



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

# Approvals Process for new & existing applications

# Categories of Applications



Three potential categories of landowners who can plant under the new Programme:

- **Category 1** – Valid licences under old Programme who had not yet commenced planting by 31/12/2022
  - Opt-in letters have issued to approx. 700 Afforestation licence holders (5,500 hectares)
  - Need Opt-in Declaration and Environmental Declaration from forester
  - Licences will be re-assessed to ensure that they meet the new environmental conditions
  - Letter will issue once assessment completed – full/partial approval or refusal
  - There may be additional conditions attached to the existing licence following re-assessment
  - Financial Approval can then be processed once Form 1(a) submitted – only for the area approved following re-assessment
  - To date, we have received opt-ins from 100 (1,735 hectares), environmental declarations from 95 of these

# Categories of Applications (cont.)



- **Category 2** – Applications under the old Programme where licences have not yet issued.
  - Opt-in letters have issued to approx. 440 applicants (3,900 hectares)
  - Need Opt-in Declaration and Environmental Declaration from forester
  - Once opted in, applications will be assessed under the new environmental conditions
  - Files with AA complete & currently held by Ecology team can be forwarded to Inspector for certification
  - Decision will issue in the usual manner
  - To date, we have received opt-ins from 326 applicants (3,000 hectares). Of these, we have received Environmental Declarations from 309.
  - Applications that aren't opted in by 31<sup>st</sup> December will be withdrawn

# Categories of Applications (cont.)



- **Category 3** – Applications submitted under the New Forestry Programme.
  - No opt in required
  - New mandatory document – Habitats map required with all Afforestation applications
  - Grant aided and non-grant aided assessed under the same environmental conditions
  - Since 6<sup>th</sup> September, we have received 46 grant aided applications – 28 of these are still at verification stage

# Common issues delaying applications



- Declaration by beneficiary not submitted with application
- Location of site notice not marked on bio map – site notices must be on a public road
- Maps not signed/dated; incorrect legends used
- Maps not in OS discovery format or to correct scale
- If plot crosses two townlands it needs to be split into two plots and documentation needs to mention all townlands
- Ensure documents are uploaded to correct contract

## Other notes:

- Please contact us if you need more time to respond to a further information request to avoid application being withdrawn
- Only submit a Form 1b when you have actually started planting



# Application Procedure



- Application started on iNet and documents uploaded
- Application received by Registration team and reg. forester queried if application incomplete
- Once application complete, application is advertised for 30 days public consultation
- Referrals issued and file referred to district inspector
- If screened in, file referred to Ecology - Appropriate Assessment carried out (some may go to Ecology when screened out too)
- Application advertised for additional 30 days public consultation if AA carried out
- If required, file referred to Archaeology at same time as Ecology
- Further information requests can issue at any time during this process – non-response to FIR leads to application being automatically withdrawn
- File is certified by inspector
- Decision issues
- Decision subject to 14 working day appeal period – day of advertising is Day 1 of appeal period

# Change re Site notices



It was identified that there was a need to align –

1. The period in which site notices are required to be maintained on site for five weeks,
2. The period when the application is first published on the DAFM website and Forestry Licence Viewer (FLV), and
3. The commencement of the 30-day period for public consultation.

To that end an amendment has been made to Regulation 11(2)(b) of the Forestry Regulations 2017, to the effect that the site notice for Afforestation and Forest Road projects –

- a) Must still be erected before making the application,
- b) Must be maintained in position on the land concerned for a period of not less than 5 weeks from the date of publication by the Minister on the DAFM website of the notice of application,**  
and
- c) Must be renewed or replaced if it is removed or becomes defaced or illegible within that period.

# Relevant Circulars



- ❖ Circular 08/2023 Requirement for Habitat Map for Afforestation applications
- ❖ Circular 13/2023 Opt-in to New Afforestation Scheme 2023-2027
- ❖ Circular 14/2023 Launch of Afforestation Scheme 2023-2027
- ❖ Circular 16/2023 Opt-in to New Afforestation Scheme 2023-2027 for valid licence holders
- ❖ Circular 17/2023 Updated FSAuth forms
- ❖ Circular 19/2023 Financial Approvals
- ❖ Afforestation Scheme 2023-2027 Form 1(a)(1b)(1c) Guidelines
- ❖ Circular 23/2023 Site Notice Amendment





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**Thank you**

