

Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme

Location

Country: Ireland

Scale: national

Region: whole country

Compensated /improved ecosystem services

- Habitat services
- Provisioning services – raw materials

Management

The Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme incorporates 12 separate Grant and Premium Categories (GPCs), available to establish forest ('First Grant' plus a fencing allocation) and to maintain it for the first four years ('Second Grant'). Forestry grants are available from the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) under the Forestry Programme 2014-2020. DAFM sets the standards and approves grant and premium payments.

Establishment grants generally cover all of the costs associated with the establishment and early management of a forest. The rate of afforestation grant and annual forest premium depends on the quality of the land and the type of tree species it can grow.

The First Grant provides support for operations such as ground preparation, drainage, fencing, planting, forester fees and is payable following planting, subject to adherence to scheme conditions and various environmental guidelines.

The Second Grant is paid four years after planting, once the trees have become fully established and are free-growing. This payment covers maintenance works that will often be required (e.g. vegetation management, the replacement of failures).

Applicants are also entitled to an Afforestation Premium. This annual forestry payment depends on the type of tree planted (higher rates for broadleaves) and the area planted (planting more than ten hectares attracts a higher rate). The Afforestation Premium is usually paid for a period of 15 years. The minimum area to be eligible is 0.1 hectare if the land is suitable for broadleaves. The minimum area for conifers is 1 hectare.

GPCs 1 to 8 fund the establishment of a 'conventional' broadleaf or conifer forest with the main objective of sustainable commercial timber production. Of these, GPCs 5 to 8 provide options for broadleaf planting, depending on the species selected. Options include species such as oak, beech, sycamore, alder and birch.

The establishment of a native woodland is supported by GPCs 9 and 10, depending on the most appropriate woodland type.

GPC 11 supports the establishment of agroforestry: this is the production of high value timber combined with agricultural activities in the same field such as sheep grazing or silage production.

The Forestry for Fibre option (GPC 12) supports the growing of eucalyptus and poplar to produce woody biomass (rather than more valuable sawlog) over a short period of time (e.g. 10 to 15 years).

An application for Technical Approval under the Afforestation Scheme must be made by the applicant and a registered forester following a joint site visit. Once a 'Technical Approval' is granted, the owner and forester will need to activate it by requesting a 'Financial Approval' from the Forest Service (DAFM). Establishment operations can begin only once this subsequent Financial Approval has been obtained.

Stakeholders

Sellers or service providers:

Applicants for Technical Approval must be the owner, lease holder or joint manager of the land

Buyers and beneficiaries of services:

Forest Service (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

Knowledge providers:

- Teagasc provides independent advice and training to all private landowners. Teagasc should be the first port of call for all landowners thinking of planting land.
- Registered Foresters are private forestry companies registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine providing commercial establishment and management,
- COFORD co-ordinates forestry research in Ireland

Timeline

Establishment year: 2014

Time horizon: medium term

Status of PES: active scheme

Availability of economic data

Establishment Grant Rates (€/ha)

Grant and Premium Category (GPC)	First Grant (€/ha)	Second Grant (€/ha)	Fencing allocation 140m/ha	Alternative fencing allocation 100m/ha	Total Grant available (€/ha)
GPC1-Unenclosed	1,605	535	600	350	2,740
GPC2-Sitka spruce/Lodgepole pine	2,330	775	600	350	3,705
GPC3-10% Diverse Conifer e.g. Sitka spruce and 10% broadleaves	2,410	805	600	350	3,815
GPC4 – Diverse Conifer e.g. Scots pine, Douglas fir	2,785	925	600	350	4,310
GPC5 – Broadleaf e.g. sycamore	3,960	1,320	600	450	5,880
GPC6 – Oak	4,215	1,405	600	450	6,220
GPC7 - Beech	4,215	1,405	600	450	6,220
GPC8 – Alder and Birch	2,695	900	600	450	4,195
GPC9 – Native woodland Establishment (oak-birch-holly-hazel)	4,215	1,405	600	450	6,220
GPC10-Native Woodland Establishment (alder-oak)	3,960	1,320	600	450	5,880
GPC 11 Agroforestry	4,215	1,405	600	450	6,220
GPC12 Forestry for fibre	2,410	805	600	450	3,815

Establishment Premium Rates (€/ha)

Grant and Premium Category (GPC)	Annual Premium Rate <10ha (€/ha)	Annual Premium Rate >10ha (€/ha)	Premium Duration (years)
GPC1-Unenclosed	185	190	15
GPC2-Sitka spruce/Lodgepole pine	440	450	15
GPC3-10% Diverse Conifer e.g. Sitka spruce and 10% broadleaves	510	520	15
GPC4 – Diverse Conifer e.g. Scots pine, Douglas fir	590	600	15
GPC5 – Broadleaf e.g. sycamore	605	620	15
GPC6 – Oak	645	660	15
GPC7 - Beech	645	660	15
GPC8 – Alder and Birch	605	620	15
GPC9 – Native woodland Establishment (oak-birch-holly-hazel)	665	680	15
GPC10-Native Woodland Establishment (alder-oak)	665	680	15
GPC 11 Agroforestry	645	660	5
GPC12 Forestry for fibre	510	520	15

References / Source of information

<https://www.teagasc.ie/crops/forestry/grants/establishment-grants/getting-started-in-forestry-in-five-steps/>