

Detailed guide: Woodland Creation Planning Grant

Landowners, land managers and public bodies (excluding Crown bodies and non-departmental public bodies) can apply to the Forestry Commission to support large-scale, multi-purpose productive woodland creation under the Woodland Creation Planning Grant (WCPG). This is part of the Forestry Innovation Fund, along with the [Woodland Research and Development Grant \(RDG\)](#).

You can apply for £1,000 to complete a stage 1 checklist. This is a desk-based exercise to identify constraints and opportunities for proposed planting. If there's potential for woodland creation to take place on the site then you'll be offered a stage 2 payment. At stage 2, you can get £150 per hectare to produce a woodland creation design plan, minus the £1,000 offered at stage 1. You may get additional payments for survey work.

The total amount of funding is capped at £30,000 per project.

Find out if you're eligible

If you've already applied for Countryside Stewardship or the Woodland Carbon Fund, or submitted an EIA enquiry form to plant a new woodland, you're not eligible to apply for WCPG on that site.

You must plan to create woodland that is:

- 10 hectares or more, with potential to benefit the forestry sector in the long-term through production of timber or other wood products
- 10 hectares or more, with any additional blocks of at least 5 hectares

This means that if your application is for woodland less than 15 hectares in total, it must be a single woodland block. The Forestry Commission accepts applications that span multiple land holdings, though only for land in England.

You can include up to 20% of designed open space in your plan.

Tree species and forestry types

At least 70% of the species in your proposed woodland must be productive, including:

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

- GYC12 – other conifers

Biodiversity, habitats and the environment

Existing native, semi-natural habitats are likely to have a high value for biodiversity, and for landscape and visual interest. This will need to be compared with the value of new woodland. The Forestry Commission does not support the conversion of priority habitats, such as deep peat or active raised bogs.

Where the proposed planting is on semi-natural habitat, the presumption is that the planting will be restricted to native broadleaved species or retained as open ground adding to the forest mosaic.

Find out more about [woodland species and habitats protection](#).

How it works

The funding will support you to gather and analyse the information that you need to make sure your proposal takes into account:

- biodiversity
- landscape
- water
- historic environment
- local stakeholders

You'll have to develop a [UK Forestry Standard](#)-compliant plan for woodland creation that shows any constraints and opportunities.

If your land is already under an existing grant agreement then your woodland creation plan must cover the impact of tree planting on that agreement.

You'll receive payments in 2 stages and possibly extraordinary payments (see below).

Stage 1

You must not start work on the stage 1 checklist until you have a signed agreement with the Forestry Commission in place.

Stage 1 is a desk-based exercise to complete a checklist identifying constraints and opportunities for the site. If the Forestry Commission decide there's potential for planting woodland on the proposed site then you'll be offered a stage 2 payment.

Compile your data using a [WCPG stage 1 checklist](#)
(MS Word Document, 147KB)

and give supporting documents, including at least one map. You must identify

any constraints on the site.

Stage 2

You get a stage 2 payment for producing a woodland creation design plan by completing the template provided. You will find a list of required maps and plans on the first page of the template. This includes:

- a site context map
- a site appraisal plan
- a design concept plan and final design plan

Download the

[WCPG stage 2 template](#)

(MS Word Document, 230KB)

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The Forestry Commission makes the stage 2 payment on approval of your submitted stage 2 documentation.

Note: Forestry Commission approval of your woodland creation design plan does not provide approval to plant. If you wish to plant the woodland then it will still be subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 and consultation. [Find out more about EIAs.](#)

Extraordinary payments

If your stage 1 data indicates that a more detailed assessment is needed (such as a landscape and visual impact assessment, or an archaeological survey) then you can apply for an 'extraordinary payment'.

Complete the

[extraordinary payments application form](#)

(PDF, 137KB, 6 pages)

. You should submit this with a completed stage 1 checklist. If the stage 1 checklist indicates that there's potential for productive multi-purpose woodland at the site then you will get an offer of stage 2 funding, including any extraordinary payments where relevant.

State aid rules

The WCPG operates under the EU state aid de minimis regulation. This means you can receive a maximum of €200,000 (~£140,000) over 3 financial years. As part of the application process, you'll need to declare the amount of de minimis aid received during the current and previous 2 financial years, and consider how a WCPG will add to this amount. [Find out more about state aid.](#)

How to apply

You can apply year-round. The Forestry Commission aims to respond to your application within 10 working days.

You'll need the landowner's consent and signature if you don't own the land, and the Forestry Commission may ask to see your tenancy agreement to confirm your land management responsibilities.

In part 2 of the application form (below), you'll need to outline your planting proposals, and the Forestry Commission may contact you to finalise some details.

Submit an application form

Complete the [application form](#) and return it to the grant scheme administrator: WCPG@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

If you can't apply by email, send hard copies to:

Woodland Creation Planning Grant – WCPG

Forestry Commission

National Office, England

620 Bristol Business Park

Coldharbour Lane

Bristol, BS16 1EJ

Give consent if you appoint an agent

If you decide to appoint an agent to apply for funding on your behalf then 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.

Further funding

Once you have a completed and approved woodland creation design plan, you can use this to apply for:

- [Woodland Carbon Fund](#)
- [Countryside Stewardship: woodland support](#)
- HS2 Woodland Fund

Appeals

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

Contact the Forestry Commission (England)

Contact the Forestry Innovation Fund team for more information:

WCPG@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Forestry Research

The research agency of the Forestry Commission offer a range of services that will [help with pest and disease control](#), and also offer resources such as [publications, statistics and datasets](#).