhancing urban areas and improving landscapes
- supporting rural development through local businesses and farm diversification

Your analysis of all the information gathered – including stakeholder engagement – will inform how the management objectives and stakeholder aspirations for your forest could be delivered. Conversely, however, the analysis may demonstrate why current constraints limit what your forest could deliver.

It is important that the grant application includes any mitigation agreed through stakeholder engagement or as detailed on the issues log or in an EIA consent. **You should also take account of any grant eligibility requirements.**

For information on grant support you should refer to the Forestry Commission Scotland website [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants)

By following this guide you will have all the information you require to put together a grant application and particularly the operational plan which must be included with every grant application

In preparing your woodland creation grant application you should be mindful that the proposals will be assessed by your local FCS team

- against the legal and good forestry practice requirements of the UKFS
- against the grant eligibility criteria
- against the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (if not already assessed)
- and will be placed on the Public Register.

Please ensure your plan contains sufficient information to enable these assessments.

Once complete you should now submit your grant application.



### Stage 2: Environmental Impact

#### 2 > EIA process

Woodland creation proposals and grant applications above the EIA threshold are required to undergo the EIA assessment process. Requests for EIA screening can be submitted in two ways as per step 1.3

#### 2.1 > Screening

We will screen your application before writing to you to confirm whether or not consent is required. On receipt of a complete application, we have 28 days to issue an opinion. If a case is complex, we, with your agreement, can extend the timeframe up to 90 days to issue our opinion.

If we need further information we will write to you to request it, and the 28 days will apply from the time we have received all of the information required to make our decision.

Our opinion will be accompanied by a written statement giving the main reasons for the conclusion. Once we have given you our screening opinion we will publish this on our EIA Register.

#### Non-grant Funded applications

If you are not applying for grant assistance you may plant your woodland creation scheme in accordance with your proposal in the following circumstances:

- You have confirmed that your proposal does not require to be screened under The Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (You may wish to seek advice from FCS).
- You have received a screening decision from us confirming that your proposal does not require EIA consent
- EIA consent with conditions has been granted for your proposal.



#### 2.2 > Scoping

#### 2.3 > EIA Report

#### 2.4 > Public Register

#### 2.5 > EIA decision

When an EIA screening opinion confirms that EIA consent is required then the process for Scoping (2.2), EIA Report (2.3), Public Register (2.4) and EIA decision (2.5) will be followed. Full details of the EIA process can be found at [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants) which includes information on how we publish our decisions and appeals.

## Section 2 - Process for preparing a woodland creation proposal

### Stage 3: Assessment

Your grant application will be assessed by your local FCS team against

- the legal and good forestry practice requirements of the UKFS
- the grant eligibility criteria
- the Forestry ( Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (if not already assessed)
- will be placed on the Public Register.

#### Step > 3.1

Your application will be reviewed to check whether:

- It is complete and has all the required information and documents supplied.
- It is UKFS compliant.
- It requires an EIA screening assessment and if so that this has been completed (If an EIA screening is required and has not already been carried out this will be conducted in parallel to the grant assessment.)

If there are any issues found at this stage you will be requested to amend your application or supply the missing information, step 3.4.

We will only move to stage 3.2 once a complete application has been submitted that is UKFS compliant.

**Under a proposed Earned Recognition scheme, applications would be fast-tracked onto the public register in recognition of the professional status of applicants and the high standard of applications expected.**



#### Step 3.2a > How we consult on woodland creation proposals

All woodland creation projects that require an EIA report or are seeking grant funding will be subject to a four week public consultation exercise.

- Most woodland creation projects will go on the Public Register for New Planting as part of the grant approval process.
- Where a project required an EIA report, it would have been placed on the EIA Register as part of the EIA process at stage 2.4, before an EIA decision was given.
- In certain circumstances, for example for larger or more sensitive cases, we will also directly consult with local authorities and other statutory consultees.

During the four week consultation period anyone, including neighbours and members of the public, may provide comments on the application.

You should notify the people or groups involved at the stakeholder engagement stage that the application has been placed on the FCS Public Consultation Register.

It is vital that responses are received within the four week consultation period as late responses may not be considered.



We would expect new comments to be added to the issues log along with any agreed mitigation to provide a full case history.

The woodland officer will carefully consider the comments received and provide advice on any changes required to the proposal in order to address the issues raised.

Where any new comments have significant implications for the proposal or would require major design changes the woodland officer will carefully assess the merits of the comments and take a decision on the extent to which the scheme needs to be revised or mitigation adopted. This may at times involve further correspondence with consultees to seek clarification or agree mitigation options.

When we are satisfied that all the issues have been considered and appropriately taken into account in the design we will conclude the UKFS and consultation assessment stages of your proposal.

### Appeals

**If you are unhappy with our decision on your woodland creation grant application you can request a review of your case.**

### Step 3.2b > Grant Assessment

When UKFS and consultation assessment stages are complete we will then assess your grant application to ensure compliance with the grant eligibility criteria.

### Step 3.3 > Project decision

The final stage of the grant approval process involves confirming and allocating funding. This will generally involve a competitive process with woodland creation applications being scored to ensure that the available funding is used to support the highest scoring applications.

A grant scheme contract will be offered to all successful applicants and on site works can commence as soon as this has been signed by both parties.

**NOTE: If you are applying for grant funding work cannot commence until you have a signed contract.**

## Summary of Woodland Creation Application Process

Planting area proposed by owner		
Owner seeks agent advice		
Owner objectives established		
Land boundary mapped		
1.1 Prepare initial proposal (Start Issues Log)		
Constraints checked	1. Physical site character	Geology, soils (deep peat), hydrology
	2. Land information search	Designations, sensitivities
	3. Pastmap	Archaeology
	4. Local forest & woodland strategy	Sensitivities, opportunities
	5. Landscape	Context, prominence
	6. ESC	Climate and species suitability Species options
	7. Aerial photo interpretation	Vegetation, drainage, access, sensitivities (eg GWDTE, archaeology)
	8. Biodiversity (Birds, NVC, EPS, GWDTE etc)	Habitat assessment Records Survey
	9. Ground truthing	Mapped records, photographs, surveys, target notes
	10. Stakeholders identified	Woodland Officer Individual neighbours Communities/Community Councils Local Authorities Wayleaves/Utilities Special Interest groups/individuals Statutory Consultees NGOs Detractors
Concept design		
Finalise draft design	Draft design map showing constraints if applicable	
	Draft costing	
Client concept approval		

## 1.2 Due diligence

### Engage with Consultees and Neighbours

<p><b>Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone contact</li> <li>• Leaflet drop</li> <li>• Email/letter</li> <li>• Site visit(s)</li> <li>• Informal meeting(s)</li> <li>• Formal meeting(s)</li> </ul>	<p>Stakeholder Engagement proportionate to site location and sensitivities (Will reduce risk of new issues being raised at consultation).</p>	<p>Use issues log to detail issues raised, advice given by statutory consultees and resolution/ mitigation proposed.</p>
--	---	--

### UKFS Compliance

	<p>Soils (including cultivation method) Water Biodiversity - Species diversity Climate Change - Species diversity Historic Environment Landscape (including fencing) People</p>	<p>Update issues log</p>
--	---	--------------------------

### Engage Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)

<p><b>Engage with FCS woodland officer</b></p>	<p>Site visit Agree sensitivities/required surveys Set up "processing agreement" if required Agree mitigation on issues</p>	<p>Update issues log</p>
--	---	--------------------------

### Data gathering and site assessment

<p><b>Carry out required surveys</b> Amend draft design to take account of issues / mitigations</p>		<p>Update issues log on mitigation</p>
---	--	--

## 1.3 Request an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion (Optional at this point can be requested at grant application)

<p><b>Submit request for EIA screening opinion to FCS with all associated evidence</b></p>	<p>EIA Screening</p>	
--	----------------------	--

## 1.4 Prepare grant application

<p><b>Complete grant application and check supporting documents match</b></p>	
<p><b>Submit application</b></p>	

## 2 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

### 2.1 EIA Screening

FCS give EIA screening opinion	Insufficient information	Return to applicant
	Consent not required, which may be subject to mitigation proposed in the application	Update issues log Amend application as required
	Consent required, EIA report to be produced	Follow EIA process including: 2.2 Scoping, 2.3 EIA report 2.4 Public Register (Consultation), 2.5 EIA Decision

### 2.2 Scoping / 2.3 EIA report / 2.4 Public Register (Consultation) / 2.5 EIA Decision

Full EIA process to be conducted in accordance with the EIA regulations.

## 3 Grant assessment (completed by FCS)

### 3.1 Application review

Is application complete		
Is application UKFS compliant		
Has application been through EIA screening	If EIA screening is required	Screening conducted in parallel to Grant assessment.

### 3.2a Public Register (PR)

If case has not been put on PR for EIA place on PR	PR for 28 days	Appropriate changes made by applicant following advice from woodland officer
--	----------------	--

### 3.2b Grant assessment

Case reviewed against grant criteria		
--------------------------------------	--	--

### 3.3 Case approval

Case approved subject to check against available funds and grant eligibility criteria. This is a competitive process	Contract issued to successful applicant	
--	---	--

Further advice on applying and preparing Woodland Creation Applications can be obtained by contacting our staff at Forestry Commission Scotland Conservancy Offices:



## Further Advice

### Highland & Islands Conservancy

Woodlands  
Fodderty Way  
Dingwall  
Ross-shire IV15 9XB  
0300 067 6950  
highland.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk  
(for Highland, Western Isles, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands Councils)

### Grampian Conservancy

Portsoy Road  
Huntly AB54 4SJ  
0300 067 6210  
grampian.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk  
(for City of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils)

### Perth & Argyll Conservancy

Upper Battleby  
Redgorton  
Perth PH1 3EN  
0300 067 6005  
panda.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk  
(for Angus, City of Dundee, Perth & Kinross, Clackmannanshire, North Fife, Stirling, and Argyll & Bute Councils)

### Central Scotland Conservancy

Bothwell House  
Hamilton Business Park  
Caird Park  
Hamilton ML3 0QA  
0300 067 6006  
centralscotland.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk  
(for North Ayrshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, North & South Lanarkshire, City of Glasgow, East & West Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, East, Mid- & West Lothian, City of Edinburgh and Fife Councils)

### South Scotland Conservancy

55-57 Moffat Road  
Dumfries DG1 1NP  
0300 067 6500  
southscotland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

### Selkirk Office

Weavers Court  
Forest Mill  
Selkirk TD7 5NY  
0300 067 6007

(for Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils)

## Key Findings of the UKFS Implementation Review 2014/15

**Whilst the findings are based on Long Term Forest Plans (LTFPs) the issues raised are also relevant to woodland creation applications.**

The project was initiated to meet the commitment to monitor the practice of sustainable forest management in the UK through the implementation of the UK Forestry Standard.

The review involved the independent assessment of 34 approved plans against the requirements and selected guidelines from UKFS together with site visits and discussions with woodland managers to assess implementation on the ground against the UKFS.

### **Forests Biodiversity Guideline 6 Native woodlands**

Some LTFPs covering native woodlands failed to include positive management of the native woodland habitats.

### **Forests and Landscape Requirement 1, 3 and 4**

A number of LTFPs failed to take account of the landscape context or to apply the principles of forest design.

### **Forests and Historic Environment- GL 3 and 4**

Some LTFPs failed to consider their impact on the historical environment and landscape character or to take advice on the historic environment/check records.



# Maps for a woodland creation grant application

**This appendix provides information on mapping to support your Forestry Grant Scheme applications. However any mapping you provide for your woodland creation proposal should be prepared to a similar standard.**

## Introduction

The maps that you provide form an important part of your Forestry Grant Scheme application and will be used as an integral part of your contract. You will need to provide a map to show the location of the options and capital items present within your application. You should also check the individual option guidance for any detailed mapping requirements that may be necessary for that specific option.

This guidance is divided into two parts: part 1 covers the standard of maps required; part 2 provides details on what to include on your maps.

## Part 1 – standard of maps required

### What sort of map should I use?

Your application maps must be based on up-to-date Ordnance Survey maps. You must use originals or good quality copies (i.e. paper maps), unless you have access to digital mapping software enabling you to produce maps to the required standard, in which case you can submit maps in either pdf or jpeg format.

Large-scale mapping covering the whole of Scotland is available from the Ordnance Survey and their retail partners in various hard-copy and digital formats. These products allow you to define your needs and maps can be produced site-centred, regardless of National Grid sheet edges, at any size between A4 and A0.

### Where can I get a map?

Site maps are obtainable directly from Ordnance Survey's retail partners. More details are available on the Ordnance Survey website.

For more detailed information on site-centred maps and other conventional Ordnance Survey products, contact your nearest Ordnance Survey retail partner or go to Ordnance Survey's business and government support pages.

If you are producing maps from your own geographic information system or digital mapping software you should make sure that plots are based on up-to-date Ordnance Survey MasterMap data or Ordnance Survey VectorMap Local.

### What about copyright?

Any organisation or person wanting to copy Ordnance Survey based maps for their own business or private use must either be licensed by the Ordnance Survey, or apply for permission each time a copy is required and keep to the terms of that permission.

It is your responsibility (or the agent acting on your behalf) to ensure that any copyright responsibilities are met. The Ordnance Survey provides licences to many bodies (e.g. local authorities, various professional organisations and business firms) and to individual customers who have a regular need to copy Ordnance Survey material.

To apply for a licence, or for further information on copyright, see the Ordnance Survey's licensing pages.

# 2 Appendix

---

## Part 2 – what to include on your maps for a Forestry Grant Scheme Application

### How should I mark the maps?

Your application maps must be marked clearly and accurately and be consistent with the details in your Forestry Grant Scheme application. If you are carrying out a number of operations on the same area, you may need to use more than one map to ensure that the details are clear.

- Your map(s) must:
- show the title of your Forestry Grant Scheme application
- include your Business Reference Number and Location Code
- be produced on an up-to-date Ordnance Survey map
- be at an appropriate scale to show a reasonable level of detail for the types of operations you propose to carry out
- have the scale clearly marked on the map
- show where North is
- not have any map detail hidden by folds, labels or marks
- have the Ordnance Survey grid reference of the centre of your application area marked

### What details should I show on the application map?

The following represents the minimum requirements for displaying details on your map. For detailed mapping guidance relating to specific forestry options, please see the appropriate web page for that option (e.g. Woodland Creation).

- depict each forestry option or capital item you are applying for by using an easily recognisable colour coding, hatching or symbol on your map
- include a key to all of the colour coding, hatching or symbols depicted on your map
- label each individual forestry option area and capital item with a letter and ensure that these correspond to the map letters used within your online Forestry Grant Scheme application

For Forestry Grant Scheme Woodland creation mapping requirements [click here](#).

## Example Issues Log

Issue (include date and raised by)	Applicant's response	FCS Comments	Agreed Mitigation	Status (Open, Closed)	Significance of Impact (High, Medium, Low)
<i>e.g. Archaeology – Scheduled Monument at NS123456. HES, 23/10/16.</i>	e.g. Scheme design includes OG to buffer Scheduled Monument as per UKFS. John Smith, 25/10/16	e.g. Applicant has taken on board HES feedback and designed the scheme in accordance with best practice. Susan Jones, 27/10/17.	e.g. 20 metre OG buffer around SAM.	e.g. Closed	e.g. Low
<b>Population &amp; Human Health</b>					
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>					
<b>Soil</b>					
<b>Biodiversity</b>					
<b>Landscape</b>					
<b>Material Assets</b>					
<b>Water</b>					
<b>Air</b>					
<b>Climate</b>					
<b>Land Use</b>					

# 4 Appendix

## Information and data sources

The following range of data sources and policy documents will help you prepare your proposal. Further information on each can be obtained by following the relevant links.

### i. UK Forestry Standard

[The UK Forestry Standard](#) acts as the foundation for sustainable forestry in all parts of the UK. The UKFS is agreed by all of the Governments within the UK and links international obligations on sustainable forest management with policies on implementation. It therefore sets the context for forestry policy and practice in Scotland.

The UKFS applies to all existing and proposed woodlands/forests.

### ii. Data sources and tools Indicative Forestry Strategies (IFS)

IFSs provide a focus for local authority responses to consultations on grant scheme proposals and inform those developing proposals for forestry of possible sensitivities when considering options for planting. IFS, where available, should be obtained via local authorities.

**Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)** – is an approach to understanding the differences between landscapes, and can serve as a framework for decision-making that respects local distinctiveness. Covering all regions of Scotland, some thirty LCAs have been prepared by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Besides collectively describing over 360 distinct landscape character types throughout Scotland, they also usually identify potential ‘forces for change’ on the landscape, and provide associated summary guidance on managing such change. This usually includes the ‘force for change’ and associated guidance issues that should be considered when looking at the contribution forest and woodland management and expansion decisions make to a local landscape. Advice on LCA and copies of all regional LCAs are available at: [www.snh.gov.uk/policy-and-guidance](http://www.snh.gov.uk/policy-and-guidance) [www.nature.scot/landscape-character-assessment](http://www.nature.scot/landscape-character-assessment)

Review the relevant LCA for your application area and read the general sections of the report that apply to the entire LCA area; these will provide you with essential background and contextual information for your landscape. Review and consider the landscape character

type landscape description, forces for change and associated guidance; there are usually relevant sections on forest and woodlands

Incorporate this information in your woodland creation planning process for your application, specifically when developing the landscape character analysis for your application.

Review the relevant LCA for your application area and read the general sections of the report that apply to the entire LCA area; these will provide you with essential background and contextual information for your landscape. Review and consider the landscape character type landscape description, forces for change and associated guidance; there are usually relevant sections on forest and woodlands.

Incorporate this information in your woodland creation planning process for your application, specifically when developing the landscape character analysis for your application.

### Historic Environment Resource Guide

[This booklet](#) is a guide to the resources available to forest and woodland managers relating to the historic environment of Scotland. It has been designed as a route map to the most pertinent available information and advice

**Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS)** is a [comprehensive survey](#) of all of Scotland’s native woodlands and the data from the survey may be helpful in preparing native woodland plans. The full dataset is freely available to view online or download.

The survey is based on a digitised woodland map of Scotland and using field survey collects data on a range of woodland attributes. These attributes include woodland type (National Vegetation Community (NVC) and Habitat Action Plan (HAP) type), generic woodland type (whether the wood is semi natural or planted), species composition and structure, herbivore impact, deadwood and threats and damage. The data is collated to provide an assessment of woodland condition and can be analysed to ascertain the conservation value of the woodland.

### Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer

This is an [interactive map browser](#) providing access to a variety of FC datasets including NWSS.

## Forestry Commission Data Download site

The FC Data Download website provides access to a range of freely available FC spatial datasets for use within GIS systems.

## Scotland Environment Web

This [website](#) brings together environmental information and data in one place so that is easy to search, discover, analyse and interpret.

## iii. Policy documents and guidance

### Woodland Expansion Strategy

The [Woodland Expansion Strategy](#) lays out the Scottish Government's thinking on how woodland expansion can best increase the delivery of public benefits from Scotland's land.

### Control of Woodland Removal

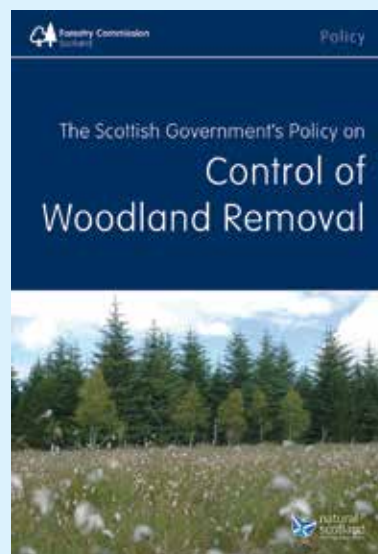
This describes the policy direction for decisions on [woodland removal](#) in Scotland and subsequent compensatory planting.

### Pest and Diseases

This [web link](#) takes you to a wide range of information on tree pests and diseases including biosecurity.

### Peatland Management

[Peatland Management](#) - The UK Forestry Standard requires managers to minimise soil disturbance, particularly on organic (peaty) soils. There is also a general requirement to consider the potential impacts of soil disturbance when planning operations involving cultivation, harvesting, drainage, and road construction.



A large, light green rectangular area with rounded corners and horizontal lines, resembling a notepad or a form for taking notes. The area is empty and occupies most of the page below the header.





Forestry Commission Scotland serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government and is responsible to Scottish Ministers

## Contact

Forestry Commission Scotland  
National Office  
Silvan House  
231 Corstorphine Road  
Edinburgh  
EH12 7AT

Tel: 0300 067 6156  
E-mail: [fcscotland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fcscotland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland)

If you need this publication on an alternative format, for example in large print, please contact us on:

Tel: 0300 067 5000  
E-mail: [diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

The Diversity Team  
Forestry Commission  
Silvan House  
231 Corstorphine Road  
Edinburgh  
EH12 7AT