

Press release: £13 million fund to increase England's woodland

A £13 million fund to help landowners plant more trees to protect wildlife, boost the timber sector and reduce flood risk will soon open for applications, Forestry Minister Thérèse Coffey confirmed today.

Farmers, foresters and land managers across the UK will be able to apply for up to £6,800 per hectare to plant, weed and protect more trees when application forms for the next round of the government's Woodland Creation grant are made available in September.

The fund – part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme – will help plant more than 3 million trees, creating 1,900 hectares of new woodland and contributing to the government's ambition to plant 11 million trees, with a further one million in towns and cities.

Confirmation of the next round of funding came as Forestry Minister Thérèse Coffey met with some of the UK's leading forestry companies today to discuss the opportunities for the sector when we leave the EU.

Announcing the next round of funding, Forestry Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Our forests and woodlands are vital for providing timber, improving the environment and protecting our wildlife.

Today's announcement demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to the forestry sector and to biodiversity, which afforestation delivers. I hope to see as many applications as possible so this important industry can continue to thrive.

Guidance and application forms will be available in September, with the application window opening in January 2018.

A range of grants are available to support the creation of new woodland and sustainable woodland management, with Forestry Commission online advice available on the application process.

Notes to editors

- The fund opens in January 2018 and the application forms and guidance will be available for download in September.
 - Under the grant annual maintenance payments are available for 10 years.
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News story: New watchdog to close money laundering and terrorist financing loopholes

[OPBAS](#) marks the latest step in the government's crackdown on money laundering and terrorist financing, working in partnership with the private sector to tackle these threats.

[Respond](#) to the call for further information on the Anti-money laundering supervisory regime.

The watchdog will raise standards across the supervisory regime, and ensure supervisors and law enforcement work together more effectively to help identify and tackle criminals.

There are 25 AML supervisors in the UK, 22 of which are accountancy, estate agents and legal services providers' professional bodies. These professional bodies bring substantial benefits to the regime, but having several organisations supervising the same sectors risks inconsistencies which criminals may look to exploit. Research shows that serious and organised crime costs the UK at least £24 billion a year.

OPBAS will work with those professional body AML supervisors to help ensure consistently high standards of supervision, with resources focused on the greatest risks whilst minimising unnecessary burdens on the vast majority of legitimate businesses.

It builds on the 2017 Money Laundering Regulations (MLRs) that took effect last month, and set the standards that AML supervisors must meet.

OPBAS will have powers to help and ensure professional body AML supervisors meet those standards. These include the powers to publicly censure or recommend Treasury remove professional bodies that do not comply with their requirements in the MLRs.

There will be complementary safeguards so that professional bodies have opportunities to engage with OPBAS before any penalty is issued and, if necessary, to appeal a decision.

The Economic Secretary, Stephen Barclay, said:

The government is delivering the biggest reforms in a decade to tackle money laundering and terrorist financing.

The new watchdog will work closely with private sector, strengthening our partnership to ensure the UK remains a global

leader in the fight against corruption.

We are making sure that businesses do not have to shoulder unnecessary burdens while taking the vital steps to disrupt and punish criminals.

[News story: FCO launches its Annual Human Rights report for 2016](#)

Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy puts human rights centre stage of foreign policy.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has published its [2016 Annual Human Rights Report](#). The report covers the period from January to December 2016 and for the first time includes a dedicated section on modern slavery – a key UK Government priority.

This report focuses on how the Government is working to protect and promote human rights around the world. It also sets out our 30 Human Rights Priority Countries (HRPCs).

The key themes include:

- modern slavery;
- rights of women and girls;
- torture and the death penalty;
- LGBT rights;
- and the increasing pressure faced by civil society organisations.

The Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, said:

In too many countries across the world, human rights and rule of law are neither respected nor valued as they should be.

Standing up for human rights is not only the right thing; it also helps to create a safer, more prosperous and progressive world.

This report documents the serious concerns we have about the human rights situations in a range of countries and also highlights our work protecting and promoting the value of universal rights and democracy.

Safeguarding, promoting and defending human rights internationally is an

important UK priority and our Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy supports crucial frontline work.

British diplomats put human rights at the heart of everything they do, working in partnership with foreign governments and civil society – particularly in our 30 HRPCs – to promote safer, more inclusive, prosperous societies.

Video available [here](#)

Further information

News story: Sentinel-5 Precursor satellite ready for launch

Sentinel-5 Precursor, part of a joint European Commission–ESA undertaking which aims to supply geo-information products and services based on the use of data from space, is set to leave Airbus’s site in Stevenage.

The satellite will provide essential atmospheric chemistry data to the Copernicus programme before the Sentinel-5 instrument becomes operational in 2021 on the MetOp Second Generation satellite.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The UK-built Sentinel-5 Precursor satellite and the success of the Copernicus Programme demonstrates what we can achieve through collaboration with our European partners and the UK’s vital role in the programme thanks to our earth observation expertise.

We’ve been clear that we want our companies and universities to continue participating in key EU space programmes, and through our Industrial Strategy and ongoing investment in the UK space sector, we are ensuring we have the infrastructure and skills in place to support our ambition to capture 10% of the global space market by 2030.

Data from the Sentinel satellites benefits the UK public sector in areas such as emergency response or flooding; farming and environmental management; air quality; marine planning and fisheries. The same data also enables commercial applications that help our wider economy function more efficiently and effectively, growing our space sector at the same time.

Dr Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

The whole of the Copernicus programme is a fantastic success for the UK. It has a global vision, providing near real-time measurements of Earth on an unprecedented scale.

Copernicus has been a major work programme for UK space technology companies, building and testing instruments and satellites. This industrial contribution helps us maintain and expand UK skills and capability, but also strengthens the whole programme, as ESA can rely on UK expertise to make sure these 'state of the art' spacecraft have the best and brightest of Europe's space sector behind them.

Sentinel-5 Precursor features the TROPOMI (TROPOspheric Monitoring Instrument) instrument, developed by Airbus DS Netherlands for the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Netherlands Space Office. TROPOMI will measure ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, methane and other atmospheric pollutants at a higher resolution than previous instruments. Having more accurate atmospheric data will enable improved climate models and pollutant tracking and forecasting.

Colin Paynter, Managing Director of Airbus Defence and Space in the UK, said:

For Sentinel-5 Precursor we used the commercially successful AstroBus platform, enabling us to meet challenging delivery and cost efficiency targets. This mission will give Europe a new way to measure global pollution levels in much greater detail.

Sentinel-5 Precursor is due for launch on a Rokot rocket from Plesetsk Cosmodrome, Russia, in September 2017.

[News story: ASLEF meeting constructive, strikes remain suspended](#)

Strikes remain suspended after Transport Secretary holds constructive talks with ASLEF union.

Planned strike action by ASLEF members on Southern Rail remains suspended after the Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, held constructive talks with

the union. The talks were aimed at re-starting the negotiations between the company and the union.

The union called off strikes on Southern Rail on 1, 2 and 4 August 2017 and lifted a ban on overtime and rest day working to meet the Transport Secretary.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We're doing everything we can to resolve the situation on Southern and get passengers the high quality rail services that they deserve.

I was pleased to have a constructive meeting with ASLEF today and I hope it paves the way for the reopening of negotiations between the union and Southern so we can sort out this situation and get services back to normal for passengers.