



Rural Development Programme 2014-2020



Forestry Grant Schemes State Aid Booklet 2016/2017



'The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development: Europe
investing in rural areas'.

Forest Expansion Scheme – State Aid Reference - SA. 43339

State Aid

All State Aid under this scheme will comply with Article 32 of Commission Regulation (EU) 702/2014 [as published in the Official Journal of the European Union, L193 pages 1 – L193/75, 1.7.2014]].

The aid is granted in the framework of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (NIRDP) in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 and the delegated and implementing acts adopted by the Commission pursuant to that Regulation.

The aid will be provided either as : (i) aid co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD); or (ii) as additional national financing to the aid referred to in point (i).

The Scheme will be identical to the underlying rural development measure provided for in sub-measure 8.1 of the NIRDP.

The NIRDP was adopted by the European Commission on 25 August 2015.

Objectives

The scheme will provide aid for afforestation and the creation of woodland granted to public and private land holders and their associations which shall be compatible with the internal market within the meaning of Article 107(3)(c) of the Treaty and shall be exempted

from the notification requirement of Article 108(3) thereof where it fulfils the conditions laid down in the following paragraphs.

Entitlement Conditions

Aid shall be granted for afforestation and the creation of woodland on agricultural land and on non-agricultural land. Aid for the afforestation of State-owned land shall only be granted if the body managing such land is a private body or municipality.

The species planted shall be adapted to the environmental and climatic conditions of the area and comply with minimum environmental requirements.

In areas where afforestation is difficult due to severe pedo-climatic conditions aid may be provided for planting perennial woody species such as shrubs or bushes suitable to the local conditions.

The aid shall be conditional on the presentation of the relevant information from a forest management plan or equivalent instrument in line with sustainable forest management as defined by the Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe of 1993.

The aid for afforestation and the creation of woodland shall cover the costs of establishment and an annual premium per hectare.

The aid for afforestation and the creation of woodland may cover investment operations.

Aid for afforestation of land owned by public authorities or for fast growing trees shall cover only the costs of establishment.

Excluded Items

Aid shall not be granted for planting the following trees: (a) trees for short rotation coppicing; (b) Christmas trees; or (c) fast growing trees for energy production.

Investment Operations - Eligible Expenditure

Aid for afforestation and the creation of woodland related to investment operations shall cover the following eligible costs:

Investment Operations – Conformity to Environmental Legislation

The investment operations shall be in conformity with Union legislation and with national laws of the Member State concerned on environmental protection. For investment operations requiring an environmental impact assessment under Directive 2011/92/EU the aid shall be subject to the condition that such assessment shall have been carried out and the development consent shall have been granted for the investment project concerned before the date of granting the individual aid.

Establishment Costs – Eligible Expenditure

The following costs of establishment may be eligible: (a) the costs of the plantation and propagation material; (b) the plantation costs and the costs directly linked to the plantation; (c) the cost for other related operations such as storing and treatments of seedlings with the necessary prevention and protection materials; (d) the costs for replanting necessary during the first year of afforestation.

Annual Premium – Eligible Costs

The annual premium per hectare shall cover the costs for the agricultural income foregone, and shall be paid for a maximum period of 10 years from the date of granting the aid.

Aid Intensity

The aid intensity shall be limited to 100 % of the eligible costs.

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 Forest Expansion Scheme (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]

Forest Protection Scheme – State Aid Reference – SA. 43340

State Aid

All State Aid under this scheme will comply with Article 34 of Commission Regulation (EU) 702/2014 [as published in the Official Journal of the European Union, L193 pages 1 – L193/75, 1.7.2014].

The aid is granted in the framework of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (NIRDP) in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 and the delegated and implementing acts adopted by the Commission pursuant to that Regulation.

The aid will be provided either as : (i) aid co-financed by the EAFRD; or (ii) as additional national financing to the aid referred to in point (i).

The Scheme will be identical to the underlying rural development measure provided for in sub-measure 8.1 of the NIRDP.

The NIRDP was adopted by the European Commission on 25/08/2015.

Objectives

The scheme will provide aid for the prevention and restoration of damage to forests from plant pests pursuant to Article 24 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 granted to private and public forest holders, and other private law and public bodies and their associations.

Entitlement Conditions

In the case of aid for prevention of damage to a forest from plant pests,

the risk of occurrence of the plant pest shall be supported by scientific evidence and acknowledged by a scientific public organisation. The list of species of harmful organisms which may cause a plant pest shall be provided for in the NIRDP. The aided activities or projects shall be consistent with the forest protection plan established by the Member State.

The aid shall be conditional on the presentation of the relevant information from a forest management plan or equivalent instrument in line with sustainable forest management as defined by the Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe of 1993, detailing the preventive objectives.

Aid shall not be granted for loss of income resulting from fire, natural disasters, adverse climatic events, which can be assimilated to a natural disaster, other adverse climatic events, plant pests and catastrophic events.

Eligible Expenditure

The aid shall cover the following eligible costs:

Restoring forest potential damaged from* fires, natural disasters, adverse climatic events, which can be assimilated to a natural disaster, other adverse climatic events, plant pests, catastrophic events and climate change related events.

The aid shall not be granted for agricultural related activities in areas covered by agri-environmental commitments.

In the case of the restoration of forest potential the aid shall be subject to the formal recognition by the competent authorities of the Member State concerned that:

(i) the fire, natural disaster, adverse climatic event which can be assimilated to a natural disaster, other adverse climatic event, plant pest*, catastrophic event or climate change related event has occurred; and

(ii) the event referred to above, including measures adopted in accordance with Directive 2000/29/EC to eradicate or contain a plant pest, has caused the destruction of at least 20 per cent of the relevant forest potential.

*Only restoration of forest potential damaged from plant pests will be supported.

Aid Intensity

The aid intensity shall be limited to 100 per cent of the eligible costs. Aid granted for the eligible costs above and any other payments received by the beneficiary, including payments under other national or Union measures or insurance policies for the same eligible costs shall be limited to 100 per cent of the eligible costs. The aid intensity shall be limited to 100 % of the eligible costs.

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 Forest Expansion Scheme (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]

Woodland Investment Grant – State Aid Reference – SA. 43338

State Aid

All State Aid under this scheme will comply with Article 35 of Commission Regulation (EU) 702/2014 [as published in the Official Journal of the European Union, L193 pages 1 – L193/75, 1.7.2014].

The aid is granted in the framework of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (NIRDP) in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 and the delegated and implementing acts adopted by the Commission pursuant to that Regulation.

The aid will be provided either as : (i) aid co-financed by the EAFRD; or (ii) as additional national financing to the aid referred to in point (i).

The Scheme will be identical to the underlying rural development measure provided for in sub-measure 8.5 of the NIRDP.

The NIRDP was adopted by the European Commission on 25 August 2015.

Objectives

The scheme will support sustainable forest management and improve the environmental value of woodlands, build resilience to climate change and enhance public amenity value of forests. In particular this relates to the needs of improving the management of land resulting in improved environmental and/or climate outcomes by improving resilience of forest

ecosystems, protecting priority habitats, action to remove non native invasive species and contributing to improving the ecological status of rivers and water catchments, for example by encouraging low impact silvicultural systems and addressing acid sensitive water catchments.

Eligibility Conditions

Investments shall be aimed at the achievement of commitments for environmental aims, for provision of ecosystem services or enhancement of the public amenity value of forest and wooded land in the area concerned or the improvement of the climate change mitigation potential of ecosystems, without excluding economic benefits in the long term.

The investment shall be in conformity with European regulation and with national laws of the Member State concerned on environmental protection. For investment requiring an environmental impact assessment under Directive 2011/92/EU the aid shall be subject to the condition that such assessment shall have been carried out and the development consent shall have been granted for the investment project concerned before the date of granting the individual aid.

Eligible Costs

- The direct costs associated with the implementation of the investments, this will include materials, services and labour.
- Support will be for the costs of labour and materials (where relevant) for a range of forestry operations such as costs for plants, tree protection by fencing and tree shelters, removal of trees, thinning and pruning to improve the ecological value of woodlands and the removal of non–native species such as rhododendron.

General maintenance and running costs will not be supported.

Aid Intensity

The aid intensity shall be limited to 100 % of the eligible costs.

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