

Native Woodland Scheme

1. Scheme Outline and Legal Basis.

- a) This Scheme provides opportunities to protect and expand Ireland's native woodland resource and associated biodiversity.
- b) The Native Woodland Scheme is a key biodiversity measure within Ireland's national forest policy. It also supports a wide range of other benefits and functions arising from native woodlands, relating to landscape, cultural heritage, wood and non-wood products and services, the practice of traditional woodland management techniques, environmental education, and carbon sequestration.

The Scheme provides financial support for landowners under two separate elements. **Element 1: Conservation** supports the protection and enhancement of existing native woodlands and the conversion, where appropriate, of existing non-native forests to native woodlands. **Element 2: Establishment** supports the establishment of new native woodlands on greenfield sites.

- c) **Grants and annual premiums** are available under both elements for projects that are compliant with national legislation, operational and environmental guidelines.
- d) Native woodlands protected and enhanced and those established under this Scheme must meet full silvicultural standards.
- e) Woodland activities, including uprooting and felling of trees are subject to the provisions of the Forestry Act, 1946, as may, from time to time, be amended or replaced.
- f) This document represents the administrative provisions for the implementation of the Native Woodland Scheme in Ireland, as approved under the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 and in accordance with State Aid Decision 162/2007. This document should be read in conjunction with **The Native Woodland Scheme Manual, April 2008.**
- g) The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food shall administer the Scheme and it shall operate throughout the State.
- h) The Exchequer funds the Scheme.
- i) The Scheme shall come into operation on 19 December 2007 for a period to be determined by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

2. Objectives of the Native Woodland Scheme.

The objectives of the Scheme include:

- To protect and expand Ireland's native woodland resource and associated biodiversity;
- To sustain Ireland's native woodlands on a long term basis;
- To conserve native genetic biodiversity;
- To improve water quality through native riparian woodland development;
- To increase Ireland's woodland cover to contribute positively towards climate change mitigation;
- To promote the application of close to nature forestry and traditional woodland management systems and related woodcraft.
- To encourage wood and non-wood production where compatible with native woodland biodiversity.

3. Eligibility.

- i) In order to qualify under Element 1: Conservation or Element 2: Establishment of the NWS, private landowners must own, lease or be in joint management of the land or existing woodlands in question. Applicants must provide documentary evidence of ownership, leasing or joint management, as detailed in the Forestry Schemes Manual.
- ii) All Applicants must:
 - a) Be over 18 years of age and
 - b) Hold a Personal Public Service Number.
- iii) Under Element 1: An annual Conservation Premium may also be paid to private applicants for a period of seven years.
- iv) Under Element 2: Establishment, two rates of premium are available:
 - (1) **The farmer rate:**
 - (a) applies to applicants who fulfil the qualification conditions set out in sub-paragraph (v) of this paragraph and is payable for a period of 20 years.
 - (b) Native woodland plantations that fulfil the requirements of the **FEPS scheme** may qualify for an additional FEPS premium. Eligibility for this premium must be established **in advance**, in accordance with the terms and conditions of FEPS. See FEPS Scheme Document for further information or contact the Forest Service for advice.
 - (2) **The non-farmer rate:** applies to applicants who do not meet all of these conditions, and is payable for a period of 15 years.

Grant and Premium rates are detailed in Annex 1.

- v) An applicant for the farmer rate of the Establishment Premium under Element 2 must supply evidence of farming activity in one of the following forms:

- (1) An active REPS registration number, Herd number or registration under the Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Scheme or another Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Scheme including the Single Payment Scheme. For the purposes of the sub-paragraph, an 'active' registration means an applicant who has been a beneficiary under the particular scheme in the year of the completion of initial work under the NWS, or in one of the three preceding years.

OR

- (2) Documentary evidence that at least 25% of an applicant's income was derived from farming in the State in the year of the completion of initial work under the NWS or in one of the three preceding years, drawn up in accordance with sub-paragraph (iv) of this paragraph.

vi) Documentary evidence of farming income, calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (vii), must be supplied in one of the following forms:

- (1) A tax assessment showing that farming income amounted to at least 25% of total income.

OR

- (2) An income assessment and declaration form, TF1, completed and stamped by the local Teagasc Land Use Advisor or TF2 completed and stamped by an agricultural consultant who is a member of the Agricultural Consultants Association, demonstrating that at least 25% of total income is derived from farming.

vii) The following conditions attach to calculating income for qualification for the farmer rate of premium:

1. The income of the applicant only is to be used in the calculation. A spouse's income is not to be included in the calculation unless the application for premium is made in both names.
2. Farming income includes agricultural aids, premiums and subsidies.
3. Farmer forest premiums may be included as farming income provided the applicant has other farming income.
4. Land letting on the less than 11-month basis (conacre) may be included as farming income provided the applicant has other farming income.
5. All Social Welfare payments, pensions/disability benefits, are excluded from gross income.

viii) An applicant who has already been assessed and qualified as a farmer under the existing Afforestation Scheme or the RDP Afforestation Scheme 2000 – 2006 or the CAP Premium Scheme 1993 – 1999 or the Farmer Premium Scheme 1989 – 1992, does not have to be re

-assessed in respect of new applications under the Scheme.

- ix) An applicant who has participated in the Farm Retirement Scheme cannot be classified as a farmer in respect of a native woodland completed after the date of retirement (unless all payments received under that scheme have been repaid to the Department and the conditions outlined above are met).
- x) An applicant who is not resident in the State is not eligible for payment of the Farmer rate of premium.
- xi) The provisions of this paragraph replace Chapter 3 (Premium Payment Considerations) of the Forestry Schemes Manual in respect of applications made under this Scheme.

4. Grant and Premium Rates.

- a) Grant assistance is available in respect of costs incurred in the conservation (Element 1), and a fixed rate grant is available for the establishment (Element 2) of native woodland. Application for the 1st Instalment Grant may be made on completion of the works. Application for the 2nd Instalment Grant may be made 4 years (i.e. 48 months) after the completion of the initial works, subject to satisfactory maintenance of the woodland.
- b) Under Element 2: Establishment, premium rates are calculated according to farmer status of the applicant as well as farm and woodland size. See Annex 1. Payment is subject to satisfactory establishment/enhancement and maintenance of the woodland.
- c) Annex 1 sets out the grant and premium rates payable. The Minister reserves the right to alter these rates from time to time.
- d) Evidence of costs expended and receipts for items purchased must be retained and produced on the request of the Minister. To this end, the requirements as set out in the Forestry Schemes Manual will apply.
- e) For audit purposes, recipients of grant aid under this Scheme will be required to retain invoices relating to work undertaken for a period of 6 years.

5. Conditions of Aid.

5.1 General:

Payments shall be made in respect of applicants who make a valid application and have undertaken all work in accordance with the stipulations of their NWS Approval and in compliance with:

- All relevant national legislation for the time being in force,

- The terms and conditions of this Scheme as set out in the NWS Manual 2008 and this document and all application forms,
- The requirements, where appropriate, set down in the Forestry Schemes Manual,
- The Forest Service Code of Best Forest Practice – Ireland,
- The principles of Sustainable Forest Management; and
- The Forest Service Environmental Guidelines.

5.2 Native Woodland Scheme Requirements:

See NWS Manual, April 2008.

- a) Each project under the NWS must promote the most appropriate native woodland type or types for the particular site, based on soil, elevation, climate, etc.
- b) All planting and natural regeneration under this scheme is limited to species deemed native to the island of Ireland.
- c) Natural regeneration is eligible under both Element 1 and Element 2 subject to the rules laid out in the NWS Manual.
- d) All plants used under the scheme must originate from material collected from suitable sources within the island of Ireland. Further restrictions apply to woodlands designated as SACs and NHAs.
- e) All applications require a site-specific Native Woodland Plan developed jointly by a Participating Ecologist and a Participating Forester (both registered with the Department) in close consultation with the owner.
- f) Projects within SACs, NHAs and SPAs may be eligible for funding under this scheme, where, following consultation with NPWS, they are deemed to be ecologically compatible with the particular designation.
- g) Element 1 is limited to woodlands where two-thirds or more of the existing stocking comprises native species. There are specific exceptions to this rule outlined in the NWS Manual.
- h) Under Element 1, non-native species must generally be removed from the site by the 2nd instalment, unless clear ecological, silvicultural or other reasons presented in the Native Woodland Plan justify a more gradual approach.
- i) The realisation of wood and non-wood products and services, where deemed compatible, is encouraged under this scheme.
- j) A multi-annual grant payment mechanism may be available for privately-owned Element 1 sites greater than 40 ha. This mechanism is described in detail in the NWS Manual.
- k) The above multi-annual grant payment mechanism is also available (on a pilot basis) for privately-owned Element 1 projects involving the restoration of 8 ha or more of former coppice or coppice-with-standards woodland to active coppice management.

6. Application Procedure.

All application forms are available from the Forest Service, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co Wexford. Lo-call 1890 200 223 or e-mail forestservice@agriculture.gov.ie.

- **NWS Form 1 – Application for NWS Approval.**

Application for approval to undertake specific operations on an Element 1 site or to apply for approval to establish a new native woodland on an Element 2 site must be made using the relevant 'NWS Form 1'. Separate applications must be used for Element 1 and Element 2. The applicant and a NWS Participating Forester must complete the application. A Native Woodland Plan jointly prepared by a NWS Participating Forester and a NWS Participating Ecologist, following the set template contained in the NWS manual, must accompany the Form 1. The application form sets out the requirements to be met to make a valid application.

- **NWS Form 2 – Application for 1st NWS Instalment Grant and 1st NWS Premium.**

Application for payment of the 1st Conservation Grant and Premium (under Element 1) and 1st Establishment Grant and Premium (under Element 2) must be made using the relevant 'NWS Form 2'. The applicant and NWS Participating Forester must complete the application. The application form sets out the requirements to be met to make a valid application.

- **NWS Form 3 – Application for 2nd NWS Instalment Grant.**

The 2nd Instalment Grant under both Element 1 and Element 2 may be claimed for payment 4 years (i.e. 48 months) after the completion date of initial operations. Application for payment of the 2nd NWS Instalment Grant must be made using the relevant 'NWS Form 3'. The applicant and NWS Participating Forester must complete the application. The application form sets out the requirements to be met to make a valid application.

- **NWS Form 4 – Application for NWS Subsequent Premium Payments.**

Under **Element 1**, an annual Conservation Premium may be paid to private applicants for a period of seven years, to support ongoing works to protect and enhance the native woodland resource. Application for all premiums subsequent to the 1st premium is made using the relevant 'NWS Form 4'.

Under **Element 2**, the farmer rate of the Establishment Premium is payable for a period of 20 years (there is an option for those establishment sites that fulfil all the terms and conditions of the FEPS Scheme to attract the FEPS Premium), the non-farmer premium for a period of 15 years. Application for all premiums subsequent to the 1st Premium is made using the relevant 'NWS Form 4'. The Forest Service issues these forms to eligible applicants on an annual basis. The application form sets out the requirements to be met to make a valid application.

7. NWS Approval.

Approvals issued under this Scheme may be subject to additional conditions as laid down by the Minister. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the woodland is compliant with the requirements of the scheme.

8. Element 1: Felling.

- a) NWS Approval must be secured before any felling operations take place on the site. Applications for a Felling Licence should be made prior to or in conjunction with the NWS application, to avoid delays after NWS approval.
- b) All woodlands are subject to the provisions of the Forestry Act, 1946, which controls the felling of trees.

9. Areas for Biodiversity Enhancement.

Under the scheme, between 18% and 20% of the woodland may comprise Areas of Biodiversity Enhancement (ABE). Other ABE requirements are set out in the NWS Manual (December 2007), Chapter 7 of the Forestry Schemes Manual and the “Forest Biodiversity Guidelines”.

10. Consultations and Public Notification Procedure.

- a) All proposed woodlands of greater than 2.5 hectares are notified by the Forest Service to the public by way of notice in an appropriate provincial newspaper.
- b) Chapter 11 of the Forestry Schemes Manual, entitled “Environmental Protection and Controls Consultation Process”, continues to apply under this Scheme. That chapter sets out the environmental standards governing forestry and the consultative process undertaken when an application for an Approval is made. Members of the public may make a submission or observation that must be taken into account by the Department in reaching a decision on the application.

11. Applications and Environmental Considerations.

- a) In accordance with SI No. 538 of 2001, all applications for planting trees are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process undertaken by the Minister. The screening determines whether an application requires an EIA.
- b) An Environmental Impact Assessment must accompany applications for the planting of areas of 50 hectares or more.
- c) An Environmental Impact Assessment must accompany applications for the planting of areas of under 50 hectares where a proposed development is deemed by the Minister to have a significant environmental impact.

12. Land Use Reconciliation Requirements.

- a) Applicants for grant or premium payments under this Scheme must ensure that the woodland is not the subject of a claim under another Department area-based scheme.
- b) Adjustments, reductions in payments and/or penalties may be imposed by the Minister where an application exceeds the area permitted for a woodland and/or overlaps with an area the subject of a claim under an alternative Department area-based scheme.

13. Good Practice.

Good forestry practice is mandatory and applies across all operations of the Scheme. Conditions for good forestry practice are published in the Code of Best Forest Practice - Ireland.

14. Payment.

The Department may pay grants and premiums to Applicants via Electric Fund Transfer (EFT). Applicants may mandate the payment of grants to an alternative payee using a mandate document that satisfies the requirements of the Minister.

15. Penalties.

- a) Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the Scheme, incorporating the Code of Best Forest Practice – Ireland, and the current suite of environmental guidelines may result in an appropriate penalty/sanction being applied.
- b) Monetary penalties, which shall apply to certain specific breaches of the Scheme, are set out in the Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme Document., but other breaches of the Scheme not specified in the Afforestation Scheme Document may also incur a penalty.
- c) Overclaims may also result in the imposition of a penalty in accordance with the provisions of EU Council Regulation (EC) 796/04 and EU Council Regulation (EC) 817/04, or as may be amended from time to time.
- d) Penalties may include the repayment of the 1st and 2nd Instalment Grants under both Element 1 and Element 2, and the annual Conservation and Establishment Premiums under both Element 1 and Element 2..
- e) Monetary penalties shall include interest payable at the rate provided for under SI No. 13/2006. Interest shall be calculated for the period elapsing between a date specified in a notification to the applicant of the repayment obligation and either repayment or deduction.
- f) Penalty amounts may be deducted from future payments due to the Applicant under the Forestry Schemes or from payments due under other Department schemes. Where monetary penalties are not paid or recovered within the period requested, the Minister may take whatever action is deemed necessary for their recovery.
- g) The principle of proportionality will apply. Penalties, which in the opinion of the Minister are proportionate to the alleged breach of the Scheme, may be imposed.
- h) The imposition of a penalty shall not relieve an Applicant of an obligation to comply with an instruction from the Minister to undertake remedial works in respect of a woodland.
- i) At the Minister's discretion, these penalties may be applied to the whole woodland.

16. Appeals.

- a) An Applicant, or his/her contractor, may appeal a decision of the Minister's regarding an application for a Pre-Approval, a Grant, a Premium or a penalty.
- b) An Appeals Committee hears all appeals made. Appeals should be lodged with the Department's offices at Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford.

17. Change of Ownership.

The Minister must be informed if there is a change of ownership of a native woodland, which has received grant assistance. Annex 3 of the Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme Document sets out the provisions governing change of ownership issues and replaces paragraph 4.6 of Chapter 4 of the Forestry Schemes Manual.

18. Joint Management Consent.

The owner of the lands may give permission to an immediate family member who is jointly managing the lands to claim the NWS grant and premiums. A joint management arrangement must be between **immediate family members**, namely, husband and wife, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. Joint management consent forms must comply with the template provided at Appendix 11 of the Forestry Schemes Manual.

19. Right of Entry.

The Minister reserves the right to carry out inspections at reasonable times on any land receiving grant aid under this scheme or any other forest related schemes. The Applicant is obliged to ensure that, where required, adequate inspection paths through the woodland are provided.

20. Responsibility for Woodland Management.

- a) Responsibility for the successful establishment and management of a native woodlands rests with the Applicant. Where an Applicant contracts the services of a third party to undertake the establishment and or management of the woodland, it is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that the third party contracted has sufficient insurances to indemnify the work undertaken.
- b) The inspection of a woodland by the Minister shall not relieve the Applicant of responsibility for the success of the woodland as described in the subparagraph above.

21. Insurance of Woodlands.

Applicants should ensure that their woodland has adequate insurance cover against damage from, *inter alia*, fire and wind. In the event of plant losses, it is a condition of grant aid that losses will be replaced within the following two growing seasons.

22. Failure to abide by the terms and conditions of the Scheme.

- a) Where, for the purposes of obtaining payment under this Scheme, the applicant or a person acting on his/her behalf knowingly makes a false or misleading statement or declaration or withholds essential information, his/her participation in the Scheme may be terminated and all or part of the aid paid shall be reimbursed.

- b) Where an Applicant or a person acting on his/her behalf fails to abide by the terms and conditions of the Scheme or is there is any material change in the circumstances of the applicant which would be in conflict with the letter or the spirit of the Scheme, his/her participation in the Scheme may be terminated and all or part of the aid paid shall be reimbursed.
- c) The obtaining of aid under the Scheme by fraudulent means by the applicant or a person acting on his/her behalf or others acting alone or together may render such persons liable to prosecution.

23. Review of Scheme, Procedures and Grant Aid.

- a) The Minister reserves the right to alter from time to time the conditions of the Scheme and or the procedures to be followed in the operation of this Scheme, or to lay down further conditions under this Scheme.
- b) The Minister reserves the right to review and vary, where occasion so demands, the amount of financial aid wherever specified in the Scheme.

24. Tax Clearance Requirement.

a) General:

It is a condition of grant aid of this Scheme that all grant-aided activities shall be conducted in compliance with the laws of the State relating, *inter alia*, to tax and employment.

b) Tax Clearance:

Payment of financial aid as provided for in this Scheme may be subject to the condition that a tax clearance certificate from the Revenue Commissioners be furnished before a payment is issued.

25. Information and Data Protection.

The Minister reserves the right to make information available to the public regarding the areas covered by the Scheme including the number of participants, farms, historical and archaeological sites, hectares covered etc. while continuing to observe the terms of the Data Protection Act.

26. Chapter 21 of the Forestry Schemes Manual.

Chapter 21 of the Forestry Schemes Manual does not apply to NWS applications issued with an Approval under this Scheme.

27. Cumulation of Agriculture State Aids.

Any Applicant who has raised finance under the Business Expansion Scheme (**BES**) and/or the Seed Capital Scheme (**SCS**) tax incentives must make the necessary declaration on the application form.

28. Further Conditions.

The Minister may at any time lay down further conditions under this Scheme.

Annex 1

NWS Grant and Premiums Payable

Element 1: Conservation

Table 1: Maximum grant levels

	1st Instalment Grant - €/ha	2nd Instalment Grant - €/ha	Total NWS Grant - €/ha
NWS Element 1	75% paid at 1 st instalment	25% paid at 2 nd instalment	5,000.00
<p>The grant payable under Element 1 is based on approved direct costs subject to the maximum rates as set out above. Approved eligible operations are set out in the NWS Manual. All costs including management costs and anticipated costs yrs 1 – 4 should be included in the claim and 75% of these costs or 75% of the maximum grant (whichever is the lesser) is payable at 1st instalment and 25% of these costs or 25% of the maximum grant (whichever is the lesser) is payable at 2nd instalment. The grant is exclusive of VAT if the applicant is registered for VAT, if the applicant is not registered for VAT, the grant is inclusive of VAT.</p>			

Table 2: Element 1: Conservation Premium

	Conservation Premium Rate - €/ha
NWS Element 1	350.00
<p>Private landowners under Element 1 may be eligible for an annual Conservation Premium for a period of seven years in respect of ongoing work to protect and enhance the native woodland resource.</p>	

Table 3: Fixed Grant for Element 2: Establishment
Applies to sites with completion dates on or after 01.01.08

	1st Instalment Grant - €/ha	2nd Instalment Grant - €/ha	Total NWS Grant - €/ha
NWS Element 2	4,809.25	1,660.82	6,470.07
<p>Element 2: Establishment is paid in two fixed rate instalments, plus an additional allowance of maximum €450/ha for fencing. (Max €1,800/ha in the case of deer/rabbit fencing.) Fencing allowance is paid at 1st instalment stage. All fencing claims are capped at €50,000 on all plantations. Contact the Forest Service for further details on fencing rates. The 2nd instalment is paid 4 years i.e. 48 months after establishment and is subject to satisfactory maintenance of the plantation.</p> <p>The grant corresponds to the Grant & Premium Category 6 (GPC6) of the general Afforestation Scheme but applies to <u>all species</u> acceptable under the NWS. Approved eligible operations are set out in the NWS Manual.</p>			

Table 3: Element 2: Establishment Premiums

Depending on the status of the applicant, and the plantation size, the following premium rates are available. These rates correspond to the GPC6 of the general Afforestation Scheme but apply to <u>all species</u> acceptable under the NWS.				
	Establishment Premium (€/ha)			
	Farmer rate 20 years	Farmer rate 20 years	Farmer rate 20 years	Non- farmer rate 15 years
	<6ha	≥6 ha to < 12 ha	≥12 ha	Per ha
NWS Element 2	544.65	559.26	573.86	211.73

NOTE: The FEPS 5-year Premium may be available to applicants who fulfil the requirements of FEPS. See FEPS Document for details.

Annex II

Definitions

For the purposes of this Scheme:

- **‘Applicant’** means a person who has applied for Approval under the scheme, or has established or protected or converted to native status, woodland following an Approval under the scheme;
- **‘Approval’** means a Native Woodland Scheme Approval granted by the Minister, before which work cannot commence;
- **‘Application, Approval – NWS Form 1’** means an application for the Minister’s approval to enhance or establish a native woodland under the terms of all current legislation, guidelines and the conditions of this scheme.
- **‘Application – 1st Instalment Grant – NWS Form 2’** means an application to receive a 1st instalment grant and the 1st annual premium (where applicable) following the completion of initial operations to enhance or establish a native woodland within the terms of the Approval.
- **‘Application – 2nd Instalment Grant – NWS Form 3’** means an application to receive the 2nd instalment grant, due for payment 4 years (i.e. 48 months) after the completion date of initial operations.
- **‘Application – Annual Premium – NWS Form 4’** means the subsequent premium application to be submitted annually to the Forest Service.
- **‘Code of Best Forest Practice’** is a Department listing of all forestry operations and the manner in which they should be carried out to ensure the implementation of Sustainable Forest Management in Ireland, as agreed at the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Lisbon, 1998.
- **‘Completion Date’** is the date the agreed works are completed to the required standard, as verified by the Forestry Inspector.
- **‘Conservation Premium’** means an annual payment to the Applicant under Element 1: Conservation, designed to compensate for revenue foregone arising from the fact that he/she is managing the woodland for biodiversity as opposed to commercial production.
- **‘Department’** means the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
- **‘Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)’** means the process of examining the environmental effects of a proposed development, if carried out, would have on the environment.
- **‘Establishment Premium’** means an annual payment to the Applicant under Element 2: Establishment, that compensates for revenue foregone from the establishment of native woodland on his/her lands.
- **‘Farm’** or **‘Holding’** means all the land parcel production units in the State (owned, leased or rented) that are under the control of the applicant.
- **‘Farmer’** means an agricultural producer who owns, leases or is in joint management of at least 3 hectares of an agricultural holding, and shall include any person, group of persons or partnership engaged in farming in the State. Evidence of farming activity is required as described in paragraph 5 (Eligibility).

- **‘Farming’** includes dairy farming, livestock production, the cultivation of grass and tillage crops and the growing of horticultural crops.
- **‘FEPS’** means the Forest Environment Protection Scheme.
- **‘Forest Service Environmental Guidelines’** means the following publications of the Forest Service, as may be amended from time to time: ‘Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines’; ‘Forestry and The Landscape Guidelines’; ‘Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines’; ‘Forest Biodiversity Guidelines’; ‘Forest Harvesting and The Environment Guidelines’; and ‘Forestry and Aerial Fertilisation Guidelines’; and ‘Forest Protection Guidelines’. The Minister may, from time to time, add further guidelines to this definition.
- **‘Forestry Schemes Manual’** means the schemes manual published by the Stationary Office on behalf of the Department; and which, from time to time, may be amended or replaced.
- **‘Immediate Family Member’** means Spouse, Parent, Brother, Sister, Son or Daughter.
- **‘Joint Management Consent’** means a consent submitted by the owner of specific lands consenting to the payment of grants and premiums to an immediate family member.
- **‘Lease’** means a term of years absolute in possession for at least 40 years from the commencement date of the commitment under the Scheme.
- **‘Minister’** means the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
- **‘Native Woodland’** means a woodland dominated by native species of trees and other native plants.
- **‘Native Woodland Plan’** means a document in a form acceptable to the Minister, which must be developed jointly by a NWS Participating Ecologist and Participating Forester both registered with the Department, setting out the specific ecological priorities for the site, and the proposed management objectives and operations for the short-, medium- and long-term.
- **‘Natural Regeneration (NR)’** means the establishment of new trees from seed arriving naturally onto the site from overhead, adjoining or nearby seed sources.
- **‘Newly established native woodland’** means a woodland, comprising native species, recently created by planting and/or natural regeneration.
- **‘NHA’** means an area designated as a National Heritage Area, such areas are considered as important for habitats present or which hold species of plants and animals whose habitats need protection.
- **‘NPWS’** means the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government.
- **‘NWS Participating Forester’** means a person qualified and registered with the Department under the Department’s Registration of Foresters and Forestry Companies, who has also fulfilled criteria set by the Department to be allowed to develop applications under the NWS. Each Registered Forester shall be subject to the conditions of approval as set down by the Department.
- **‘NWS Participating Ecologist’** means a person who has fulfilled criteria set by the Department to be allowed to develop applications under the NWS.

- **‘NWS Manual’** means a manual developed specifically for practitioners involved in the NWS, setting out the procedures and standards required, and related information.
- **‘The Forest Service’** means the Forestry Division of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
- **‘Scheme’** means the Native Woodland Scheme.
- **‘SAC’** means an area designated as a Special Area of Conservation, such areas are designated in order to conserve certain habitats and species pursuant to the EU Habitats Directive.
- **‘SPA’** means an area designated as a Special Protection Area in order to safeguard certain habitats pursuant to the EU Birds Directive.
- **‘Sustainable Forest Management’** means the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economical and social functions, at local, national and global levels and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.