

# Government launches new scheme to boost tree-planting

The government today (Monday 4 November) launched a £50 million scheme to help boost tree-planting rates in the fight against climate change.

The new Woodland Carbon Guarantee will encourage farmers and landowners to plant more trees and create new woodland in return for payments as those trees grow.

It gives land managers in England the long-term financial income they need to invest in carbon sequestration – the process by which trees lock up and store carbon from the atmosphere.

Successful participants will be offered the option to sell Woodland Carbon Units to the government over 35 years at a guaranteed price set by auction, providing new income for land managers who help businesses compensate for their carbon emissions.

Forestry and Climate Adaptation Minister Zac Goldsmith said:

Woodland creation is an excellent way to help combat the effects of climate change.

By supporting farmers and land managers who decide to invest in tree-planting, we are making sure we tackle climate change through nature-based solutions and – as part of our 25 Year Environment Plan – help leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee means that now – more than ever – there is no reason to delay planting trees.

Trees are a precious natural asset and, as a natural carbon sink, are a vital part of the fight against climate change. Woodlands and forests will play an important role in the UK's efforts to hit net zero carbon emissions by 2050, which is why the government is committed to planting 11 million trees by 2022. Funding for this scheme was announced by HM Treasury in the 2018 Autumn Budget.

By planting more trees and creating new woodland, land managers also provide a range of other ecosystem benefits such as preventing flood risk, soil conservation and boosting biodiversity.

Sir Harry Studholme, Chair of the Forestry Commission, said:

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee is an innovative new financial

incentive for the mitigation of carbon dioxide emissions. By underpinning the carbon price I hope it will give confidence to landowners and investors, and encourage the planting of the right kind of trees at a viable scale. I am delighted that the Forestry Commission has been able to work with Defra to launch the scheme.

Creating more woodland is vital in the fight against climate change, and the Guarantee provides land managers with long-term certainty of a guaranteed payment rate for carbon, which their trees lock up and store.

I urge all land managers and owners thinking about planting to look at the scheme and apply for the Woodland Carbon Guarantee ahead of the first auction which will be held early next year.

Government-appointed Tree Champion Sir William Worsley said:

Land managers across the country can support me in my role as Tree Champion by tapping into the environmental and economic benefits of planting more trees.

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee provides an exciting opportunity for land managers to be rewarded for enhancing the environment on a sustained long-term basis.

The role trees play in combating climate change cannot be underestimated and by applying to the Guarantee you will also play a crucial role in helping with the UK's efforts to hit Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050.

To apply for the Woodland Carbon Guarantee, land managers need to register their projects with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#) – the voluntary standard for UK woodland creation projects where claims are made about the carbon dioxide they sequester.

[Click here to apply for the Guarantee.](#)

Notes to editors:

- The Woodland Carbon Guarantee will offer successful participants a guarantee that the government will buy Woodland Carbon Units at an agreed price.
- The Woodland Carbon Guarantee is a long-term contract and recipients won't receive immediate payments. Instead, land managers will receive a guaranteed income for delivered carbon units at agreed dates over 35 years if they wish to sell carbon units to the government.
- The Woodland Carbon Guarantee can be used alongside other grants and funds available to plant new woodland as long as Additionality rules under the Woodland Carbon Code are met.
- The Woodland Carbon Code is the voluntary standard for UK woodland

creation projects which provides investor confidence in the claims are made about the carbon dioxide they sequester. Independent validation and verification to this standard provides assurance and clarity about the carbon savings of these sustainably managed woodlands. Businesses can buy Woodland Carbon Units to help compensate for their carbon emissions.

- The scheme applies to land in England.
- Further advice on how to register with the Woodland Carbon Code can be found at [www.woodlandcarboncode.org.uk/landowners-apply](http://www.woodlandcarboncode.org.uk/landowners-apply)

Forestry Commission Chief Executive Ian Gambles explains more about the Guarantee and why land managers should apply now:

We all know that urgent action to tackle climate change is needed.

The UK is the first major economy to legislate for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Trees are vital in the fight against climate change, but trees take time to grow and store carbon which is why we need to plant trees now if we want to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

The new Woodland Carbon Guarantee will give you, the land managers, the security you need to invest in carbon sequestration. The scheme will offer successful participants the option to sell Woodland Carbon Units to government at a guaranteed price every five or ten years up until 2055/56, which provides an additional long-term income from your woodland.

If you prefer, you can still choose to sell your CO<sub>2</sub> on the open market rather than to the government. This can cover income foregone from planting woodland on marginal agricultural land and provide long-term security when making the decision to invest in tree planting.

The guaranteed price for your CO<sub>2</sub> is agreed with the government through an online reverse auction. A series of auctions will take place every six months for up to five years, beginning in early 2020. In order to bid in the auction you will need to calculate how much money you need (per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>) in order to make your project financially viable and worthwhile.

If you are successful in the auction, the government will buy the CO<sub>2</sub> for the price that you bid – which is protected against inflation for the life of the contract. This guaranteed price and the income you will get from it will also help to reduce the traditional risks associated with establishing new woodlands, thereby making the process of converting areas of your land to woodland a more attractive prospect.

Before you apply for the Guarantee, you will need to have registered with the Woodland Carbon Code, which provides the tools and information required to plan your woodland and calculate the

amount of carbon that it will remove from the atmosphere. The woodland will also need to comply with the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard. Your Guarantee application may also be made alongside applications for woodland creation grants (for example, Countryside Stewardship, the Woodland Carbon Fund or the HS2 Woodland Fund) – provided that any other contracts were signed after 29 October 2018.

There is no reason to delay applying for the Guarantee and plant trees now: the Guarantee provides you with long term certainty of a guaranteed payment rate for carbon which your trees lock up and store. This, in addition to being able to apply for the Guarantee alongside other woodland creation grants, makes planting new woodland a really attractive option for both farmers and land managers. I strongly encourage you to apply now ahead of the first auction which is being held early next year.

To apply for the Guarantee, you will need to submit an application form providing a few basic details for your proposed woodland creation project including the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that it will remove from the atmosphere.