

# Detailed guide: Woodland Carbon Fund

Landowners, land managers and local authorities can apply to the Forestry Commission for support to plant large-scale productive woodland under the Woodland Carbon Fund (WCF). This benefits the environment through carbon storage and helps tackle the effects of climate change. It also provides opportunities to work in partnership to open up public access to woodland and increase environmental benefits.

The scheme offers capital funding for the creation of new woodland. This includes the planting of trees and costs of protection items including tree guards, fencing and gates. You can also get funding for the installation of forest roads and recreational infrastructure.

A one-off capital payment of £1,000 per hectare is available in year 5 following successful establishment.

Applicants to the Woodland Carbon Fund may still be eligible to receive funding under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) for the length of the WCF agreement, subject to meeting BPS eligibility criteria. The standard length of a WCF agreement is 5 years, however, where an agreement includes a second stage payment the agreement length extends to 10 years.

You can apply for the WCF for land under multiple ownership. You'll need the landowner's written permission if you don't own the land and the Forestry Commission may ask to see your tenancy agreement to confirm your land management responsibilities.

If you've been ordered to plant woodland as part of a planning consent you cannot apply to the WCF for grant support to fund the new planting.

## **How it works**

You can get stage 1 capital funding for:

- planting trees
- protection items – tree guards, fencing and gates
- forest roads for maintenance access and infrastructure that encourages public use of the woodland
- £1,000 per hectare in year 5 after you've successfully established your woodland

There are 2 different funding rates you can apply for:

- standard planting rate – this applies to most proposals (unless your land is in 'priority places') and you get 80% of the standard costs for planting and establishment capital items, capped at £6,800 per hectare
- priority places planting rate – this applies to proposals near to urban

areas, which give access to the public on foot, and you get 100% of the standard costs for planting and establishment capital items, capped at £8,500 per hectare

See the

[Woodland Carbon Fund: priority places in England map](#)

(PDF, 4.06MB, 1 page)

to work out which areas in England qualify for a higher rate of funding. You can claim the higher rate if:

- 30% or more of your site falls within a priority place area in England
- you agree to provide access to the public by foot for 30 years

In addition to planting trees, you can get funding for:

- added recreational features such as footpaths – paid at 80% of actual costs (100% in priority places), capped at 10% of the total cost of your application
- forest roads and tracks that support access so you can successfully establish, maintain and harvest woodland – paid at 40% of actual costs, capped at 10% of the total cost of your application

Use the

[WCF capital items calculator](#)

(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 128KB)

to work out costs and possible funding.

## **Find out if you're eligible**

The land must meet the following size thresholds:

- 10 hectares or more to be planted as woodland with up to 20% open space in the final design
- either one continuous standalone block of 10 hectares or more or at least 10 hectares of new planting that expands existing woodland

The Forestry Commission may consider applications for grant support for additional blocks of woodland creation in landscape-scale projects as long as the blocks are each at least 5 hectares in area (standalone) or a total of 5 hectares if connecting or expanding existing woodland.

Find out how to develop woodland design plans and associated maps.

## **Tree species**

You must include productive tree species on 70% of the net planted area in

your woodland design, including:

- minimum general yield class (GYC) 6 – broadleaves
- GYC10 – pine
- GYC12 – other conifers

You can find country-specific advice on which tree-species to plant in the UKFS publication. Find further information on [species and provenance choice for adapting England's woodlands](#) from Forest Research, the research agency of the Forestry Commission.

Forest Research also offers a tool to help you select species ecologically suited to your site. Find out about the [Ecological Site Classification Decision Support System \(ESC-DSS\)](#).

You can't apply for funding if you plan to:

- create short-rotation forestry
- create short-rotation coppice
- plant fast-growing tree species such as eucalypts

## **Planting density**

You must plant 2,000 stems per hectare minimum on a net area basis.

## **Funding to develop your proposal**

Before you apply to the WCF you may want to consider using the [Woodland Creation Planning Grant \(WCPG\)](#). The WCPG provides funding to prepare a UKFS-complaint Woodland Creation Design Plan – this plan can subsequently be used to support a WCF application.

## **How to apply**

You can apply year round and the Forestry Commission aims to respond to your application within 3 months.

## **Submit an application form**

You need to [submit an application form](#) and send it to the WCF scheme administrator at the Forestry Commission.

Send an electronic copy of your completed application form to:  
[wcf@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:wcf@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

Along with your application form you need to submit one of the following:

1. a completed WCPG stage 1 checklist and supporting documents including at least one map showing features of your site and any constraints – [find](#)

[out more](#)

2. a draft UKFS-compliant woodland creation design plan
3. a completed UKFS-compliant woodland creation design plan
4. confirmation that Forestry Commission England has given an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening decision that the proposal does not require an EIA, or should consent be required, confirmation that the consent to plant has been awarded

If you submit your application form with either a WCPG stage 1 checklist or a draft woodland creation design plan (bullet point 1 or 2) then funding from the WCF can only be allocated in principle. This decision will be made within 3 months of the application being received. A final agreement will be issued once a completed woodland creation design plan has been prepared and the subsequent EIA process completed.

If you submit an application form with an EIA screening decision that the proposal does not require an EIA – or should consent be required, confirmation that the consent to plant has been awarded – you will receive a decision on the award of WCF funding within 3 months.

Applications will be assessed by a panel consisting of representatives from Defra, Natural England and the Environment Agency, who will evaluate applications to ensure they meet the criteria of the fund.

### **Give consent if you appoint an agent**

If you decide to appoint an agent to apply for funding on your behalf you must [complete a form to give your consent](#).

(This is not the same form that you would complete to appoint an agent to apply for Countryside Stewardship: woodland support.)

### **Make an appeal**

Find out how to [make a complaint or appeal](#).

### **Extra income from selling carbon**

If your project is not cost-effective with the Woodland Carbon Fund grant alone, you might be able to earn further income by selling carbon credits from your project. In order to do this you need to register with the Woodland Carbon Code within 2 years from the start of planting.

Validation/verification to this standard provides assurance of the carbon savings and access to the voluntary carbon market.

Find out more in the guidance on woodland creation, including more information on the Woodland Carbon Code and an overview of how to manage woodland once it's created.

## Contact the Forestry Commission (England)

You can get help developing maps or completing the application form from the Forestry Commission: [wcf@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:wcf@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)