

[Detailed guide: EIAs: notify the Forestry Commission, get an opinion or apply for consent](#)

You may have to notify the Forestry Commission or ask for its opinion about environmental impact, depending on the scale and location of the forestry project you're proposing. Once you've had a Forestry Commission response you may have to apply for consent. These formal processes are written into the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations – see the [overview guidance for general information on EIAs](#)).

Notification

If your forestry project is for afforestation, small scale in nature and/or located within a low risk area you may simply be able to notify the Forestry Commission of your proposal, using the [EIA enquiry form](#), in order to get its decision. Check the [afforestation thresholds table](#) to see if you're eligible for this process, and which notification procedure would apply.

If you're eligible for basic notification, the Forestry Commission will give its decision within 28 days, unless it asks you for more information.

If you're eligible for full notification, the Forestry Commission will give its decision within 42 days, unless it asks you for more information.

If the Forestry Commission asks for more information, you'll get a request in writing and the decision period will be restarted once you've provided the requested information.

Opinion

For all other eligible forestry projects, the Forestry Commission will give an opinion on whether or not you, the applicant, must apply for consent to carry out any work. Below is the process for getting its opinion.

1. Bring your proposal together

When planning your project, you should use your own forestry experience or seek advice from a professional forestry agent, and should engage with local and statutory stakeholders who may have an interest in the land on which your project will lie, as required.

Gather information from on the site and from as many other sources as possible and use that information to design a [UK Forestry Standard](#) compliant forestry project. You should consider liaising with Natural England and the Environment Agency at this stage, and submit their comments along with your

EIA enquiry application.

2. Complete an EIA enquiry form

Once your project proposal has been drawn together, complete the relevant EIA enquiry for your project(s).

- Download the EIA enquiry form to [create new woodland.](#)
- Download the EIA enquiry form for [deforestation.](#)
- Download the EIA enquiry form for [forest roads and/or quarries.](#)

3. Send your details to the Forestry Commission

Send your completed form with the following information/documentation to [your local Forestry Commission admin office](#)

- a map identifying the area and showing the extent of the project – this should be a clear Ordnance Survey map at a scale of 1:10,000 or 1:2,500
- information on the characteristics of the project and any likely significant effects on the environment – significant effects are specified in Appendix 2 of the [EIA screening guidance](#) (PDF, 942KB, 21 pages)

document

- any other information or evidence that you have gathered and is relevant, eg species maps, plans, photographs etc, including a description of any features of the project or measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment

If the Forestry Commission reasonably requires further information in order to form an opinion, it will contact you. If, at any time, it becomes aware of proposals that require it's consent, the Forestry Commission may give it's opinion to the person whom it believes should have asked it.

4. When to expect an opinion decision

The Forestry Commission will only begin to form an opinion when all the relevant information has been received. If the Forestry Commission has asked you for more information, the process may take longer. It will normally form an opinion within 28 days of receiving all the relevant information, but in exceptional circumstances it may take longer than this period to form an opinion. If this is the case, the Forestry Commission will let you know in writing.

Decisions last for a period of 5 years or any shorter period specified.

5. If consent is not required

If the Forestry Commission decides that consent is not required, it will inform you in writing.

6. If consent is required

If the Forestry Commission decides that consent for the work is required, it will inform you in writing. If you wish to progress with your project you will be required to produce an Environmental Statement and application for consent in order to get a decision about whether or not the work can proceed.

When the Forestry Commission publicises the decision

After notifying you of their decision, the Forestry Commission will publish the decision on a Public Register for 28 days. This will notify the public of the decision on your project.

Grant applications for EIA project types

If you're applying for a Forestry Commission grant to deliver a EIA project type you may not be required to submit an EIA Enquiry Form, as the information provided in your grant application may meet the information requirements of the Enquiry Form.

Additionally you should note that grant applications take longer to assess than EIA projects, so the final EIA decision for Notification or Opinion won't be given until the final grant offer is ready to be made. This may be significantly longer than 28 or 42 days.

Apply for consent

If the Forestry Commission decides your project has a significant impact on the environment, you must get its consent for the work before you start.

Your application will need to include an Environmental Statement and you will have to scope the project. For more help, read the [EIA scoping environmental statement guidance](#).
(PDF, 652KB, 31 pages)

The Forestry Commission is required to provide formal consent for certain 'relevant projects' under the EIA Regulations. The process for getting its consent is outlined below.

In most cases, the Forestry Commission would strongly advise applicants to proceed with the notification or application for our opinion, whichever is relevant, prior to submitting an application for consent. But if you're certain that an application for consent is required, it's possible to apply for consent without completing the previous steps.

1. Make preliminary enquiries

Speak to your local Forestry Commission woodland officer about your project and the need to apply for consent. They will help you to decide which countryside organisations may need to be involved with providing information that might help the preparation of the Environmental Statement.

2. Hold a scoping meeting

This meeting between you, the Forestry Commission, relevant countryside organisations, consultees and interested parties, such as neighbours, will help to identify the particular issues that the environmental statement must address.

3. Prepare an Environmental Statement (ES)

The purpose of an ES is to provide the Forestry Commission and other interested parties with as full an understanding of the consequences of the proposals as possible.

4. Prepare the application

You will need to include:

- a map showing the area where the project is proposed, and the extent of any planting, regeneration, constructions, works or operations – this should be a clear Ordnance Survey map at a scale of 1:10 000 or 1:2 500
- a description of the nature of the relevant project
- any other information that might be relevant e.g. species maps, plans, photographs etc
- the Environmental Statement for the work
- a copy of the publicity notice that you must place in newspapers (this should only be done once the ES has been finalised with the Forestry Commission)

Note: you may have already supplied some of this information if you've previously asked for the Forestry Commission opinion under the EIA regulations. This information can be reused to help inform your ES. You can also use other relevant and equivalent ES from other similar projects as part of your application for consent, rather than having to recreate the required evidence.)

5. Send the application

Send the documents to your [local admin hub](#).

The Forestry Commission may ask for multiple copies of the application documents to send to appropriate consultees.

6. Publicise the ES and consult

- Once the Forestry Commission is satisfied that the ES addresses all the

issues of concern as agreed at the scoping meeting then you must make a public notice.

- Place the public notice (advertisement) in local newspapers and/or electronically, as directed by the Forestry Commission. You're responsible for the cost of this notice.
- Full details about the contents of the notice are given in the Environmental Impact Assessment of Forestry Projects.
- You must make copies of the application and the ES available in public places such as the local library, post office etc. The Forestry Commission will advise you about suitable locations.
- The Forestry Commission will give details of your application to the appropriate consultees and statutory bodies as well as the local authority with an interest in the application. They're required to give us their comments within 30 days.
- Proposals to carry out new planting or felling will appear on the Register of New Planting and Felling.

7. The Forestry Commission responds

The Forestry Commission will respond with one of 3 possible decisions. You will either be:

- granted consent subject to the standard conditions (that the work must be started within 5 years from the date of consent and finished no later than 10 years from the date of consent)
- granted consent subject to the standard conditions (above) plus other additional conditions
- refused consent

8. The Forestry Commission publicises the decision

After notifying you and other interested parties about their decision, the Forestry Commission will advertise their decision in the same newspapers in which the notice of the application for consent was placed and will be responsible for the cost of this notice.

Appeals

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