

Your reference: **FOI request (Case Ref: RS03448)**

Our reference: **DAERA/26-91**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
For Robin Swann MP  
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Tel:  
Email: [forest.regulation@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:forest.regulation@daera-ni.gov.uk)

2 March 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

I refer to your request for information received by the Department on 3 February 2026 that sought information about:

- (i) The number of trees felled by request of your Department for the past 5 years in South Antrim (Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area).
- (ii) The reason for the request to fell trees.
- (iii) Whether your Department has provided provision for replanting within South Antrim (Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area).

In relation to request (i) and (ii):

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our records I have established that the information you requested is not held by the Department. (i.e. the Department did not issue any notices/requests to fell trees).

However, as part of normal sustainable forest management, Forest Service harvests and reestablished its own woodlands. Also, on occasion some roadside trees are

felled due to storm damage, or to reduce risk. Forest Service issue felling licences to applicants that submit a felling and regeneration plan that evidences sustainable forest management.

In relation to request (iii):

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds the information you requested which is attached as Annex 1. Also, I can inform you that there were four, successful, applications under the Woodland Investment Grant – restocking.

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department.

If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing [daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk) or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE, SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,



**Forest Service**

**Annex 1 - Woodland Investment Grant - Information Booklet 2025**

# Woodland Investment Grant (Restocking) Information Booklet 2025



*Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*



An Agency within the Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

Gníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne  
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Cnóthaí Tuaithe

An Agency w<sup>i</sup>in the Department o  
Fairmin, Environment o  
an' Kintra Matthers

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**  
We invest in people Standard

If you require assistance to apply for this grant scheme, the Grants team will be pleased to help.

The Grants team can be contacted using the details below

Telephone 028 6634 3103

Email [grants.forests@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:grants.forests@daera-ni.gov.uk)

# Woodland Investment Grant - Information Booklet

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# 1. Introduction

The specific Forestry Grant Schemes outlined in this booklet are administered by the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs.

## Forest Policy

The Northern Ireland Forestry Strategy (DARD 2006) re-stated forest policy as:

- A steady expansion of tree cover to increase the many diverse benefits that forests provide; and
- The sustainable management of existing woods and forests.

The [Forestry Act 2010](#) gave the Department modern powers to implement the policy. The Explanatory Notes to the Act explain that modern forestry has developed from policies intended to create a strategic reserve of timber and to maintain a timber supply to something that is “*a complex and multi-functional enterprise, with increasing economic, social and environmental purposes and benefits*”, in which “*the modern Forest Service must balance these diverse and sometimes competing functions in an integrated and balanced way, and strive to maximise the benefit of the public estate*”. The Act placed a general duty on the Department to promote forestry, so that the traditional role of developing afforestation, the supply of timber, and the maintenance of growing trees which was the emphasis of the 1953 Act was extended to include protection of the environment, biodiversity, climate change and social and recreational use.

The delivery of forest policy is underpinned by the [UK Forestry Standard](#) (UKFS) which describes the Governments’ approach to sustainable forest management. Therefore, all forestry work undertaken through any of the

Forestry Grant Schemes and the subsequent management of grant aided woodlands must meet the requirements of the UKFS and its supporting guidelines.

## **Forestry Grant Schemes**

Support for woodland expansion and the management of existing woodland is designed to provide both woodland owners and the general public with a wide range benefit obtained from ecosystems. These services include social/health benefits related to public access to forests, particularly those close to settlements; environmental benefits such as carbon capture (sequestration), protection and conservation of biodiversity, improved water quality and flood mitigation; and, economic benefits such as timber/wood production and tourism businesses. Sufficient funding has been allocated to create up to 1,800 hectares of new woodland and sustain approximately 4,000 hectares of woodland created under previous programmes. This will make a small but positive contribution towards the aim of the Forestry Strategy to achieve 12% woodland area by the middle of this century.

## 2. Legal basis

The legal basis for the Forestry Grant Schemes is Section 17 of the Agriculture Act 2020 which enables the Department to continue to offer financial assistance to existing programmes / schemes covered within the NIRDP, under EU retained framework and are regulated by Commission Regulation (EU) No.1305/2013, Articles 21-22, 24-26 and under Measure 8. Funding is provided to the maximum permitted under the Commission regulation.

The Forestry Grant Schemes have been notified to the European Commission under Commission Regulation (EU) No. 702/2014 declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Articles 32, 34, 35 of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 702/2014 will be utilised by the Forestry Grant Schemes and are granted subject to assessment against the detailed conditions of the Regulation and will not exceed the €7.5 million limit per investment project.

Specific State Aid requirements for each scheme are specified in the State Aid section at the back of this Information Booklet.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/2010/10/section/2/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/2010/10/section/2/enacted)

### 3. How to Apply

To apply for the Woodland Investment Grant, applicants must complete an application form which can be obtained from Grants Branch (see Annex 1 for contact details) or downloaded from the [Forestry Grants Section of the DAERA website](#).

Before completing an application form you should familiarise yourself with this Information Booklet, the [State Aid Booklet](#) and any Supplementary Scheme Information. You should fill in the application form together with any supplementary documentation, giving all the necessary information requested, and submit it to Grants Branch before any specified scheme specific deadline. You must **not** start any operations until you receive a Final Letter of Offer and confirmation that we have received your completed terms and conditions together with any other requested supporting documentation. This applies to all grant applications.

An application may be made by the owner (or owners) of the land or by a tenant, provided that all the parties concerned are specified and named in the application and have signed the declaration. All applications require a DAERA Business ID Number. If you do not have a DAERA Business ID Number you can apply for one by contacting your local [DAERA Direct office](#).

A Forest Management Plan must accompany your application. These plans state the objectives of management together with details of forestry proposals over the next 5 years and outlines intentions over a minimum total period of 10 years. Forest Management Plan templates are available to download from the [Forestry Grants Section of the DAERA website](#).

## 4. Restocking Grant

### Introduction

This grant supports sustainable forest management including the improvement of the environmental value of woodlands and building resilience to climate change through restocking.

### Eligibility

Grants are available for forest owners, including:

- Farmers
- Landowners and estate owners
- Charitable organisations
- Local Council

Government bodies and agencies are not eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Schemes. The holder (manager) of land owned by Government departments and agencies can apply for the Woodland Investment Grant provided the manager is constituted as a private body, charitable organisation or Council.

Support may be made available for:

- Restructuring woodland - to improve the ecological and environmental value of woodlands through the regeneration of forests by replanting. The aim is to encourage species diversity and improve the resilience of forests to climate change;

Eligible costs may include:

- Support will be for the costs of labour and materials (where relevant) for a range of forestry operations such as costs for plants and planting/regeneration.

General maintenance and running costs will not be supported.

## **Criteria**

All proposals must comply with the minimum environmental requirements of the UK Forestry Standard and will be conditional on providing a Forest Management Plan.

All plans must be in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Forest Management as defined by the UK Forestry Standard and shall be valid for a period of five years or more. As a minimum, the Forest Management Plan must cover the area for which grant aid is being sought

As a first step, projects will be required to meet all the 'eligibility criteria' and as a second step projects will be ranked using selection criteria that will promote maximum benefit to increase resilience to climate change and enhance public amenity. The selection process may be competitive, and applications will be appraised against one another to ensure those with highest value added will be selected for support.

## **Restocking Option**

The Restocking Option supports restructuring to improve the ecological and environmental value of woodlands through the re-establishment of forests by replanting. The aim is to encourage species diversity and improve the resilience of forests to climate change. All applications must demonstrate how the redesign improves the ecological and environmental value of the woodland and must be accompanied by a Forest Management Plan.

Support will be provided at a rate of £600 per hectare, the minimum application area to be replanted is 1 hectare and the minimum block area must be 0.2 hectares. Proposals must result in the area replanted having a species composition that meets the UK Forestry Standard.

## **Species Diversity Requirements**

To meet the UK Forestry Standard, each application must provide evidence of meeting the following block of proposed afforestation must have the following proportions by block area –

- No more than 65% of the area allocated to a single species
- In blocks of 10ha and more at least 10% open space (this may be relaxed providing the adjacent land uses provide landscape and habitat diversity)
- 10% other species or ground managed for environmental objectives.
- 5% native broadleaved trees or shrubs
- You may include up to a maximum of 20% open space in your proposal.

If your woodland is larger than the area where grant aid is being applied for you may describe it within your Forest Management Plan to provide evidence of meeting UKFS species diversity requirements.

The application must take account of the practice guide: [Adapting forest and woodland management to the changing climate](#).

## **Period of Commitment and withdrawing from the Woodland Investment Grant**

The Woodland Investment Grant is paid as part of an agreement under which the woodland owner undertakes to maintain the woodland in accordance with good forestry practice and must not fell the woodland for a minimum of 20 years. However, the woodland owner will be allowed to thin the woodland in accordance with normal silvicultural practice.

If the woodland owner wishes to withdraw from this scheme and does not wish to transfer the agreement to a new occupier, we may recover

grant payments already made with interest. We will not normally recover payments if the woodland continues in existence or if the original agreement holder has died or if there are other exceptional circumstances.

## 5. Claiming Forestry Grant Schemes

### Submitting Your Claim

You must provide evidence of expenditure to support your claim. All the schemes claim forms require you to submit -

- original itemised invoices,
- a copy of cheque(s) or document of equivalent standing and
- Beneficiaries bank statements proving payment to your suppliers.

Woodland Investment Grant – Restocking establishment grant claims must include a map showing the location of open space and main species within your application area. To meet this requirement please note that you must submit an accurate map or GPS survey showing these areas following completion of your planting.

### Late applications

An application will be considered 'late' if it is received by the Department after the specified closing date. In this case penalties apply, and your payment will be reduced. You will be given details as part of your agreement. The EU Regulations allow for us to consider cases of *force majeure*<sup>1</sup> exceptional circumstances as a reason for not

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<sup>1</sup> *Force majeure* is defined in section 8.

submitting or amending your application on time.

## **Inspections**

As part of our claims administration processes, Forest Service Inspectors will inspect a proportion of sites claimed for a Forestry Grant Scheme as required by European Union regulation.

Inspections are based on a combination of:

- Random selection
- Risk selection to ensure we inspect the more complex or high value costs
- Targeted selection to ensure we carry out inspections on all the grants we offer

Forestry Grant Scheme inspections can take place at any time of year once your forestry claim has been submitted.

Inspections of claims for the Woodland Investment Grant will result in either a recommendation for payment to be made or feedback to you about what remedial work is required, and when it is required to be completed to meet the minimum standards. False or misleading claims will be subject to a Penalty System which may result in reductions and exclusions being applied to your claim.

As soon as we have completed the inspection, we will contact you if you have not met the minimum standards in which case, we will tell you of the implications and future processes.

We aim to make payment within 8 to 12 weeks of receiving your fully completed claim form.

Under European Regulation, we must check at least five per cent of the Forestry Grant Scheme claims each year and all schemes are subject to inspection.

### **What we will look for**

Forest Service inspectors will check the information you provided in your application and claim for payment.

They will also make sure you are meeting the required Forestry Grant Scheme eligibility requirements incorporating EU regulatory requirements and demonstrating compliance with the UK Forestry Standard.

For example, this will involve:

- checking that the boundaries you have provided for the area of land you are claiming against are correct
- checking that the work has been implemented to the minimum standard required and to the quantity<sup>2</sup> agreed
- All contract terms and conditions are being adhered to

If you fail part or all of your inspection, we will refer to this as a breach and may reduce your funding by the application of a Penalty System. Any reduction in payments will be assessed depending on how serious the breach is.

Our inspections underpin the correct payment of money Therefore, it's very important that you keep us up to date with any changes to your land.

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<sup>2</sup> Quantity refers to unit amounts and area measurements

## **6. Death of Agreement Holder & Transfer of Ownership**

Once an application is received the Department cannot permit the applicant to transfer a letter of offer to another landowner or tenant either in part or as a whole project.

On the death of an agreement holder the executors should notify the Department and the Forestry Grant Scheme agreement will be terminated. A successor e.g., through inheritance may, within 12 months of the termination of occupation by the previous occupier apply in writing to Forest Service to transfer the original agreement and following the transfer process may assume the position of the original applicant. On completion and return of this form the new owner assumes all the rights, liabilities and obligations in place of the original applicant and his successors. This also applies to subsequent changes of ownership accordingly.

A change of ownership e.g., through sale of land between the date when an application for payment is approved and the date of final payment or period of commitment must be reported to the Forest Service in writing within 12 months from the date of transfer by the original applicant.

A new occupier may, within 12 months of the termination of occupation by the previous occupier apply in writing to Forest Service to transfer the original agreement and following the transfer process may assume the position of the original applicant. On completion and return of this form the new owner assumes all the rights, liabilities and obligations in place of the original applicant and his successors. This also applies to

subsequent changes of ownership accordingly.

Following a satisfactory site inspection carried out by a Forest Service Inspector, a Transfer of Application form (issued by Forest Service) must be completed and returned along with a solicitor's letter confirming the changes, to the Forest Service, by the new owner before he can be eligible to receive any instalment of the grant under the original application.

In the event of a sale or other disposition, the original applicant (and his/her successors) should consider seeking appropriate indemnities to cover their continuing obligations until the new owner completes the Transfer of Application form (and thereby assumes the position of the original applicant from that date).

You should also be aware that conversion of woodland to another type of land use (Deforestation) is subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (as amended). Deforestation may constitute a relevant project, as it might have a significant effect on the environment, and as such, consent for the work is required from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Forest Service.

## **7. Relationship with Other DAERA Area Based Schemes**

### **Dual Funding**

DAERA is required to exclude dual funding under EU Regulations. Forest Service therefore cannot pay grant if the aims of proposed woodland operations conflicts with, or duplicate, any previous public funding such as Agri-Environment Schemes.

If you have had an application approved under one of the Agri-Environment Schemes you should discuss the proposed forestry planting with your local agriculture office at an early stage to ensure that the planting does not conflict with the objectives of these Schemes or constitute dual funding.

### **Cross Compliance**

The term cross-compliance refers to the requirement for farmers to comply with a set of Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and to keep their land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) in order to qualify for payments under the Forestry Grant Schemes.

There are two aspects to Cross-Compliance. The first of these is compliance with specific articles contained within 13 European regulatory requirements covering the environment, climate change, public health, animal health, plant health and animal welfare. These are known as the Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs).

The second aspect of Cross-Compliance is a requirement that all those in receipt of payments in respect of the area-based schemes maintain all their land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC).

The Northern Ireland GAEC Measures have been developed from a framework set out by the European Commission to address the following issues:

- **Protection and management of water** - protect water against pollution and run-off, and manage the use of water.
- **Protection of soil and carbon stock** – minimum soil cover, prevention of erosion and maintenance of soil organic matter levels.
- **Minimum level of maintenance** - retention of landscape features and avoiding the deterioration of habitats.

All applicants to Forestry Grant Schemes must meet the Northern Ireland Cross Compliance conditions in order to qualify for full payments. The conditions are designed to promote sustainable agricultural practices and reflect a number of environmental and other objectives. They are good farm management practices and encourage responsible stewardship of the land. All European Union member states have to implement Cross-Compliance.

A full version of the Cross-Compliance standards, including advice on how to meet them and what an inspector will be looking for during inspection, together with a summary version are published on the DAERA website at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/cross-compliance>

A breach of these requirements may lead to a partial or complete withholding of payments in respect of the above schemes. **It is important to remember that you are still bound by all other environmental and animal health and welfare laws.** You may still be prosecuted in the criminal courts for breaching the Cross-Compliance standards, if the breach is a criminal offence.

## **General Cross-Compliance Information**

Cross-Compliance applies to all land within an agricultural holding for the full 12 calendar months. This includes permanently held land (either owned or under an agricultural tenancy), common land, shared grazing and land taken in conacre. In addition, if you receive funding under a Forestry Grant Scheme, Cross-Compliance applies to the land under the Forestry Grant Scheme agreement. Cross-Compliance also applies to the agricultural activity undertaken by the beneficiaries of the schemes listed at the start of the section.

You should note that the Cross-Compliance rules vary across England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. Where your holding crosses a border, you may have to make different arrangements on each side of the border. You should therefore obtain copies of all relevant guidance that applies to your holding.

## **8. Force Majeure**

Force majeure or exceptional circumstances is defined as ‘unusual circumstances, outside the control of the trader, the consequences of which, in spite of the exercise of all due care, could not have been avoided except at the cost of excessive sacrifice’. A landowner may experience a force majeure incident or exceptional circumstance that impacts on his ability to meet the eligibility criteria for any of the Forestry Grant Schemes covered in this booklet. Cases of force majeure are determined against their particular circumstances and on an individual basis, for example, your woodland may have been made ineligible following a gorse/heath fire or affected by a new tree disease that you could not prevent.

You should always notify the Department at the earliest possible opportunity of any force majeure situation that renders a portion of woodland out of use, even if only for a short time.

So, if for reasons of force majeure or exceptional circumstances some, or all, of your land is not available to you, or is ineligible for a Forestry Grant Scheme, or any other area-based scheme, at any time during the year, you should tell us when you submit your claim or within fifteen working days of the date of being in a position to do so. If you do not, and we later discover that the land was taken out of woodland at any time during the year, we may consider that there is an over-declaration of land and apply a penalty to your claim.

For us to consider force majeure or exceptional circumstances, the woodland must be unavailable to you on 15 May in the scheme year or ineligible for a Forestry Grant Scheme for at least some part of the calendar year. The land must be able to be returned to woodland use or become eligible for a Forestry Grant Scheme. You must provide clear documentation indicating when the land is likely to come back into woodland use.

If your land is ineligible for a Forestry Grant Scheme for the whole year, and is removed permanently from woodland use, we will not consider force majeure or exceptional circumstances.

### **Notifying a Force Majeure event to Forest Service**

Should you consider force majeure applies to your application because of any unforeseen event you should contact Grants Branch (full address at Annex 3) immediately for advice. You should be aware that, for us to consider a case of force majeure or exceptional circumstances, we need to be told in writing **within 15 days of the date of you being in a position to do so.** When you tell us of a 'force majeure' you will be

asked to complete an FML1 application form<sup>3</sup>. We will look at each request individually and where we agree that force majeure or exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated, we will not normally apply penalties. You will have to prove that, despite taking all reasonable measures to counteract their effects, the force majeure or exceptional circumstances prevented you from meeting your obligations. You must be able to provide information, supported by documentary evidence, of the steps you have taken to prevent or lessen the effect of these circumstances. It is important that you do not wait until the 'Review of Decisions' stage to notify the Department of force majeure or exceptional circumstances, as this will normally be considered to be outside the 15 working day notification period.

## **9. Review of Decisions**

Under the Review of Decisions procedure, applicants have a right to request a review of a decision made by the Department in relation to their Forestry Grant Scheme. The review process is intended to provide applicants with a fair, impartial and transparent assessment of the Department's decision against the framework of EU and National Regulations and Scheme Rules. The aim of the procedure is to ensure the decision made is correct and in line with the appropriate Regulations and Scheme rules.

Detailed information on the Review of Decisions process can be found in the "Review of Decisions Procedures" (2024) which can be viewed on the DAERA website<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/fml1-force-majeure-and-exceptional-circumstances>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/review-decisions-2024>

## 10. Environmental Standards & Regulation

### Introduction

Environmental safeguards are an essential component of the Forestry Grant Schemes and are enforced through application approval and monitoring procedures. On receipt, all applications are assessed to ensure they meet the environmental standards set out in the UK Forestry Standard and the associated guidelines. Your application must also be compliant with Article 6 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 807/2014 which includes the requirement that species selection must consist of:

(i) the exclusive planting of ecologically adapted species and/or species resilient to climate change in the bio- geographical area concerned, which have not been found, through an assessment of impacts, to threaten biodiversity and ecosystem services, or to have a negative impact on human health.

(ii) a mix of tree species which includes either:

- at least 10 % of broadleaved trees by area, or
- a minimum of three tree species or varieties, with the least abundant making up at least 10% of the area.

### People

Consideration should be given to involving people in the development of forestry proposals who have a recognisable interest in the proposal or its outcomes. Interested people will include local councils, those who live close to the proposal, neighbouring landowners<sup>5</sup>, where legal rights including rights of way and any sporting rights are impacted and people

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<sup>5</sup> Land which directly adjoins the application site or which would adjoin it but for an entry or a road less than 20m in width [DOE Practice Note 14].

who enjoy traditional and cultural uses of the land. To prevent encroachment and isolation, the blocking of light and curtailment of views in relation to dwellings, associated buildings, and roofed farm buildings there are minimum setback distances which are measured using the Departments Geographic Information System.

Setback is most critical when a building is [or will be] surrounded by forest on two or more sides. Consider retaining locally important views from the dwelling by designing open spaces<sup>6</sup> as part of the forest design.

Minimum setback distances are:

- 60 metres minimum setback from all dwellings.
  - Where there is a written agreement from the occupier submitted at the time of the application a 30 metre minimum setback will be accepted.
- 10 metres minimum setback from all other permanent roofed buildings
- No setback is required for temporary buildings e.g timber sheds or kennels.

### **Special Protection Areas and Special areas of Conservation**

A European network of wildlife sites known as 'Natura 2000' was established under the Habitats Directive. This network consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required if any part of the project area is considered to have a potential impact on a Natura 2000 Site by being located within, adjacent or upstream to a European Site. It describes the process of gathering information

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<sup>6</sup> A maximum of 20% open space is permitted within the woodland. Refer to Annex 1 - Block Definition

and submitting it to a competent authority (Forest Service) for consideration and evaluation.

### **Areas of Special Scientific Interest**

The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 provides protection for ASSIs which represent the best of our wildlife and geological sites.

Landowners are obliged to notify the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) of potentially harmful operations planned to take place within an ASSI. Landowners must seek consent from Conservation, Designations and Protection (CDP), NIEA in advance of submitting an application to Forest Service. For access to NIEA's ASSI online consent service see link: <https://www2.daera-ni.gov.uk/aca> This pre-application work will help streamline the Small Woodland Grant Scheme application assessment may also prevent the application from being rejected. You can view the protected areas on the following <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer>

### **Biodiversity features**

Important biodiversity features such as watercourses, lakes, hedgerows and unimproved species rich grasslands may not always be designated. Project proposals must take biodiversity and cultural features into consideration and adherence to the UK Forestry Standard and the associated guidelines will be a pre-requisite for any application.

### **Historic monuments**

Landowners have a statutory obligation under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 to protect any scheduled ancient monuments and historic buildings within the site boundary. Where you believe intended works may directly impact a scheduled monument you must contact NIEA- Historic Environment Division before submitting an

application. Similar arrangements apply to unscheduled sites where their location has been identified. You can view historic environment features on the Department for Communities website <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/services/historic-environment-map-viewer>

### **Felling Licences**

Owners of private woodlands of 0.2 hectares or more may require a licence to fell trees. A licence will only be issued if an approved felling management plan includes a proposal to re-establish the woodland. Further information may be obtained from the Forest Service website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/felling-licences>

### **Powerlines**

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIE Networks) owns the electricity transmission and distribution network in Northern Ireland and their approach taken towards woodlands is explained on their website <https://www.nienetworks.co.uk/help-advice/wayleaves/wayleaves>

Any application for funding must show how the woodland proposal demonstrates sustainable forest management. If there is a power line within your site or sufficiently close to your boundary where newly planted trees could have a potential impact on the line, you must inform Northern Ireland Electricity of your plans in writing before submitting an application. This allows applicants to take account of future line clearance requirements within their proposal and design planting which is sustainable e.g. using open ground where appropriate or excluding areas from the scheme and continuing to farm them. Where line clearance requirements conflict with sustainable forest management, support is not available.

**You are advised to contact NIE Networks as early as possible because a period of four weeks is normally required to process a request for a wayleave agreement.** NIE Networks can be contacted on 03457 643 643 and other contact details are given in the link below

<http://www.nienetworks.co.uk/Contact-Us>

## 11. State Aid Details

This information book should be read in conjunction with the Forestry Grant Schemes State Aid Information Booklet published on the DAERA website which provides full and detailed information for all schemes:

- Woodland Investment Grant
  - State Aid Reference – SA. 110534 State Aid

### **Publication and Information (Article 9 of Commission Regulation (EU) 651/2013**

From 1 July 2016 information on each individual award exceeding €500,000 will be published on a comprehensive State aid website.

### **De Minimis Aid**

Where aid is not paid in accordance with the Woodland Investment Grant (Northern Ireland) 2015 – [Commission Reference Number to be added once available] it will be paid in accordance with de minimis Regulation (EU) 1407/2013 [Official Journal, L 352, pages 1-8 , 24.12.2013

## 12. References

- Adapting forest and woodland management to the changing climate
  - <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/climate-change-adaptation/adapting-forest-and-woodland-management-to-the-changing-climate/>
- Forestry Act (Northern Ireland) 2010
  - [www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2010/10/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2010/10/contents)
- Northern Ireland Forestry
  - <http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-forestry-strategy-sustainable-growth> ISBN 1 85527 859 6
  - The UK Forestry Standard, Government's approach to sustainable forestry (Forest Commission, Forest Service, 5th Edition 2023). The UK Forestry Standard (forestresearch.gov.uk): ISBN: 978-1-83915-021-0
- UK Plant Health Risk Register
  - [UK Plant Health Risk Register](#)
- Guidance on Road Classification and the Primary Route Network
  - [Guidance on road classification and the primary route network - GOV.UK](#)

## **Annex 1 – Forest Service Headquarters**

**Public office opening hours are 9.00 am – 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm each working day, except where changes are notified.**

The Forest Service customer number is 028 6634 3103

Forest Service Headquarters

Grants Branch

Inishkeen House

Killyhevlin

Enniskillen

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BT74 4EJ

Email; [grants.forests@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:grants.forests@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**If you have a disability which impairs you applying for a planting grant, the staff listed above would be pleased to assist, explaining the contents of the Information Booklet and filling in an Application Form.**

## Annex 2 - Privacy Notice (DAERA)

The Department (DAERA) takes data protection, freedom of information and environmental information issues seriously. It takes care to ensure that any personal information received from you is dealt with in a way which complies with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (2016). This means that any personal information you supply will be processed principally for the purpose for which it has been provided. However, the Department is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided for this purpose.

A full copy of the DAERA Privacy Statement can be found here on the Departments website <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-privacy-statement>

DAERA, Forest Service: February 2025

