



09th March, 2023.

Circular 04/2023

To all Registered Foresters and other Stakeholder

Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027 – Interim arrangements for Ash die-back scheme

The new Forestry Programme 2023-2027 will come into force in 2023 subject to State Aid approval from the EU Commission. This process is ongoing, and all stakeholders will be updated on progress as the State Aid application moves closer to completion. Detailed discussions are ongoing so that the new Forestry Programme can be launched as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the Minister has approved an interim solution for the Ash die-back scheme, namely:

- **Interim Reconstitution Scheme for Ash-dieback (via General De Minimis)**

This scheme is being offered to those applicants that on 31/12/22 held a valid technical approval for the Reconstitution and Underplanting Scheme (RUS), but have not commenced reconstitution work and do not wish to wait until the launch of the Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027.

Features of the scheme are:

- Enhanced site clearance grant rate, increased to €2,000
- Enhanced grant rates as per draft Forestry programme 2023-2027
- Those applicants whose sites are still in premium will continue to receive the premium due for the remaining years.
- In addition, for those in receipt of farmer rate of premium, a top up premium equal to the difference between the equivalent FT and the existing premium will be paid. This will be calculated for the remaining years left in premium and paid in a single sum.
- For those in receipt of non-farmer rate of premium a top up €300 will be paid per hectare for the remaining period left in premium and paid in a single sum.

The scheme has been published and is available on the Department's website:  
[www.gov.ie/forestry](http://www.gov.ie/forestry) ; see information under Forestry grants and schemes



### **De Minimis**

De minimis payments must be cumulated with other forms of de minimis aid, including de minimis aid received through the agriculture sector and/or other sectors (Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013). In these cases the threshold is €200,000 over three fiscal years.

The terms and condition for both schemes are available on the DAFM website at: [www.gov.ie/forestry](http://www.gov.ie/forestry); see information under Forestry grants and schemes.

### **Next Steps**

If an applicant with a valid approval wishes to await the launch of the Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027, no further action is required.

If an applicant with a valid approval wishes to opt-in to the interim scheme they must:

- Sign up to the terms and conditions of the Interim Reconstitution scheme for Ash-dieback (via General De Minimis).
- Sign a De Minimis declaration.
- Declare which Forest Type(s) they are applying for.

Relevant forms are attached to the 'Forestry Early 2023 Interim Arrangements -FAQs' which is available on [www.gov.ie/forestry](http://www.gov.ie/forestry)

All eligible applicants will be notified of this interim arrangement option.

**Future decisions that may be introduced for the Reconstitution Scheme for Ash-die back in the new Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027 will apply to this Interim De Minimis scheme also.**

**Joanne Adams**

**Assistant Principal officer**

**Forestry Division**