

The English Woodland Grants Scheme

Location

Country: England
Scale: regional
Region: Across England

Compensated /improved ecosystem services

The scheme targets creation and management of woodlands thereby providing: recreational services, reduced flood risk, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, climate regulation, improved water and soil quality, timber provision, and cultural heritage

Management

The English Woodland Grants Scheme (EWGS) was introduced in 2005 to replace the Woodland Grant Scheme. The key aims are to sustain and increase the public benefits derived from existing woodlands and invest in creating new woodlands for additional public benefit. It consists of six distinct grants. The Woodland Planning Grant (WPG) funds the preparation of plans for sustainable woodland management in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard. The Woodland Assessment Grant (WAG) pays for information gathering to improve management decisions. The Woodland Regeneration Grant (WRG) supports change in woodland composition through natural regeneration or restocking after felling, to deliver environmental improvements such as ancient woodland restoration. The Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) pays for work in woodlands to provide environmental and social benefits, such as coppice restoration, deer management, access tracks, and public access facilities. The Woodland Management Grant (WMG) helps with the costs of providing high-quality public benefits from existing woodlands. The Woodland Creation Grant (WCG) offers extra financial incentives where woodland creation delivers the greatest public benefits and Farm Woodland Payments to compensate for lost agricultural income.

The grant application process is managed at an area (sub-national) level. Applicants send a proposal to the local Forestry Commission office. The FC may inspect the site or consult with bodies such as Natural England before approving an application. All felling and woodland creation proposals are entered on the FC's public register for 28 days for anyone to view and comment upon. Funds are allocated on a first come first served basis.

Agreements with woodland owners are in the form of contracts. Payment is a contribution to the cost of undertaking woodland creation or management ranging from 20% for some woodland regeneration grants to 80% for some woodland improvement and creation grants.

Stakeholders

Sellers or service providers:

- Owners of woodland in England registered on the Rural Land Register
- Leaseholders and tenants require owner consent
- Government departments, other than the Public Forest Estate, and other public bodies can apply as can their tenants

Buyers and beneficiaries of services:

- UK government through the Forestry Commission on behalf of the English public
- Local landowners benefit directly from contributions to the cost of woodland creation and management
- Local residents benefit indirectly from a better quality environment, recreational opportunities, and reduced flood risk
- Wider benefits accrue indirectly through improved recreational opportunities, cultural heritage, carbon sequestration and the protection of biodiversity

Knowledge providers:

The Forestry Commission consults with other bodies in certain circumstances (for example applications affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are sent to Natural England)

Intermediaries:

- The scheme is administered by the Forestry Commission (FC); the government department responsible for protecting, expanding, and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands and increasing their value to society and the environment

Timeline

Establishment year: 2005

Time horizon: medium term

Status of PES: EWGS is now closed and was superseded by Countryside Stewardship in 2015

Availability of economic data

Payment rates

Woodland Planning Grant (WPG) - £20/ha for the first 100 hectares, £10/ha thereafter, with a minimum payment of £1000

Woodland Assessment Grant (WAG)

Assessment type	Grant rate	Minimum payment
Ecological Assessment	£5.60 per hectare	£300
Landscape Design Plan	£2.80 per hectare	£300
Historical & Cultural Heritage	£5.60 per hectare	£300
Determining Stakeholder Interests	£300 per assessment	£300

Woodland Management Grant (WMG) - £30/ha per year on the eligible area.

Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) - there are 4 national funds available:

- SSSI WIG - 80% contribution towards work that will help a SSSI woodland achieve or maintain favourable condition
- BAP WIG - 50% contribution to deliver the UK Biodiversity Action Plan for priority woodland habitats and species, e.g. restoring Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)
- Red squirrel WIG - 80% contribution for conservation work in Red squirrel reserves and buffer zones
- Public Access WIG - 50 or 80% contributions for the provision and improvement of public access facilities where there is a need. Higher contributions are available in regional priority areas, e.g. Social Regeneration Priority Areas

Woodland Regeneration Grant (WRG)

Payment rates for restocking on Ancient Woodland Sites (AWS)

Felling	Restocking with	Grant per hectare	Conifer nurse?
Conifer PAWS	Native woodland	£1760	N
	Broadleaved woodland	£950	N
	Conifer species	nil	Y
Broadleaved PAWS	Native woodland	£1760	N
ASNW/OSNW	Broadleaved woodland	£950	N
	Native woodland	£1100	N

Payment rates for restocking on Secondary Woodland Sites

Felling	Restocking with	Grant per hectare	Conifer nurse?
Conifer plantation	Native species	£1100	N
	Broadleaved plantation	£950	Y
	Conifer plantation	£360	Y
Broadleaf plantation	Native species	£1100	N
	Broadleaved plantation	£950	Y
	Wide-spaced broadleaves	£350	Y

Woodland Creation Grant (WCG)

Type	Characteristics	Min tree stocking/ha	Max spacing	Max open ground	Max % shrubs
Native	Native species appropriate to the site and location, distributed in a naturalistic pattern	1600	15m	40%	25%
Community	Designed for access and suited to the site and location	1100-2250	3m	40%	25%
Special broadleaves	Appropriate broadleaves grown at wide spacing	100	10m	10%	0%
Small standard	<3.0 ha and none of the standard above types	1100	3m	10%	15%
Standard	≥3.0 ha and none of the other types above	2250	2.5m	20%	10%

There is a strong logic chain that improvement of management and increase in woodland area will provide positive results. Management of over 190,000 ha of woodland has been achieved; between 2004 and 2010 the percentage of woodland SSSIs in favourable or favourable-recovering has increased from 71 to 96; 3,500 ha of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites have been converted to native species; and since 2007 almost 9,000 ha of woodland have been created (very limited areas of woodland are established without grant aid).

References / Source of information

<http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=122813&id=122814>