

CHAPTER 2

Application Process for the Afforestation Scheme

All proposed forestry developments must receive the prior written approval of the Forest Service. **Any development which proceeds without such approval will not be eligible for grant assistance.**

Following completion of the works formal applications for payment of the Afforestation Grant, Premiums and 2nd Installment Grants must be made by the applicant.

2.1 Application for Preplanting Approval - Form 1

All Form 1 applications must be completed by the applicant and a qualified forester whose name is included on the Register of Approved Foresters. This register is available on request from the Forest Service. The following enclosures must accompany the application:

- Form 1
- Location Map - see Chapter 10
- Certified Species Map - see Chapter 10
- Biodiversity Map – see Chapter 10
- Cultivation Plan – see Chapter 10
- Forest Service acknowledgement sheet
- Tests results for levels of Calcium carbonate CaCO_3 (if applicable)
- Drainage survey report – see Chapter 9
- Soil Analysis report – see Chapter 9

The application is processed by the Forest Service and assigned a unique Forest Service reference number known as "Contract No.". Form 1 applications go through the following procedures:

- The application is referred to the relevant Forest Service Inspector for assessment and recommendations.
- If there are any environmental considerations identified the application is simultaneously referred to the relevant prescribed body as detailed in Chapter 11. Certain sites in this category require a process of public consultation by the Forest Service.
- If the site is greater than 2.5 hectares a notice of the application is published in the local press.
- If the proposed development is greater than 25 hectares the application is referred to the relevant Local Authority for their observations.
- If the site is greater than 50 hectares an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

The referrals described above are initiated simultaneously. The time frame for these consultations is shown in table 17 in Chapter 11.

If an approved forester fails to identify specific considerations, the referrals may be delayed until the

application is returned from the Forest Service Inspector. Also note the Forest Service Penalty System, Chapter 12.

2.2 Application for 1st installment Grant and 1st Premium – Form 2

The 1st installment of the afforestation Grant and 1st Premium are due for payment on completion of site operations and submission of a completed Form 2. The application must be completed and signed, at the time of submission, by both the applicant and the approved forester to whom pre-planting approval issued. If the applicant carries out the development works, the approved forester who completed the Form 1 must complete the Form 2 application having satisfied him/herself that the works have been carried out in accordance with the Form 1 specifications and Forest Service standards. No Form 2 will be processed for grant payment if the company who carried out the work is different from that which received approval at Form 1 stage unless specific prior written approval has been given by the Forest Service. The following enclosures must be submitted with the application:

- Certified Species Map - see Chapter 10
- Location map – see Chapter 10
- Biodiversity map
- Fire plan
- Statement of Costs
- Current Tax clearance certificate(s) or a C 2 Certificate for contractor(s) used
- Provenance Declaration Form- see Chapter 9 and Appendix 1
- A valid Mandate, if the grant is mandated to a Contractor or Bank. Details of the requirements for mandates are listed in Appendix 2 and sample Mandates are shown at Appendix 3 and 3A.
- Documentary evidence of farming income (as defined in Chapter 3) where the farmer rate of premium is being claimed.
- Proof of ownership documentation as detailed in Chapter 4

All grant schemes are cost based. As a result documentary evidence of costs expended and receipts for items purchased must be provided. If documentation is complete and the on-site inspection confirms the works have been carried out in compliance with the Scheme and that costs claimed are reasonable, the Afforestation Grant and 1st Premium are paid.

2.2.1 Statement of Costs

Only 1st installment / formation costs should be claimed and submitted at Form 2 stage. Second installment costs should not be included at Form 2 stage.

Invoice(s) are required for the cost of the works carried out. The cost of works must be broken down by the specific operations and quantified.

Direct Costs	Ground preparation (state area and operation), scrub clearance, plants, planting, fertilisation, 1st cleaning / spraying, fencing (State type and length of fence used), Fire Protection (State length of fire line), Mapping
Overhead Costs	Salaries, Miscellaneous costs, Supervision/Consultancy/Management (including profit element)
VAT	VAT where applicable should be shown separately for each operation

Sample Statement of Cost sheets are included at Appendices 20 and 21.

Where the applicant carried out the works she/he must provide a statement of the costs claimed for his/her own labour, see Appendix 21.

2.2.2 Catalogue of Costs

The catalogue of costs (available from the Forest Service) is based on a survey of current operating costs from forestry companies and individual contractors, and of plant costs from major nurseries. It is based on a high and low range for each operation. Costs claimed above the stated catalogue costs are considered in exceptional circumstances provided vouched receipts support them. This catalogue will be updated as necessary to factor in inflation or changing industry costs.

2.2.3 Overheads

Costs of approved foresters associated with their salaries, wages, consultancy, supervision and including profit element must be included in the allowance for overheads.

The recommended allowable overheads are as follows

Farmers and Individuals	25%	
Consultants/ Contractors	30%	(based on a turnover <€1,100,000)
Self assessment Companies	40%	(based on a turnover >€1,100,000)

If a Consultant or Company has a turnover greater than €1,100,000 they can claim overheads at 40 %.

Overheads are calculated as a percentage of direct costs.

2.3 Application for 2nd installment grant – Form 3

The 2nd installment afforestation grant is due for payment 4 years after the completion date of the plantation. Application for 2nd installment grant may be liable for an on-site inspection. An application for payment (Form 3) must be completed and signed by both the applicant and the approved forester at time of submission to the Forest Service.

If the entire plantation is up to the required standard the grant may be paid.

2.3.1 Forest Management Plans

All applicants must submit a management plan at Form 3 stage for plantations which are 10 ha or greater or where over 5ha of broadleaves have been planted, detailing proposed management to year 10. Any such application which is submitted without a plan will be returned to the applicant. A management plan is a document which contains details of forest crops planted and gives a general outline plan regarding the forest operations, which should take place over a specified time period. When plantations are 10 years old, and before payment of the 11th premium, an updated plan must be submitted detailing proposed management from year 11 to year 20. Examples of both plans are given in the Appendix 4 and Appendix 5. A management plan must be prepared by an approved forester.

The following details must be included in the management plan for years 4 to 10:

- Crop details (or reference to Form 3 details if no change has occurred)
- Management objectives (must include estimated age of first thinning, thinning cycle and clearfell age for each plot or sub compartment)
- Environmental objectives
- Work plan from year 4 to year 10
- A fire plan
- A declaration must be signed at Form 3 stage by the applicant stating that at year 10 - a subsequent management plan will be provided.

The following details must be included in the management plan for years 11 to 20

- Work plan to year 20
- Updated species map
- Stocking assessments
- Nutrient assessments
- Timing of Top height and yield class assessment
- Road requirements
- Pruning
- Age of first thinning, thinning intensity, clearfell age for each plot (this should be supplied even where first thin age is post year 20)

See sample Management plans (Appendix 4 and 5)

2.4 Application for subsequent Premium Payments - Form 4

The farmer rate of premium is payable for a period of 20 years and the non-farmer rate for a period of 15 years. All premiums subsequent to the 1st premium are applied for by completing a Form 4 which issues to the applicant annually from the Forest Service. At the end of year 10 the applicant must submit an updated species map and management plan for the subsequent 10 years. The eleventh and subsequent premiums are dependant on the applicant providing the Department with a brief updated management plan prior to the eleventh premium payment. See sample year 10 management plan at Appendix 5.

2.5 Rules for reduction/withholding of payments

2.5.1 1st Installment Grants

If part of the total planted area fails inspection the applicant can carry out remedial work within the current planting season and resubmit the entire Form 2 application,
or

Payment may proceed for part of the area that is up to standard. In this instance a Form 2 application covering only the part that has been satisfactorily planted is required. Another Form 2 covering the part that was not up to standard should be submitted for the remainder of the area when it is up to grant standard.

In such instances the date of completion of the plantation as entered on the first Form 2 submitted by the claimant, and confirmed by inspection, will determine the rate of grant and premium payment applicable.

2.5.2 2nd Installment Grants

2nd Installment grants will normally be paid only when the entire plantation is up to the required standard. If part of the plantation fails inspection, payment may be withheld on the entire area until the remedial works are carried out and the plantation established.

2.5.3 Premiums

Annual premium will only be reduced where part of a site is written off as not viable. Premiums will not be suspended until the applicant has been advised of remedial works required and given time scales for these works to be completed. If the applicant undertakes the remedial works proposed annual premium payments will continue to be made. If the second installment grant is refused because the plantation is not up to standard premium may be stopped until remedial works are carried out. Premium payments will continue only if the Inspector is satisfied that the applicant has undertaken the recommended remedial work to be completed within an agreed time scale. The Forest Service also carries out random premium inspections and if plantations are not managed in accordance with the rules of the schemes premiums may be put on hold or penalties may be applied.

2.6 Self Assessment Companies and Approved Foresters

The applicant and a forester whose name is included on the Forest Service Register of Approved Foresters must complete all Form 1, Form 2 and Form 3 applications. Any application not signed by the applicant and approved forester will not be accepted. The register includes both foresters employed by the companies approved under the Forest Service Self-Assessment Scheme and private consultants.

Private consultants wishing to be included on the Register of Approved Foresters must complete an application form, available from the Forest Service, which includes a signed undertaking that they have read and understood and will comply with the Forest Service Guidelines. In addition they must have Professional Indemnity Insurance of at least €320,000.

2.7 Responsibility for forest management

Responsibility for the successful establishment and management of forests rests with the applicant. The Department will not be held liable for any issue that arises regardless of whether the site had received a Departmental Inspection or not.