



challenge funds



Woodlands
In and Around Towns
Forestry for People

Scotland Rural
Development Programme

What are Woodlands In and Around Towns and Forestry For People Challenge Funds?

Challenge Funds are administered by Forestry Commission Scotland under the Scotland Rural Development Programme. They contribute to the achievement of SRDP priority outcomes, the delivery of the Scottish Forestry Strategy targets, and Scottish Government's national and regional priorities.

The Woodlands In and Around Towns Challenge Fund is targeted at improving existing areas of woodland, bringing them into sustainable management by carrying out an agreed programme of work. The aim is to regenerate the woodland environment close to centres of population and improve the quality of life for people living and working there. Examples of the work which could be supported include silvicultural work to improve the condition of the woodland and the construction of new or improved recreation facilities, including new and upgraded paths.



The Forestry for People Challenge Fund is intended to help groups realise the potential contribution of local woodlands to the health, learning and strengthening of communities. Eligible work could include guidance, contribution towards staff time, feasibility studies and health education projects.

Who can apply?

- Owners or occupiers of existing woodland greater than 1ha in size within 1km of a settlement of at least 2000 people or more can apply for the Woodlands In and Around Towns Challenge Fund. The National Forest Estate is not eligible to receive grants under this fund.
- Users of private woodlands, Local Authority woodland, or those using the National Forest Estate across Scotland can apply for the Forestry for People Challenge Fund. Community and voluntary groups, schools and educational groups and other non-profit distributing organisations with local community benefit as their core aim, are among those who can apply. Groups must have a formal structure, a basic constitution and a set of accounts.
- Businesses and Local Authorities can also apply for the Forestry for People Challenge Fund as long as they can demonstrate effective local community benefit and support for their proposals.
- Applications to both Challenge Funds are encouraged where the eligibility criteria for both are met.

When and how do I apply?

- You will need to have a Business Reference Number (BRN) before you submit an application and the relevant woodland area should be



registered on the IACS system. Further guidance is available from SGRPID, FCS and SNH area offices.

- You should submit applications to Forestry Commission Conservancy Offices on the Challenge Fund application form.

Do any restrictions apply?

Yes.

- Both Challenge Funds are competitive and subject to sufficient funds being available.
- Proposals linked to golf courses and open parkland are not eligible to receive funding.
- All work must be consistent with the UK Forestry Standard.

Where can I go for assistance or guidance?

You can seek advice from Case Officers located in Forestry Commission Conservancy Offices.

What information do I need to supply with my application?

- You should use the Challenge Fund application form to set out the operations you are seeking funding for in each financial year. Operations can extend through to financial year 2013.
- Clear maps supporting the application must be provided. These maps should be based on Ordnance Survey Master Map.
- Supporting information to explain how the cost of proposed work has been compiled.



What will happen to my Proposal once I have submitted it?

A Case Officer will process your application, including, if necessary, consultation with other public bodies and 4 weeks on the Public Register of felling proposals. Once the application is deemed acceptable, they will be submitted to the Challenge Fund Judging panel. The panel will be made up of representatives across Scotland, will convene twice per year and will judge both Challenge Funds at the same time. Grants will be awarded to those schemes that best meet the aims of the Fund, which offer best value for money and maximise public benefits. The Social Outcomes through Investment in Forestry Tool (SIFT) will be used to inform the judging process.

Once I am participating in these challenge funds, what general conditions will apply?

Payment will be in arrears and must be claimed during the financial year agreed in the contract. Claims should be grouped together wherever possible. Work will be inspected at claim stage. Receipts must be kept for a period of 5 years and made available if requested for audit purposes to demonstrate the eligibility of the expenditure claimed. Beneficiaries are expected to evaluate their projects in accordance with an agreed framework and applicants may be subject to cross compliance inspections and Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC).

What will happen if I fail to meet the rules of the scheme?

If you do not meet the requirements of cross compliance, your payments through Rural Development Contracts and other schemes within the SRDP may be subject to the reductions and penalties set out in the guidance notes for cross compliance. Any grant paid under either Challenge Fund could be reclaimed plus interest.

Where can I find more details?

Web-based detailed guidance, including explanatory notes and application forms, will be provided on the Scottish Government and Forestry Commission websites www.scotland.gov.uk/srdp, www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland



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