

Detailed guide: Assess environmental impact before you create new woodland

Woodland creation means work that involves direct seeding or natural regeneration processes, planting Christmas trees or planting short rotation coppice.

The thresholds of projects to create new woodland are affected by the scale of the project and the sensitivity of the location in which the project is to take place. Use the table below to see which threshold your project falls into. You must apply for our opinion where your project requires EIA screening, or you may simply be able to notify us of your project instead. For very small proposals away from sensitive locations, you could be exempt from assessment by the Forestry Commission.

Afforestation thresholds table

Project Size (Ha)	Land type – sensitivity	EIA requirements
0ha – 2ha	A sensitive area but not a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Full EIA screening
0ha – 2ha	Everywhere else	No EIA screening
2ha – 5ha	Any sensitive area	Full EIA screening
2ha – 5ha	Everywhere else	(Prior) basic notification
5ha – 50ha	Only in a low risk area	(Prior) full notification
5ha – 50ha	Everywhere else	Full EIA screening
>50ha	Everywhere else	Full EIA screening

Notification

If your forestry project is afforestation (woodland creation), small scale in nature and/or located within a low risk area then you may simply be able to notify us of your proposal (giving a basic or full notification) using the EIA Enquiry Form to get our decision.

This process gives specific timescales in which the Forestry Commission must give you a decision. However, if you're also applying for a woodland creation grant from the Forestry Commission then you will not receive the decision for a Notification until the Forestry Commission has made a decision on the grant offer.

About prior basic notification

For afforestation projects between 2 and 5 hectares in non-sensitive areas, prior basic notification will be sufficient to satisfy the requirements under the EIA Regulations. Use the [Land Information Search \(LIS\)](#) and other online

map browsers such as [MAGIC.gov.uk](https://www.magic.gov.uk) to identify any designations or sensitivities that may be affected by the project.

When you submit prior basic notification to the Forestry Commission, you must include:

- a description of the proposal for the project
- a map or plan sufficient to identify the land that is the subject of the proposed project (including its boundaries)
- information about the proposer and any agent or manager of the proposer

Within 28 days of first giving us notification, we may ask you to give further information. If you don't get an assessment from the Forestry Commission within 28 days then you can assume that the project is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment and no further action will then be required under the EIA Regulations.

About prior full notification

For afforestation projects between 5 and 50 hectares that are fully within low risk areas, prior full notification will be sufficient to satisfy the requirements under the EIA Regulations. Use the [Land Information Search \(LIS\)](#) and other online map browsers such as [MAGIC.gov.uk](https://www.magic.gov.uk) to identify any designations or sensitivities that may be affected by the project.

Full notification submitted to the Forestry Commission on the EIA enquiry form must include:

- a description of the proposals for the project, including evidence that the proposals are consistent with good forestry practice
- information about the land that the project covers or affects, including a map or plan sufficient to identify the land and its boundaries, habitats and water features
- information about the proposer and any agent or manager of the proposer

It must also include evidence that the proposer has consulted on the project with (for example):

- the person responsible for maintaining the Local Environment Records for the area (in respect of biodiversity)
- the Environment Agency (in respect of the possible impact of the project on any water features)
- the relevant local authority (in respect of the possible impact of the project on the landscape)
- the person responsible for maintaining the Historic Environment Records for the area (in respect of the possible impact of the project on the historic environment)
- any potentially affected neighbours

Within 42 days of first giving us notification, we may ask you to give further information. If you don't get an assessment from the Forestry Commission within 42 days then you can assume that the project is unlikely to

have significant effects on the environment. No further action will then be required under the EIA Regulations.

[Submit an EIA enquiry form for afforestation.](#)

[Send your form to the FC admin hub](#)

EIAs and grant applications for woodland creation

If you're applying for a Forestry Commission grant then you may not be required to submit a separate EIA enquiry form, as the information in your grant application may meet the Forestry Commission's requirements to assess environmental impact.

Getting our opinion and applying for consent

If you do not qualify for an exemption or notification then you must apply to the Forestry Commission for our opinion. Your afforestation project may have impacts on the environment which, when seeking our opinion, will highlight the need for our consent to be given before the project can begin.

See the [overview guidance on EIAs](#) for general information about EIAs, or find out more about [getting our opinion and consent](#).

Further information

You can find out more about the process with the:

- [EIA screening guidance](#)
(PDF, 942KB, 21 pages)

- [EIA scoping](#)
(PDF, 652KB, 31 pages)

if you're applying for consent

See additional advice on [EIA requirements for woodland creation](#)
(PDF, 574KB, 20 pages)

If you have any questions, you can [contact your nearest Forestry Commission area office](#).

Appeals

You can [make a complaint or appeal against a Forestry Commission decision.](#)