

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

The Forest Service of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Ireland's national forest authority, is responsible for national forest policy, promotion of private forestry, administration of planting and other forestry grant schemes, forest protection, control of felling and promotion of research in forestry and forest produce.

Forestry has been recognised by the European Union as having a major role to play both in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and in the wider context of rural development. The Afforestation Grant and Forest Premium Schemes, introduced under Council Regulation 2080/92, supporting the afforestation of agricultural land, are part of the accompanying measures to CAP reform. The CAP Rural Development Programme provides continued co-financing for these schemes by the EU for the period 2000-2006. .

The Woodland Improvement, Reconstitution, Native Woodland and NeighbourWood Schemes are part of the Regional Operational Programmes which receive funding from the EU Structural Funds. All these schemes are part of Ireland's National Development Plan 2000 – 2006.