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Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Climate Resilient Reforestation Pilot Scheme

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Amendments

Version	Date of revision	Summary of changes
1.1	06/11/2025	Update to Section 11.1 to add mapping requirements and clarification on treatment of Areas of Biodiversity Enhancement Update to Section 8.9
1.2	10/03/2026	Grant rates updated as per the Mid-Term Review of the Forestry Programme 2023-2027

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1. Introduction

1.1 The overall objective of this Scheme is to increase the climate resilience of the national forest estate by expanding the proportion of forest land managed under permanent forest cover using close to nature silviculture. This aligns with one of the three objectives under the Forest Strategy, which looks for the '*rapid and sustainable expansion of climate resilient and biodiverse forests that support a healthy and high-quality environment'.*

This Scheme provides a range of options to support forest owners considering a move to close to nature forest management at reforestation stage. These options are arranged under three elements, as described below. An individual application under this Scheme can apply under one, two or all three elements (as long as no physical overlap exists and one element is selected per plot).

- **Element 1: Reforestation for Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF):** Encourages the design and layout of the replacement forest, in a manner that facilitates the future realisation of quality wood products using established CCF principles and practices.

- **Element 2: Reforestation for Native Forests:** Encourages the replacement, at reforestation stage, of existing conifer stands with the most appropriate native forest type or types for the site, using the Native Forest Framework (contained in the Forestry Standards Manual) and the various scenarios described therein. (Note, such projects were previously funded under the last Forestry Programme, under the Native Woodland Conservation Scheme.) The resulting native forest is permanent in nature and may be managed for quality wood products using established CCF principles and practices, which is a part of a wider Close to Nature forest management method where compatible with the ongoing development of the native woodland and its associated ecosystem.

- **Element 3: Reforestation for Biodiversity and Water:** Encourages the creation of undisturbed areas for biodiversity and water protection, with associated measures including drain-blocking, slow-water damming and the planting of widely-spaced groups of native broadleaves, typically in areas adjoining the water setback required at reforestation stage. This element aims to create a permanent semi-natural zone that will provide further protection to water and enhance biodiversity through the second rotation and beyond. (Note, Element 3 reflects the Biodiversity & Water ('Bio') Reforestation Objective set out in DAFM's Felling & Reforestation Policy.)

1.2 Forests reforested under this Scheme must meet the required silvicultural standards of the Scheme and must be managed in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Forest Management. Beneficiaries must also comply with national and EU legislation, and all circulars, operational and environmental guidelines and other requirements published by the Department. Only projects which receive prior written approval from the Department, and which are undertaken in compliance with the conditions of approval, will be eligible for support. Support will take the form of grants and annual Payments for Ecosystem Services (PESs) towards the costs of forest management and maintenance to enhance the ecosystem services that the site delivers. Applicants have a responsibility to ensure that forests are maintained according to the rules of the Scheme throughout the period of the contract. This management and maintenance are conditions of continued payment of aid under the Scheme.

1.3 The Scheme measures will be open to all private forest owners in Ireland.

1.4 This document should be read in conjunction with:

I. The Forestry Standards Manual, Standards for Felling & Reforestation, the Felling & Reforestation *Policy document,* and various scheme circulars can be downloaded from the Department's website at: www.gov.ie/forestry

II. Certain standards applicable under the Native Woodland Conservation Scheme, as set out in the Native Woodland Conservation Scheme document;

III. DAFM's Native Forest Framework document (in relation to CRR Element 2), as contained in the Forestry Standards Manual;

IV. Any/all circulars amending the requirements of this Climate Resilient Reforestation Pilot Scheme that are periodically issued by DAFM**.**

1.5 In order to undertake operations associated with this Scheme, it is necessary to have the following:

(i) a valid felling licence with the same replanting species as those proposed in the Scheme application; or

(ii) written agreement from DAFM that the replanting species can be changed. For details, please refer to the FAQs published with this Scheme document.

(iii) an application for a tree felling licence should be submitted in conjunction with the application for this Scheme. To avoid complexity and possible delays, the TFL application should share the same 'footprint' as the project itself, i.e. it should not include other forest stands outside of those being applied for under this Scheme. Also, no operations associated with this Scheme can take place until Scheme approval and a valid felling licence (or written DAFM agreement to a change in the reforestation species) have issued and the 14 working day appeal window on the licence has passed.

1.6 This Scheme is operating as a pilot with an annual limit of 525ha. When this limit is met, DAFM will issue a circular stating same to Registered Foresters and will close the application portal on iNET.

1.7 The inclusion of discrete Biodiversity Area (ABEs - Area of Biodiversity Enhancement) plot/s outside of those areas funded under CRR Element 3 (see Section 7) is not permitted under the CRR scheme.

1.8 One application can be made per forest owner per year for the duration of this Pilot Scheme.

2. Legal Basis

2.1 The Legal basis for the Scheme is established under Section 6 of the Forestry Act, 2014.

- The Scheme is administered by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and operates throughout the State. The Scheme shall be operational from 26/07/2024 for a period to be determined by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- The Scheme is 100% Exchequer funded under the following legal framework.
- Is operated pursuant to the European Union guidelines for State aid in the agriculture and forestry sector and in rural areas (2022/C485/01)
- The Scheme is subject to Council Regulation (EC) No 2015/1589 of 13 July 2015 laying down detailed rules for the application of Article 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (codification) – the **Procedural Regulation** - (Codification of Council Regulation (EC) 659/1999 as amended), which governs the procedure on recovery of aid.
- Participation in the Scheme is voluntary.

3. State Aid requirements

3.1 The Incentive Effect

This applies only where the applicant is a small/medium enterprise SME. Small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined in the EU Recommendation 2003/361/EC) must confirm and declare on the Climate Resilient Reforestation Scheme Pilot Application that:

"*The work described herein, would not have been undertaken if it was not for the financial support provided under State Aid rules. Without this aid, there would be no change to current activities.*"

For large companies, documentary evidence must be submitted in relation to the counterfactual (what would happen without the aid) for each of the measures proposed. This involves a credibility check of the counterfactual to establish that the company would not carry out the proposed work in the absence of aid. A counterfactual is credible if it is genuine and relates to the decision-making factors prevalent at the time of the decision by the beneficiary regarding the activity.

Large companies must submit an internal company document (separate to the application form) showing that the company has analysed the viability of the project – with and without aid – and showing the incentive effect. The document must clearly state what would have happened without the support available under this Scheme.

That means that the documentation (internal report) produced by the company must establish that the aid will cause at least one of the following:

- a material increase in the size of the project /activity, or
- a material increase in the scope of the project / activity, or
- material increase in the total amount spent by the beneficiary on the project/activity or
- a material increase in the speed of completion of the project/activity concerned

DAFM will require that the company document shows a credible analysis and demonstration of the incentive effect. The document should contain an analysis which answers the following questions:

- Would the project proceed without State Aid assistance?
- Would the level of project expenditure be less without State Aid support? If so, indicate by how much?

This information should indicate changes in the project size, scope and total spend. Where required, this incentive effect document should be submitted with the relevant Form 1. As part of its evaluation of the application, the Forest Service will assess whether or not the incentive document meets the requirements set out above and is fully compliant with the European Union Guidelines for State Aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

3.2 Proportionality of the aid

Aid granted under this Scheme must be proportionate. Support is considered proportional only if the same result could not be achieved with less aid, in other words if the amount of aid is

limited to the minimum necessary. The aid amount should not exceed the minimum necessary to render the project sufficiently profitable, for example should not lead to increase its IRR beyond the normal rates of return applied by the undertaking concerned in other investment projects of a similar kind or, when available, to increase its IRR beyond the cost of capital of the undertaking as a whole or beyond the rates of return commonly observed in the sector concerned. For example, the IRR should be comparable with returns experienced by entities which are not large companies. Where the IRR exceeds this reference figure then the application may be refused.

Large Companies must provide documentary evidence that the aid is proportionate. This can be achieved by submitting an IRR and NPV analysis of the investment with aid and without aid with the Form 1. Only applications which are deemed proportionate will be grant aided by the Forest Service.

3.3 **Transparency**

Ireland shall publish the following information on the State aid schemes: the full text of the notified aid scheme and its implementing provisions, the granting authority, the names of the individual beneficiaries, the form (in particular the aid instrument) and amount of aid granted to each beneficiary, the date of granting, the type of undertaking (SME/ large enterprise), the region (at Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics or NUTS level II) in which the beneficiary is located and the principal economic sector in which the beneficiary has its activities, at NACE group level. This requirement only applies to individual aid awards greater than:

(i) EUR 10,000 for beneficiaries active in the primary agricultural production;
(ii) EUR 100,000 for beneficiaries in the sectors of the processing of agricultural products, the marketing of agricultural products, the forestry sector or activities falling outside the scope of Article 42 of the Treaty.

4. Objectives of the Scheme

4.1 The overall objective of this Scheme is to increase the climate resilience of the national forest estate by increasing the proportion of forest land managed under permanent forest cover using close to nature silviculture. This aligns with one of the three objectives under the Forest Strategy, which looks for the '*rapid and sustainable expansion of climate resilient and biodiverse forests that support a healthy and high-quality environment'.*

Increasing the area of uneven aged forest is consistent with objectives of the EU Forest Strategy and the European Commission's proposal for a Nature Restoration Law, which include targets for uneven aged forests.

Mandatory reforestation conditions are determined as per Felling and Reforestation Policy (DAFM, 2017). The opportunity exists to incentivise species diversity and alternative forest management systems at reforestation stage over and above the mandatory requirements. The uptake of this incentivisation can result in an increase in the resilience and adaptiveness of forest land to climate related threats. In addition to mandatory conditions regarding reforestation set out in the Tree Felling Licence, all elements of this Scheme will be subject to the DAFM's Forestry Standards Manual, including the lists therein regarding acceptable species, origin and provenance. The grant funding available through this Scheme can be used for material and operations (or 'eligible works') that will ensure the successful reforestation of the site with the approved tree species. Such eligible works include the purchase of forest transplants, planting, fencing, deer tree shelters, vegetation management and the replacement of early mortalities (see the eligible works under each Elements 1-3, below).

Private forest owners will be eligible for an annual Payment for Ecosystem Services "PES", for 7 years which represents an additional payment in recognition of the social, environmental and climate services provided by the forest owner by choosing an alternative management system, and the additional costs incurred in doing so.

In addition to the above, the Climate Resilient Reforestation Scheme aims to:

i. encourage the reforestation of sites in a way that facilitates the application of continuous cover forest (CCF) management and long-term forest retention;
ii. create and enhance natural systems by linking existing habitats and by creating new forest types capable of supporting a wide range of flora and fauna, within larger forest areas;
iii. support the achievement of the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland in areas where forestry is characterised as a significant pressure (either alone or alongside other land uses);
iv. provide enhanced ecosystem services arising from forest cover;
v. expand the area under native woodland, thereby realising the associated ecosystem services relating to native woodland habitats and their associated flora and fauna.
vi. increase the area of forests suitable for use by members of the public for forest recreation and amenity, thereby promoting a range of social benefits, including health and well-being (Note, applicants under this Scheme are not required to open up the area to the public. This is optional, but if pursued, a parallel application can be made under the NeighbourWood Scheme when it opens for recreational facilities.)
vii. develop forest-based biomass resources to support the circular and green economy in commercial and domestic markets;
viii. support carbon sequestration, climate change mitigation and forest resilience through appropriate species selection and sustainable forest management; and

ix. provide a forest resource to support the economic viability and sustainability of rural communities through increased use of wood and wood products in construction and energy production, and through other direct and indirect activities (e.g. the realisation of non-wood products from the forest, or the use of the forest as an onsite attraction).

5. Element 1: Reforestation for Continuous Cover Forestry

5.1. Objective & Purpose

Element 1: Reforestation for Continuous Cover Forestry encourages the creation, at reforestation stage, of multi-functional forest specifically designed and laid out to be managed for quality timber production under established CCF principles and practices.

This will thereby deliver ecosystem services associated with CCF, an approach which avoids future clear felling on the site, e.g. the retention of the forest ecosystem, the protection of water and soil, enhanced landscape, etc. Under Element 1, the species selected for reforestation must be compatible with CCF management, and may comprise non-native, naturalised and native species of conifers and broadleaves, planted in the form of silviculturally appropriate mixtures.

5.2 Main requirements

- The project area must be reforested using complementary mixtures of conifers and / or broadleaves. The species involved can be non-native, naturalised or native to the island of Ireland.
- The measure will be limited to free draining mineral sites only to reduce the risk of windblow.
- All sites must be capable of supporting the vigorous growth and sustainable long-term development of the new forest canopy. This must be achievable without the need for fertiliser input.
- Applications involving sites subject to severe and persistent threats that could undermine the long-term viability of the project (e.g. sites within a locality heavily infested with rhododendron or within a deer hotspot) must include a comprehensive action plan that address these issues as part of the Replacement Management Plan.
- In general elevations above 300 metres are to be avoided as the risk of windthrow increases significantly.
- The maximum area per application is 12ha.
- Under Element 1, reforestation must adhere to either of the following two scenarios. An application may contain both scenarios but can only select one scenario per plot.
- All species must be planted at a stocking rate of 2,500 stems / ha on all sites and at a spacing of 2.0 x 2 metres
- Mandatory environmental setbacks required at reforestation stage, for water, public roads, archaeology, etc. must remain unplanted.

Scenario	Planting mixture
Scenario 1: Sitka Spruce/ other conifer, Oak plus other broadleaves.	Sitka Spruce (55%), other conifer (25%) (minimum of two other conifer species), Oak (10%) other broadleaves (10%). • Changes + or – 20% for each species will be accepted. (Sitka Spruce to a max of 55% of total area). • Species selection should reflect site type. • Conifer can be planted in Intimate line mixtures or Group mixtures (25 to 100 trees per group). Broadleaves suited to the site also to be incorporated in small groups 25 to 100 trees per group. • Minor species to be planted along the edge of the emerging canopy and / or alongside hedgerows. • Mandatory minimum 20% broadleaf requirement for this Element
Scenario 2: Norway Spruce or Western Red Cedar and other broadleaves.	Norway Spruce (55%), other conifer (25%) (minimum of two other conifer species), Oak (10%) Other broadleaves (10%). • Changes + or – 20% for each species will be accepted. (Norway Spruce to a max of 55% of total area). • Species selection should reflect site type. • Conifer can be planted in Intimate line mixtures or Group mixtures (25 to 100 trees per group). Broadleaves suited to the site also to be incorporated in small groups 25 to 100 trees per group. • Minor species to be planted along the edge of the emerging canopy and / or alongside hedgerows. • Mandatory minimum 20% broadleaf requirement for this Element

Note: In order to be eligible for the 1st grant, plots reforested under Element 1 must have at least 100% of the original stocking at reforestation, spread evenly over the site. Applicants must commit to undertaking filling in during the subsequent planting season, to bring stocking back up to 100%. To be eligible for the 2nd grant, at least 90% of the original stocking level must be evident, spread evenly over the site and established (i.e. growing freely above competing vegetation). The above does not apply to mandatory environmental setbacks required at reforestation stage, for water, public roads, archaeology, etc.

5.3 Financial supports

Element 1	
Grant: €2,200 per treated ha	PES2: CCF Annual payment of €150 per treated ha for 7 years

5.4 Annual Target

The target set for the uptake of Element 1 of the Climate Resilient Reforestation Scheme is 200 ha per year.

6. Element 2 Reforestation for Native Forests

6.1 Objective & Purpose

Element 2: Reforestation for Native Forests encourages the replacement of existing conifer stands at reforestation stage, with the most appropriate native forest type or types appropriate for that site, as identified using the Native Forest Framework and the various scenarios described therein. These scenarios are as follows:

Scenario 1: Podzols (Oak-Birch-Holly Woodland)

Scenario 2: Brown Podzolics (Oak-Birch-Holly with Hazel Woodland)

Scenario 3: Brown Earths (Oak-Ash-Hazel Woodland)

Scenario 4: Gleys (Alder-Oak-Ash Woodland)

Scenario 5: Highly Modified Peat & Peaty Podzols (Pioneer Birch Woodland)

Scenario 6: Alluvial Floodplains (Alluvial Woodland) (details pending)

After reforestation, the site is to be managed to encourage the development of that native forest type(s), on a close to nature basis, for the purpose of delivering native forest ecosystem / biodiversity and associated benefits regarding wider biodiversity within the landscape, habitat connectivity, the protection of water, etc. Wood production is also permitted within forest areas realised under this element, where compatible with the primary objective of delivering native forest ecosystem / biodiversity.

This element has a particular relevance in situations where the gradual conversion of non-native forest to native forest may not be realistic due to site and stand conditions. For example, any attempt to transform an older even-aged conifer stand on peat to native forest is likely to lead to catastrophic windthrow early on in the process. In such cases, replacement (at reforestation stage) may be the best, or indeed the only, viable option.

6.2 Main requirements

The Native Forest Framework, as contained in the Forestry Standards Manual, applies under Element 2, whereby soil type, site features and vegetation are used to identify the most appropriate native forest type or types appropriate for the site.

Element 2 is open to all reforestation sites (subject to the Schemes terms and conditions). However, sites with a high ecological priority (Element 2a in IFORS) will be eligible for an increased grant rate and additional premium payment (PES 4), where a clear ecological benefit can be demonstrated. A project area that meets one or more of the following criteria is regarded as an Ecological Priority Site under Element 2a of this Scheme:

- Project area within and / or adjoining an ‘ancient woodland’ site, i.e. a site that has been under continuous woodland cover since 1650.

- Project area within and / or adjoining a woodland or forest designated for conservation purposes under European and / or national legislation, due to its particular native woodland habitat type (e.g. SACs, NHAs and pNHAs).

- Project area within and / or adjoining an undesignated forest comprising woodland habitat(s) listed under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive.

- Project area within and / or adjoining an 'old woodland' site, i.e. a site that has been under continuous woodland cover since the 1830s.

- Project area adjoining or traversed by an aquatic zone and within a catchment of heightened sensitivity regarding water, where reforestation with native woodland will contribute to the protection of water quality and aquatic habitats and species. Such areas include the subbasins of high status objective waterbodies or waterbodies where forestry is listed as a pressure under the current River Basin Management Plan for Ireland; areas identified in the Environmental requirements for Afforestation as being acid sensitive, and areas within the Top 8 Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments.

- Project area within 2 km of a woodland designated for conservation purposes under European and / or national legislation, due to its native woodland type / habitat.

- Project area within 2 km of a non-woodland habitat designated for conservation purposes under European and / or national legislation.

- Projects involving the ecologically compatible development of a native woodland amenity for public access and recreation, woodland interpretation and environmental education.

- Mandatory environmental setbacks required at reforestation stage, for water, public roads, archaeology, etc. must remain unplanted.

Furthermore, the following also apply under Element 2b of this Scheme:

- All sites must be capable of supporting the vigorous growth and sustainable long-term development. of the native forest type(s) identified using the Native Forest Framework document. This must be achievable without the need for fertiliser input.

- Applications involving sites subject to severe and persistent threats that could undermine the long-term viability of the project (e.g. sites within a locality heavily infested with rhododendron or within a deer 'hotspot') must include a comprehensive action plan that address these issues, as part of the Replacement Management Plan.

- Reforestation under Element 2a and b must follow the prescribed planting mixtures for the particular native woodland type identified for the site (or part thereof), as set out in the Native Woodland Framework. If two or more different native woodland types are identified for different parts of the project area, assign separate plots and apply the corresponding planting mixtures within each, as per the Framework.

All trees planted under Element 2a and b must come from seed sources from within the island of Ireland, unless otherwise allowed through periodic DAFM circulars.

- In general elevations, above 300 metres are to be avoided as the risk of windthrow increases significantly.

- The maximum area per application is 12ha.

- All species must be planted at a stocking rate of 2,500 stems / ha on all sites and at a spacing of 2.0 x 2 metres.

Note: In order to be eligible for the 1st grant, plots reforested under Element 2a and b must have at least 100% of the original stocking at reforestation, spread evenly over the site. Applicants must commit to undertaking filling in during the subsequent planting season, to bring stocking back up to 100%. To be eligible for the 2nd grant, at least 90% of the original stocking level must be evident, spread evenly over the site and established (i.e. growing freely above competing vegetation). The above does not apply to mandatory environmental setbacks required at reforestation stage, for water, public roads, archaeology, etc.

6.3 Financial supports

2a) For Ecological Priority Sites (i.e. sites that met one or more of the qualifying criteria described above):	
Grant: €4,800 per treated ha	PES1: NW Conversion: Annual payment of €500 per treated ha for 7 years PES4: Environmental Enhancement: Annual payment of €150 per treated ha for 7 years

2b) For all other sites:	
Grant: €2,700 per ha	PES1: NW Conversion: Annual payment of €500 per treated ha for 7 years

6.4 Annual Target

The target set for the uptake of Element 2 of the Climate Resilient Reforestation Scheme is 200 ha per year.

7. Element 3 Reforestation for Biodiversity and Water

7.1 Objective & Purpose

Element 3: Reforestation for Biodiversity and Water involves the replacement of conifer stands at reforestation with native broadleaves planted at wider spacings or as groups, complimented by drain blocking, slow water damming and the creation of attenuation areas. In time, as natural ground vegetation develops and natural hydrological conditions return, such areas will provide increased biodiversity and will protect and enhance water quality and aquatic ecosystems.

Element 3 is aimed at areas of existing forest adjoining aquatic zones in highly sensitive catchments, where the above prescription, strategically applied, will augment the role of the unplanted water setback applied at reforestation, creating a permanent semi-natural zone that will provide further protection to water and enhance biodiversity through the second rotation and beyond. (Note, Element 3 reflects the Biodiversity & Water ('BIO') Reforestation Objective set out in DAFM's Felling & Reforestation Policy.) Such areas include, but are not limited to, the subbasin of high status objective waterbodies or subbasins where forestry is a significant pressure (as identified under the WFD process), and the Top 8 Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments. This element is also aimed at areas either within or directly adjoining European or nationally designated sites, where the qualifying interests comprise open habitats or species that require open habitats.

The resulting area will then be managed to enhance its function as an area for biodiversity and aquatic protection. Such management may include the control of non-native regeneration and colonising exotic species.

The resulting creation of mosaics of open habitats and native scrub/forest will enhance the protection of watercourses and benefit other biodiversity features or habitats, including adjoining designated areas. In addition, it will promote riparian restoration, increased protection of wetlands and hydrological restoration. In relation to certain upland bird species, it can also be used to increase habitat connectivity, foraging opportunities and wider commuting corridors within and through larger forest areas. Element 3 can also be used in a similar way in relation to certain bat species.

This element of the Scheme can be used in a similar way in relation to bat species, for example:

- within the distribution gap for Lesser Horseshoe Bat in Limerick and North Kerry for the creation of foraging areas, commuting corridors, and for facilitating access to foraging areas and roost sites (See Annex 4). This area has been highlighted in the Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan 2022 – 2026 as being important if further fragmentation of the national population is to be prevented.

  *foraging area and commuting corridors must be curved in design. Straight corridors are not to be used as bats find it hard to fly into head wind and this design make it difficult for flying as it causes wind tunnelling.

- within 2.5 km of an SAC where Lesser Horseshoe Bat is a Qualifying Interest for the creation of commuting corridors, facilitating access to foraging areas.

This measure will be targeted at subbasins of waterbodies with a high status objective, subbasins where forestry is listed as a pressure and areas where increased habitat connectivity, increased

foraging opportunities and wider commuting corridors within and through larger forest areas would benefit protected bird species.

7.2 Main requirements

- Applications for Element 3 are limited to an area no greater than 5 ha and 100 metres in width.
- All sites must be capable of supporting the vigorous growth and sustainable long-term development of those trees planted. This must be achievable without the need for fertiliser input.
- The minimum initial planting density required is 1,100 stems / ha, planted at 3m x 3m spacing. Focus on the drier, more fertile areas of the site Alternatively, the prescribed number of plants can be arranged into groups planted in the most suitable locations on the site. Stocking can also be achieved by planting groups on drier and more fertile areas of the site. Stocking density within these groups is 1.5m x 1.5m. Groups to be evenly spread across the site where possible, avoid wet areas, groups 25 to 100 trees per group.
- Note that the Native Forest Framework does not apply to Element 3. However, trees planted must be native broadleaf species suited to the immediate site conditions.
- All trees planted under Element 3 must come from sources from within the island of Ireland, unless otherwise allowed through periodic DAFM circulars. The related requirements that apply under the Native Woodland Conservation Scheme apply to Element 3.
- In projects which include or adjoin an aquatic zones, the planting must not encroach into the water setback installed at reforestation stage, along the aquatic zone.
- Applications involving sites subject to severe and persistent threats that could undermine the long-term viability of the project (e.g. sites within a locality heavily infested with rhododendron or within a deer 'hotspot') must include a comprehensive action plan that address these issues, as part of the Replacement Management Plan.
- In general, sites with an elevations above 300 metres are to be avoided as the risk of windthrow increases significantly.
- Sites submitted under Element 3 must be situated:
    - within or directly adjoin a site designated for nature conservation, under national and / or European legislation; and / or
    - within the subbasin of a high status objective waterbody or subbasins where Forestry has been identified as a pressure under the WFD process, and / or
    - within one of the Top 8 Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments; and / or
    - within any of the six SPAs designated for breeding Hen Harrier, where Element 3 can be used to create and enhance foraging opportunities, to promote habitat linkage and to widen flight corridors within the wider forest resource, and / or
    - within the distribution gap for Lesser Horseshoe Bat in Limerick and North Kerry, where the Element 3 can be used to create foraging areas and commuting corridors, or to facilitate foraging areas and roost sites (See Annex 4) (This area has been highlighted in the Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan 2022 – 2026 as being important if further fragmentation of the national population is to be prevented. Note, foraging areas and commuting corridors for this species of bat must be curved in design, to avoid wind tunnelling which affects flight.); and / or

- within 2.5 km of an SAC where Lesser Horseshoe Bat is a Qualifying Interest, and where the Element can be used to create commuting corridors and facilitate access to foraging areas.
- Applications in other areas may be considered by DAFM on a case-by-case basis, where the ecosystem services realised will significantly benefit a high profile environmental / ecological sensitivity. In such cases, the applicant must submit clear reasoning with the application, setting out why the project should be considered.

- Mandatory environmental setbacks required at reforestation stage, for water, public roads, archaeology, etc. must remain unplanted.

Eligible operations under Element 3 are as follows:

- The purchase and planting of suitable native broadleaf species, either widely spaced at 3 m x 3 m spacing, or in groups at 1.5 m x 1.5 m spacing, focused on the drier, more fertile areas of the site. Required stocking level is 1,100 trees / ha.
- Vegetation management around planted trees.
- Filling in of tree mortalities.
- Drain blocking, slow-water damming, the redirection of drains and the creation of water attenuation areas, to provide further protection to water and to aid the hydrological restoration of the site.
- The initial control of the natural regeneration of non-native tree species, and early-stage colonisation by invasive exotic species (note, the ongoing control of both is the responsibility of the owner).
- Protection against grazing.
- Other appropriate operations, on application to DAFM and on a case-by-case basis, for example, the retention of open areas for use by certain bird and bat species, for foraging and commuting.

Note: In order to be eligible for the 1st grant, plots reforested under Element 3 must have at least 100% of the original stocking at reforestation, spread evenly over the site. Applicants must commit to undertaking filling in during the subsequent planting season, to bring stocking back up to 100%. To be eligible for the 2nd grant, at least 90% of the original stocking level must be evident, spread evenly over the site and established (i.e. growing freely above competing vegetation). The above does not apply to mandatory environmental setbacks required at reforestation stage, for water, public roads, archaeology, etc.

7.3 Financial Support

Element 3	
Grant: €3,000 per treated ha	PES6: Water Protection Annual payment of €350 per treated ha for 7 years

7.4 Annual Target

The target set for the uptake of Element 3 of the Climate Resilient Reforestation Scheme is 125 ha per year.

8. Eligibility

8.1 Individuals applying for participation in the Scheme must be over 18 years of age and hold a Personal Public Service Number (PPSN). Companies must provide their company registration details (CRO number).

8.2 Applicants seeking technical approval under the Scheme must be the owner, leaseholder or joint manager of the land at the time of the application.

8.3 In order to qualify for payment of reforestation grants and (PES), the applicant must own, lease or be in joint management of the lands proposed for planting. Applicants must provide documentary evidence of ownership and of leasing or joint management where relevant, as detailed in the *Forestry Standards Manual*. This documentary evidence is typically required at submission of the claim for the 1st Grant Instalment but may also be sought at after a pre-approval application has been submitted.

8.4 The Department will refuse applications for grant aid where it is found that an application was made by a person other than a person that meets the above criteria.

8.5 Forests reforested and maintained in accordance with the Scheme will be eligible for payment of both a reforestation grant towards the cost of replanting, and an annual (PES) payment for a period of 7 years, linked to the realisation by the project of certain ecosystem services.

8.6 Financial aid: this Scheme is only open to private forest owners that meet their respective reforestation elements eligibility criteria.

8.7 In order to undertake operations associated with this Scheme, it is necessary to have the following:

(ii) a valid felling licence with the same replanting species as those proposed in the Scheme application; or
(ii) written agreement from DAFM that the replanting species can be changed. For details, please refer to the FAQs published with this Scheme document.
(iii) an application for a tree felling licence should be submitted in conjunction with the application for this Scheme. To avoid complexity and possible delays, the TFL application should share the same 'footprint' as the project itself, i.e. it should not include other forest stands outside of those being applied for under this Scheme. Also, no operations associated with this Scheme can take place until Scheme approval and a valid felling licence (or written DAFM agreement to a change in the reforestation species) have issued and the 14 working day appeal window on the licence has passed.

8.8 To be eligible to enter this Scheme the applicant must adhere to all conditions on their felling licence for the licensed area.

8.9 Holders of a felling licence who have already clearfelled their forest may be eligible apply for this Scheme. For details, please refer to the FAQs published with this Scheme document.

8.10 One application can be made per forest owner per year for the duration of this Pilot Scheme.

9. Grant and PES Premiums

9.1 A fixed grant towards the costs, subject to the maximum laid down in **Annex 1**, will be available to private land-holders for projects which comply with the requirements, terms and conditions of this Scheme. Grants and (PES) will be available only for projects which, prior to replanting, have been granted a pre - technical approval (see section 9.3 to 9.5 below) by the Department, following the online submission of a pre-approval application using DAFM's iNET application system. Aid for reforestation under these measures will be granted solely in connection with duly justified and substantiated costs; and no over-compensation will take place.

9.2 Grants will be paid in two instalments. The first instalment (75%) may be claimed immediately after planting. The second instalment (25%) can be claimed no sooner than 4 years after planting has been completed, as outlined in **Annex 1**. All payments of grants will be conditional on the forest being successfully reforested and maintained in compliance with the conditions of approval and standards as outlined in the *Forestry Standards Manual*. Any area planted outside of the approved area will not be eligible for grant aid.

9.3 Application for payment of the 1st Instalment Grant and 1st (PES) Premium may be made following replanting, in accordance with the terms of the technical approval. The time limit for submission of claims for the 1st Instalment Grant will be 12 weeks after date of completion of planting. The 1st Instalment Grant claim must be made using DAFM's iFORIS iNET application system which has been designed for submitting pre-approval applications and claiming related grant payments for planted lands. Where a 1st Instalment Grant claim is received after the prescribed period, the applicant must submit a written explanation for its late submission and it will be at the discretion of the Department as to whether or not the application can be accepted.

9.4 Subsequent (PES) premiums (i.e. claims for 2nd and subsequent premiums) shall be claimed by applicants using DAFM's online services. Applicants will be enabled as registered users for the DAFM's online AgFood services as part of the application process (See Section 9).

9.5 Application for payment of the 2nd Instalment Grant shall be made using DAFMs iNET system. Applications for payment will be made available via iNET in the 3 months before the 4th anniversary of the completion date of the forest. The 5th and subsequent premiums can be claimed when due each year following payment of the 2nd Instalment Grant.

9.6 **Annex 1** details the grant and premium rates payable to entrants to the Scheme. The Minister reserves the right to alter these rates at any time. Beneficiaries of grant aid under this Scheme are required to retain all receipts and invoices relating to work undertaken to reforest and maintain the forest for a period of 6 years following payment of the 1st instalment grant. The Minister may, at their discretion, require the submission to the Department of such receipts and/or invoices at any time during this period.

10. Conditions of Aid

10.1 Where an applicant makes an application for aid that is deemed valid and is approved by the Department, a contract then exists under the Scheme between the applicant and the Minister. The terms and conditions of this *Scheme* as set out in this document (which may be revised from time to time by the Minister), any circulars amending the Scheme requirements, all application forms, maps and submitted documents, including letters of approval and, where appropriate, remedial works notifications, form the terms and conditions of this contract. The contract will be identified by the contract number (**CN**) assigned to it by the Department when the application for approval is received via DAFM's iNET system.

10.2 PES Payments will be based on either the area claimed as eligible for payment by the applicant (on 1st Grant Claim, 2nd Grant Claim or Subsequent Grant Claim and associated maps) **or** the area determined by the Department to be eligible for payment, whichever is the lesser.

i. The Department's computerised mapping and payment system (iFORIS) is used by the Department to capture a digital representation of the payment area based on the applicant's claim map. Capturing the claim map in a digital form allows for the accurate measurement and calculation of the payment area. The process of electronically capturing the claim map is referred to as ***digitisation***. The **digitised area** of a contract (i.e. the entire forest) is the sum of the areas of the individual forest plots (including biodiversity) comprising that contract number or forest. For each plot contained in an application for payment, the **digitised area** is the entire area of the forest plot within the perimeter boundary of that plot measured by the Department's iFORIS system.

ii. The **determined area** of a contract number or forest is the sum of the areas, determined by the Department to be eligible for payment, of the individual forest plots comprising that contract number or forest. The determined area is calculated by excluding any ineligible areas (e.g. power line corridors, rock, gas lines, or ineligible areas.

iii. The **claimed area** is the total area of the forest plots specified by the applicant in the application as being claimed for payment of a reforestation grant or premium payment. The claimed area is calculated by the applicant by deducting any part of the plot that is not eligible to receive reforestation grant and premium payments (e.g. power line corridors, rock, gas lines and ineligible areas, from the digitised area.

iv. Whichever is the lesser of the **claimed area** or the **determined area** is deemed to be the area eligible for payment, known as the **payable area**. This is the area on which payments of reforestation grants and premiums will be based, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Scheme as regards submission of proof of ownership.

10.3 Where an area delineated as the payable area on a claim map submitted by the applicant differs from the area specified on the species plot table attached to a map or the area specified as part of the 1st Instalment Grant Claim, 2nd Instalment Grant Claim or Subsequent Grant Claim, the **lesser** of these areas will be deemed to be the area claimed by the applicant.

10.4 Where the determined area (i.e. the area determined by the Department) is greater than the claimed area (i.e. the area claimed by the applicant), this is deemed to be an under-claim. In such cases, a new revised claimed area equal to the determined area can be submitted by the applicant in respect of the following and all subsequent payments due under the contract. The onus is on the applicant to satisfy themself that the revised claim that s/he is submitting is correct. This revised claimed area will then be deemed to be the payable area for the remainder of the grant and premium payments due under the contract. This change cannot be

applied retrospectively, and no back money will be paid in respect of payments that were made or, in the case of annual (PES) premiums, were due to be paid before the revised claim is submitted. (If not already due for payment or paid by the time the revised claim is submitted, the 2nd Instalment Grant will be calculated and paid on the basis of the revised claim but no back money will be paid in respect of the 1st Instalment Grant already paid.)

10.5 A 1st Instalment Grant will not be paid until ownership has been established and full proof of ownership has been provided to the Department within the time limit specified in Section 9.

10.6 Where correspondence (i.e. a remedial works letter) is issued to the applicant specifying remedial works required to bring their forest up to standard, the date specified in that letter by which the works must be completed is binding on the applicant. In exceptional circumstances, the Minister may grant an extension to that date. Requests for such extensions must be submitted in writing by the applicant and registered forester at least 30 days before the expiry of the original deadline for completion. Failure to complete the specified works to the satisfaction of the Forestry Division will result in a penalty, as set out in the document titled *Forestry Schemes Penalty Schedules*.

10.7 Grants and/or PES premiums will be paid only when the entire forest is up to the required standard. Where part of the forest fails inspection, payment will be withheld on the entire area until remedial works are carried out and the forest is replanted to the required standard.

10.8 Where, following review, DAFM decides that it is not possible to bring the forest, or part thereof, up to the required standard, no further payment will be made for that area. Where the grant and/or premium, or part thereof, is not to be paid, the Forestry Division may also require repayment of the amount paid in respect of the forest or in respect of the area that does not meet the required standard.

10.9 Payments shall be made in respect of applicants who make valid applications prepared by a registered forester and who have reforested their forest in accordance with the conditions of the technical approval and financial and in compliance with:

i. All relevant EU requirements and national legislation for the time being in force including, but not limited to, the European Union guidelines for State aid in the agriculture and forestry sector and in rural areas (2022/C485/01);

ii. The terms and conditions of this Scheme as set out in this document (and any subsequent revisions thereof), any circulars amending the Scheme requirements, application forms, letters of approval and, where appropriate, remedial works notifications;

iii. Forestry Standards Manual;

Duration of a contract under the Scheme

10.10 The duration or expiry of a reforestation contract in its entirety, is set out below:

The duration or expiry of all Climate Resilient Reforestation contracts is limited by either the payment of 7 annual Payments for Ecosystem Services or the end of the 9th year (calendar year) from the date of completion of the reforestation that was specified with the information submitted in support of the claim for the 1st instalment grant, whichever of these limits comes first.

i. Where circumstances exist that may require an extension of the contract term (for example, outstanding remedial works), the expiry date of a contract may be extended at the discretion of the Minister.

ii. Any payments not applied for in accordance with the Scheme and/or not approved for payment by the expiry of the contract may be forfeited at the discretion of the Minister. The Minister reserves the right to forfeit any payments on the basis of non-compliance with the requirements of the Scheme.

11. Application Procedure

DAFM is charged with administering the CRR Scheme are based in Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford. Email contact information for DAFM sections processing pre-approval applications and related grant applications are listed below. The section can also be contacted by phone at 053 916 3400.

Email Addresses	Queries
forestryappenq@agriculture.gov.ie	Pre-Approvals, application procedures
forestry.1stgrant@agriculture.gov.ie	1st Grant and 1st premium
forestry.premiums@agriculture.gov.ie	Subsequent premiums
forestry.2ndgrant@agriculture.gov.ie	2nd Grant
felling.forestservice@agriculture.gov.ie	Felling licences

11.1 Form 1 Application for Approval

11.1.1. An application for approval must be made using DAFM's online **iFORIS iNET** system. The applicant and a Registered Forester must complete relevant forms and this information must be the submitted online along with application declarations, relevant maps and other supporting information as applicable further to a site visit and detailed field assessment carried out by the Registered Forester.

Note, all of the listed maps must be submitted before the application can progress.

- Location Map
- Biodiversity Map
- Climate Resilient Reforestation Operations Map – Element 3 only
- Declaration by Beneficiary – most recent version in FS Auth1 form
- TFL reference number

11.1.2. Approval is only valid up to and including the expiry date specified in the letter of approval.

11.1.3. The applicant is legally obliged to reforest as per the Forestry Act 2014. Responsibility for the successful reforestation rests solely with the applicant and the Department will not accept any liability if the forest fails to reforest. Nor can the registered forester and applicant rely upon inspection by the Department to ensure that the standards required of them are achieved. Failure to reforest to the required standard may give rise to recovery by the Department of all grants and premiums paid to the applicant. The Department accepts no liability for costs incurred by an applicant at this stage or at all.

11.1.4 Mapping requirements

Payments for this scheme are based on the treatment area(s) as defined below.

Payments for this scheme are based on either the area claimed as eligible for payment and submitted by the applicant and registered forester (using iNET with associated claim maps) or the area determined by DAFM to be eligible for payment, whichever is the lesser.

i. DAFM's computerised mapping and payment system (iFORIS) is used by DAFM to capture a digital representation of the payment area based on the applicant's claim map. Capturing the claim map in a digital form allows for the accurate measurement and

calculation of the payment area. The process of electronically capturing the claim map is referred to as digitisation. The digitised area of a contract (i.e. the entire forest) is the sum of the treatment areas of the individual forest plots (excluding ineligible areas) comprising of that contract number or forest. For each plot contained in an application for payment, the digitised area is the entire area of the forest plot within the perimeter boundary of that plot measured by DAFM's iFORIS system.

ii. The determined area of a contract number or forest is the sum of the areas, determined by DAFM to be eligible for payment, of the individual forest plots comprising that contract number or forest. The determined area is calculated by excluding any ineligible payment areas (see also below).

iii. The claimed area is the total area of the forest plots specified by the applicant in the application as being claimed for a reconstitution grant payment. The claimed area is calculated by the applicant by deducting any part of the plot that is not eligible to receive a Climate Resilient Reforestation grant (see also below).

iv. Whichever is the lesser of the claimed area or the determined area is deemed to be the area eligible for payment, known as the **payable area**. This is the area on which the payments of Climate Resilient Reforestation Scheme will be based, subject to compliance with the requirements of the scheme as regards submission of proof of ownership, if requested.

11.1.5 Areas for Biodiversity Enhancement (ABEs)

The inclusion of discrete Biodiversity Area (ABEs - Area of Biodiversity Enhancement) plot/s outside of those areas funded under CRR Element 3 is not permitted under the CRR scheme.

ABEs are defined as area which are or were suitable for afforestation, but where the potential for a commercial forest crop has been foregone for the purpose of retaining habitats and open spaces for biodiversity management objectives. In general, these areas do not contain planted trees but may have received grant (and may currently receive premium payments) related to the original afforestation area. ABE's can also include areas created to enhance biodiversity such as ponds and water attenuation areas.

The types of unplanted areas and how they are treated are identified in Table 1.

Table 1. CRR - treatment areas and ABEs

Site Features / Biodiversity areas	**Eligible as treatment areas under CRR***
Hedgerows	See figure 1 and 2 below
Other woody habitats	No - See figure 3
Unplanted retained habitat setback	No - See figure 3
Unplanted archaeological setback	No - See figure 3
Public road setback	No - See figure 3
Utilised building setback	No - See figure 3
Unplanted landscape setback	No - See figure 3
Water setback (ponds, attenuation areas)	No - See figure 3
Water features developed as part of the afforestation application	No - See figure 3
Railway setbacks	No - See figure 3
Future operational areas left unplanted for planned forest roads, turning bays, ridelines, etc.	No - See figure 3

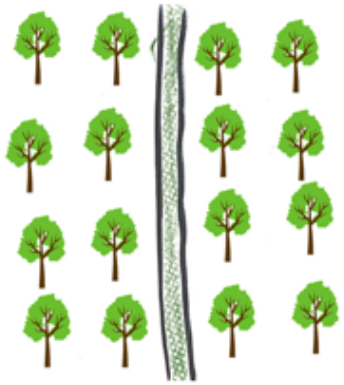
Unplantable areas (including areas with a R+N score less than 6.0)	No - See figure 3
Unplanted areas due shallow, rocky soil	No - See figure 3
Rock and scree	No - See figure 3
Aquatic zones	No - See figure 3
Rights-of-way held by 3rd parties	No
Areas with turbary or grazing rights held by 3rd parties	No
Major water main pipeline corridors	No
Power line corridors	No
Gas pipeline corridors	No
Public roads / forest roads	No

*Please note some of the area indicated as ineligible above will be eligible if present within 5 metres of an original planting position.

Figure 1
Hedger-row between two plots

Single tree line hedgerow. (Normal hedgerow scenario.)

Hedgerow retained at planting, originally planted approx. 2 m from drip line.

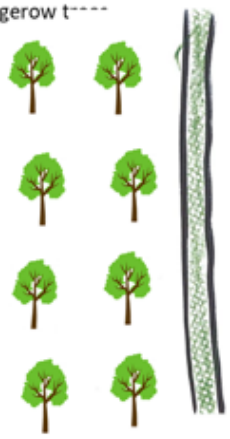


No area reduction due to presence of this hedgerow type.

Figure 2
Hedger-row on plot boundary

Single tree line hedgerow. (Normal hedgerow scenario.)

Hedgerow retained at planting, originally planted approx. 2 m from drip line of hedgerow t----



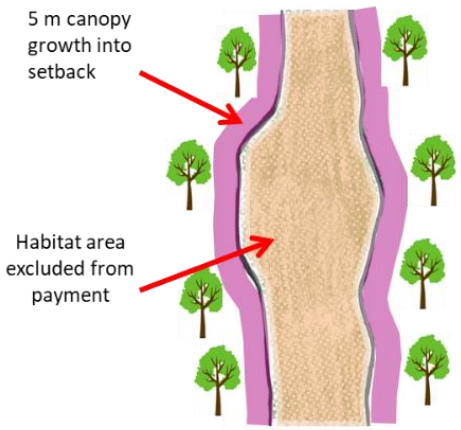
No area reduction due to presence of this hedgerow type. Digitising of outer plot boundary along centre line of hedgerow.

Treatment areas and Hedgerows

The CRR claim area claim should include the entirety of the hedgerow area in Figure 1 and 2 above i.e. no reduction to the reconstitution scheme claim area should be made for these common types of hedgerows.

Figure 3

Wider hedgerow/ linear woodland/ habitat retained at planting.



Treated area to extend to 5m beyond the centre of the originally planted ash trees. Remainder of hedgerow/linear woodland habitat excluded from payment.

Figure 3 includes a significantly wider hedgerow/ linear woodland/ habitat, and as such, the CRR treated area should extend 5 m from the centre points of the originally planted trees. In such cases the habitat area greater than 5 m from the trees will not form part of the treated area.

For relevant watercourses that have a setback of 5 m there should be no treated area reduction.

Recording CRR treatment areas on pre-approval and grant claim maps

Any undigitisable exclusions forming part of a pre-approval or grant claim area in respect of CRR Scheme claims should be entered into the iNET plot screens in the same way as iNET

applications made in respect of afforestation pre-approval or first grant applications. Undigitisable exclusion areas will then be deducted from the total digitised area to determine the net area claimable for the plot or plots making up the reconstitution contract. Undigitisable exclusions forming part of the treatment area must also be recorded on the Form 2 certified species map. Example certified species maps have been provided on pages 92 and 118 of the Forestry Standards Manual (See DAFM website). The associated legend template for creation of certified species maps has been previously circulated to Registered Foresters by DAFM in respect of the Forestry Programme 2023-2027 and may be requested by writing to approvals.forestservice@agriculture.gov.ie

11.2 Form 2 - Application for 1st Instalment Grant and 1st PES Premium

11.2.1. An application for payment of the 1st Instalment Grant and 1st PES Premium must be made using 'using DAFM's online **iFORIS iNET** system. A claim for the 1st Instalment grant will not be processed separately from the claim for the 1st premium except, as provided below, where a valid premium claim has not been submitted. The time limit for receipt of the 1st Instalment Grant claim in the Department shall be 12 weeks after the date of completion of the replanting. Where a 1st Grant Claim is received after the prescribed period, the applicant must submit a written explanation for its late submission and it will be at the discretion of the Department as to whether or not the application can be accepted. The applicant and their Registered Forester must make the appropriate declarations and submit the 1st Grant Claim using the online **iFORIS iNET** system following a site visit and a detailed field and forest plot assessment by the registered forester. Where supporting documentation (e.g. ownership proof) could relate to more than one contract, individual copies of the documentation must be submitted with each 1st Instalment Grant claim.

11.2.2. Where a 1st Instalment Grant claim is submitted to Department using **iFORIS iNET** within the required 12-week timeframe but supporting documentation remains to be submitted, the application will be held open for a maximum of 2 calendar years from the data of completion of the forest. Unless all supporting documentation needed to make a valid application for 1st grant and 1st premium is received in the Department within the 2-year limit, the annual premiums that would have been due for payment in respect of the intervening calendar years will be forfeited. As regards the 1st grant, payment may be made on receipt of supporting documentation up to 6 years after the date of completion. However, no arrears of premium for the intervening years will be paid. After year 6 the grant will also be forfeited and the contract considered terminated if a fully valid claim with all necessary documentation has not been lodged in the Department. Non-payment of a forester or forestry company for works carried out will be a matter for resolution between the owner and the forester or forestry company and the Minister shall bear no liability.

11.3 Form 3 - Application for 2nd Instalment Grant

11.3.1. An application for payment the 2nd Instalment Grant may be claimed for payment 4 years after the completion date of the replanting and must be made using 'using DAFM's online **iFORIS iNET** system. The applicant and their Registered Forester must make the appropriate declarations and submit the 2nd Grant Claim using the online **iFORIS iNET** system following a site visit and a detailed field and forest plot assessment by the registered forester. Payment of the 2nd instalment grant will also be determined by the conditions at Section 7.

11.4 Form 4 - Application for Subsequent PES Premium

11.4.1. An application for payment of the 2nd and subsequent premiums must be made using 'using DAFM's online services. Where an applicant has registered to use these services, applications for forest premiums must be made at www.agfood.ie

11.4.2. Applicants wishing to register for Department's on-line services can do so at www.agfood.ie.

11.4.3. Subject to the terms and conditions of the Scheme being met, the premiums payable under the Scheme will be paid on the basis of one each calendar year starting in the year that the forest was completed.

11.4.4. Subject to and limited by the duration of the contract as defined above, each annual PES premium is normally applied for in the year in which it is due for payment. Where such application is not made within the year, all conditions for eligibility for the premium must be fulfilled and the valid application must be received in the Department within 2 years of the 1st January of the year in which that particular premium falls due for payment, otherwise the PES premium payment for that year will be forfeited. For example, a premium due in 2024 must, at the latest, be applied for and paid by 31st December 2026. If premiums have been forfeited or not claimed for 6 consecutive years or more, the contract will be deemed to have been terminated and no further payments will issue under that contract. Payments already made under the contract may be recovered if the forest has not been maintained to DAFM standards.

12. Approval

12.1 Scheme Approval

Approval issued under the Scheme may be subject to additional conditions as laid down by the Minister. These may be of a silvicultural or environmental nature or may relate to other requirements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all works are undertaken in compliance with the requirements of the Scheme.

12.2 Material Change

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform DAFM in writing of any proposed **material change** (e.g. an increased or decrease area to be replanted compared to the approval area issued) and to seek approval for any such change before applying for financial approval or before planting commences. Failure to obtain approval from the Department for proposed changes may render the technical approval null and void.

12.3 Silvicultural and Environmental Standards

An applicant must comply with all forest and silvicultural related Scheme requirements as detailed in the Felling and Reforestation Policy May 2017 document and *Forestry Standards Manual.* Aspects of the Native Woodland Conservation Scheme also apply, particularly in relation to planting material (as set out in the corresponding scheme document.

12.4 Conditionality Compliance and Land Use Reconciliation Requirements

As an accredited EU paying agency, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is obliged to carry out checks and controls on all applications.

Conditionality sets the baseline requirements for farmers in receipt of CAP payments and replaces the "cross compliance" requirements in the previous CAP. Conditionality consists of Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) standards as detailed in Annex III of EU Regulation 2021/2115 in respect of the following specific areas;

- the climate and the environment, including water, soil and biodiversity of ecosystems,
- public health and plant health, and
- animal welfare. The conditionality requirements are implemented in two ways:

1. Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) - these refer to the legislative requirements concerning the climate and the environment, public health and plant health, and animal welfare. These are laid down in legislation and are applicable to all farmers - not just those participating in CAP interventions.
2. Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) - these refer to a range of standards concerning soil, climate change mitigation, habitats, and water. There are nine GAECs in the agreed Regulation. These apply to all farmers receiving CAP support and have been tailored to Ireland based on farm size, farm structures and the specific characteristics of the areas concerned, including soil and climatic condition, existing farming systems and land use.

Further information in relation to Conditionality in general including the relevant SMRs and GAECs, is available from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine website at gov.ie - Conditionality (www.gov.ie)

Subject to Section 21.2 above regarding the BISS, beneficiaries of the *Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme* 2023-2027 must ensure that afforested land entered into the scheme is not included, or the subject of a claim, under any other area based scheme administered by the Department. The Minister may impose adjustments, reductions in payments and/or penalties or may recoup money already paid if an application under the scheme exceeds the area approved, and/or overlaps with an area which is the subject of a claim under another area-based scheme administered by the Department.

13. Good Practice and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

Adherence to good forestry practice and the principles of sustainable forest management (SFM) is mandatory and applies across all operations of this Scheme. Operational guidance on how forestry operations should be carried out so as to ensure compliance with SFM is provided in the *Environmental Requirements for Afforestation and the Forestry Standards Manual*, which can be downloaded from the Department's website at
gov.ie - Regulation, Forest Health and Resources (www.gov.ie)

Health and Safety are of paramount importance in Forestry operations. The Health and Safety Authority have published a number of guides on Health and Safety in the Forestry Sector which can be found on: http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Your_Industry/Agriculture_Forestry/Forestry/

13.1 Payment

As the contract under this Scheme is between the applicant and the Department, payment is made to the applicant. However, applicants may mandate grant payments (not premiums) to a registered

forester or forestry company using a mandate document that satisfies the requirements of the Minister as set out in the *Forestry Standards Manual*. Such mandates are a voluntary arrangement between the applicant and their registered forester or company. Mandates to other parties e.g. Contractors or Foresters not registered with DAFM, will not be facilitated. In the event that a payment fails to be made in accordance with a valid mandate no liability shall be attached to the Minister.

13.1.1. If it is subsequently found that any undue payment or overpayment has occurred in respect of any grant, premium or other payment made under the Scheme, the Department will recover the entire amount of the undue payment or overpayment from the applicant, regardless of how the undue payment or overpayment arose.

13.1.2 The Department may offset the amount owed from any other monies due to the applicant by the Department. The Department may also recover the monies as a simple contract debt in a court of competent jurisdiction.

14. Penalties

14.1 Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the Scheme, incorporating *Ireland*; *Forestry Standards Manual,* circulars amending scheme requirements; and the relevant environmental guidelines and requirements may result in an appropriate penalty or sanction being applied.

14.2 Penalties which shall apply to certain specific breaches of the Scheme are set out in the document titled *Forestry Scheme Penalty Schedules 2023* which are a condition of grant aid. Other breaches of the Scheme not specified in the Scheme Penalties Schedules may also incur a penalty. However, all or any failure to comply with the Scheme or any breaches of its terms and conditions may result in a penalty.

14.3 Penalties may include the repayment of all or part of the grant(s) and/or all or part of the annual premium(s).

14.4 Monetary penalties shall include interest payable at the rate provided for under *S.I. No. 13 of 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 recovery by deduction.

14.5 Penalty amounts may be deducted from future payments due to the Applicant under the forestry schemes or from payments due under other schemes administered by the Department. Where monetary penalties are not paid or recovered within the period requested, the Department may take whatever action is deemed necessary for their recovery. The Department may also recover the monies as a simple contract debt in a court of competent jurisdiction.

14.6 The principle of proportionality will apply. Penalties may be imposed that are, in the opinion of the Minister, proportionate to the alleged breach of the Scheme.

14.7 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 forest.

15. Appeals

The applicant, or a registered forester acting on behalf and with the written permission of the applicant, may appeal against any decision of the Department regarding (i) an application for a pre-approval (ii) a grant; (iii) a PES premium or (iv) a penalty.

15.1 Appeals of DAFM decisions in respect of Grant Payments, Premiums or penalties

As indicated in section 16.1, the Agriculture Appeals Act, 2001, amended by the Forestry Act 2014, includes Section 14A, which provides for an appeals service against decisions on forestry applications made by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. However, appeals in respect of any DAFM decisions related to grant payments, PES premium payments or penalties held or levied in respect of the operation of the CRR Scheme by DAFM must be made to the Agriculture Appeals Office. Where an Applicant is refused on the basis of Scheme eligibility alone, they have 3 months to lodge notice of their appeal with the Agricultural Appeals Office. Full details of Agriculture Appeals Office procedures, related legislation, decisions and publications is provided at: http://www.agriappeals.gov.ie/

16. Change of Applicant

The Department must be notified in advance if:

i. a grant-aided forest is transferred, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of by the applicant during the term of the contract, up to and including payment of the final annual premium; or
ii. judgement mortgage or an inhibition or similar restriction is placed on the Folio for the forested land during the term of the contract.

In the event of the death of the applicant i.e. owner, joint owner or joint manager who was claiming forestry premium, DAFM must be notified as soon as possible by the deceased's next-of-kin, legal personal representatives or registered forester.

When notice of a change of ownership is received by the Department, payments will be suspended until a new applicant is registered in the Scheme. The new owner will be entitled to apply for all future annual premiums remaining under the contract, subject to providing proof of ownership and a completed and signed Form 5 to take over the obligations of the Scheme.

New applicants must submit all necessary documentation as early as possible and no later than one year after the date of the deed of transfer for the land ownership change, or the date that a deceased applicant's estate is settled. Failure to meet these deadlines may result in a new owner not being admitted to the scheme and the contract will, in effect, be terminated.

i. In every case, all documentation relating to change of ownership and applications for payments must be submitted before the expiry of the term of the contract. Applications for admission to the Scheme (Form 5) or for payment of premiums (Form 4) or 2nd instalment grants (Form 3) **made after the expiry of the term of the contract will not be considered**. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. delays in finalising a deceased person's estate), the date by which documents must be submitted may be extended at the discretion of the Minister.
ii. All decisions regarding eligibility for payment of grant and premiums will be made by reference to the level of compliance with the conditions of the Scheme, including the completion of outstanding remedial works, on the date of the deed of transfer of a forest or the date that a deceased applicant's estate is settled. For example, where remedial works have not been satisfactorily completed by the date of the deed of transfer, the new owner will be responsible for completion of the remedial works and, once satisfactorily completed, s/he will be eligible to apply for payment of premiums due for the period after the date of the deed and/or for the 2nd instalment grant if not already paid.
iii. The Minister will refuse payment of premiums and/or 2nd instalment grant to the previous owner(s) if they have failed to maintain the forest to the standard required under the Scheme for the period of the contract under their ownership.
iv. The Department will not divide grant or premium payments according to ownership for part of a year; individual grant or premium payments will not be split or subdivided. The parties to any sale or transfer should take these payments into account in the timing and terms of their legal arrangements and/or contracts for sale.
v. An exception may be made for the division of 2nd instalment grants if unpaid at the date of sale or transfer, provided that all parties notify the Department in writing that they have agreed on a mutually acceptable allocation of the grant and that both parties will indemnify the Minister against any claim arising in connection with or as a consequence of that agreement.

vi. In exceptional circumstances affecting a change of ownership process, at their discretion, the Minister may extend the closing date of a contract subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Minister.
vii. If a new owner is not willing to participate in the Scheme or is unwilling to give an undertaking to protect and maintain the forest in accordance with the Scheme, the previous owner will be liable for repayment of all grants and premiums previously paid under the Scheme in respect of the reforested land.
viii. Where a debt is accrued under a contract for any reason and the cause of the debt has existed and/or continued during the ownership of more than one owner, the debt will be allocated in accordance with the amount of overpayment received by each owner; each owner will be responsible for repaying the overpayment they received.

Further information about the procedures involved when a grant-aided forest is being transferred, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of during the term of the contract is available at: gov.ie - Grant-aided Forestry - Change of Ownership or Applicant (www.gov.ie)

The Minister reserves the right to alter these procedures from time to time.

17. Joint Management Consent

17.1 A landowner may enter into a joint management arrangement with an immediate family member to jointly manage the forest and assign the grants and premiums to that family member. A joint management arrangement may only be made between immediate family members, namely the spouse, children, parents and/or siblings of the landowner. Joint Management Consent forms are available at Appendix 5 of the *Forestry Standards Manual* (on the website under Forestry Publications).

17.2 The owner of the land and the applicant are both liable for the repayment of grants and premiums paid if the applicant fails to abide by the conditions of the Scheme or in the event of sale or transfer of ownership during the 7 year term of the Scheme.

17.3 A joint management arrangement may be cancelled at any time provided the owner takes over the obligations of the Scheme or, repays all grant and premium moneys already paid or, enters into a new joint management arrangement with another member of the immediate family willing to jointly manage the forest to DAFM standards and take over the obligations and benefits of the Scheme. Any such change should be notified to the Change of Applicant Section.

18. Right of Entry

The Minister reserves the right to carry out inspections at reasonable times on any land submitted for pre-approval or on any land for which grants or premiums have been paid or claimed under this Scheme or any other forest-related Scheme. The provisions of the Section 24 of the Forestry Act 2014 in relation to authorised officers under the Act applies in this context. Applicants are obliged to ensure that, where required, adequate access to the land and forests is provided to allow inspections by the Department.

19. Responsibility for Forest Management

19.1 Responsibility for the successful reforestation and management of a forest rests with the applicant. Where an applicant contracts the services of a third party to reforest and/or manage the forest, and to prepare and submit claims, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the third party contracted has sufficient insurances to indemnify the work undertaken. Any issue arising under this contract to the detriment of the applicant, such as inadequate work or preparing an inaccurate claim, etc., is a matter for the owner to resolve with the forester.

19.2 The inspection of a forest by the Department shall not relieve the Applicant of responsibility for the accuracy of applications submitted, the successful reforestation or maintenance of the forest, or any responsibility to meet the required standards or terms and conditions of the Scheme. The Department is not liable for errors (or financial loss) as a result of inaccurate claims or faulty workmanship by the applicant or their forester. The Department does not guarantee the success of any forest reforestation or bear any liability in respect of any forest for which it has granted approval in any circumstances. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant who submits land for this Scheme that the forest will successfully reforest. If the Department subsequently determines that a forest, or any part thereof, has failed to reforest successfully, the applicant will be required to repay all grants and premiums paid in respect of the entire forest or any part of the forest which has failed. As this land has previously been

under forest cover and was clearfelled there is a legal obligation to replant the forest and repayment of grants and premiums will not negate that obligation.

20. Insurance

Applicants should ensure that their forest has adequate insurance cover against damage from, inter alia, fire, and windblow, etc. In the event of significant plant deaths, as detailed in the *Forestry Standards Manual*, it is a condition of grant aid that losses will be replaced within the following two growing seasons or such other period as agreed, in writing, by the Department. Failure to replace losses may result in the recoupment of grants and PES premiums paid.

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

21.1 Where, for the purposes of obtaining payment under this Scheme, the applicant or a person acting on their behalf knowingly makes a false or misleading statement or withholds essential information, the applicant's participation in the Scheme may be terminated and all or part of the aid paid shall be repaid.

21.2 Where an Applicant or a person acting on their behalf fails to abide by the terms and conditions of the Scheme, or 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, the applicant's participation in the Scheme may be terminated and all or part of the aid paid shall be recovered by the Department. The Department may offset the amount owed from any other monies due to the applicant by the Department or it may seek to recover the amount as a simple contract debt in a court of competent jurisdiction.

21.3 The obtaining of financial aid under the Scheme by fraudulent means by the applicant or others acting alone or together may render such persons liable to prosecution.

22. Overpayments made in relation to a Scheme contract

22.1 If it is subsequently found that any overpayment or undue payment has occurred in respect of any grant or other payment made under the Scheme the applicant shall be liable to repay the entire amount of the overpayment or undue payment regardless of how such overpayment or undue payment arose.

22.2 Amounts to be recouped may be deducted from future payments due to the Applicant under the forestry schemes or from payments due under other schemes administered by the Department. Where debts are not recovered within the period specified, the Department may take whatever action is deemed necessary for their recovery. The Department may also seek to recover the amount as a simple contract debt in a court of competent jurisdiction.

23. Review of Financial Aids

The Minister reserves the right in his absolute discretion to vary, where occasion so demands, the amount of financial aid wherever specified in the Scheme.

24. Procedures

The Minister reserves the right to alter from time to time the procedures to be followed in the operation of this Scheme.

25. Tax Clearance Requirement

It is a condition 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. Proof of compliance, such as the provision of Tax Clearance Certificates, may be required by the Department.

26. Value Added Tax

All grants paid under the Fixed Grant Scheme are exclusive of VAT.

27. Information and Data Protection

27.1 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, forest location etc. while continuing to observe the terms of the Data Protection Act.

27.2 Under State Aid rules (see Section 3) the Department will publish details of beneficiaries that fall within the categories described.

27.3 By declaring their eligibility and consent to apply for the Scheme, applicants must agree to the release of non-personal information supplied by them in respect of their application to comply with current environmental consultation procedures. Furthermore, applicants consent to be contacted by the Department in respect of approved forestry training courses. Applicants must also consent to the release of their details to Teagasc and Timber Producer Groups who may subsequently communicate with applicants in relation to the forestry training and development and the harvesting of timber.

27.4 All information supplied by applicants in respect of an CRR approval and/or grant claim and any supporting documentation shall be made available to any other Department or Agency or Local Authority for the purposes of consultation, Audits, Conditionality Compliance Controls and all Rural Development measures, and, as appropriate, in accordance with the requirements under the Freedom of Information Acts.

27.5 Information in relation to the operation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is available on the Department's website gov.ie - Data Protection (www.gov.ie). For further details on the Forestry Division Privacy Notice, please click here.

28. Further Conditions

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

29. Forestry Act, 2014

All forests are protected by the Forestry Act, 2014 (and any Act that succeeds or replaces that Act), which controls felling of trees. Under this Act, with certain exceptions, it is illegal to cut down any tree, grant-aided or not, unless a Felling Licence has been obtained from the DAFM. All applications must be in compliance with conditions as laid out in their Tree Felling Licence.

Applicants must also ensure that a valid felling licence is in place for any felling associated with their application for the Climate Resilient Reforestation Pilot Scheme.
Felling licence enquiries should be made to the Felling Section in Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford or at felling.forestservice@agriculture.gov.ie

Annex 1

Grant and PES Premiums Payable

The rates of Grant and PES Premium payable are determined by the Element selected.

Elements are listed below:

Element		**Grant /** treated **ha**	**PES premium /** treated ha
Element 1: Reforestation for Continuous Cover Forestry		€2,200	€150
Element 2: Reforestation for Native Forests	2a) High Ecological Priority Area	€4,800	€650
	2b) All other sites	€2,700	€500
Element 3: Reforestation for Biodiversity and Water		€3,000	€350

Annex 2

Forest Rules and Standards

2.1 GENERAL

Each reforestation project must comply with the Forest Rules set out in this Annex.

2.2 MINIMUM AREAS:

Minimum area requirements vary for conifer and broadleaf forests and their associated plots:

Conifer forests*:*

a) A proposed conifer forest or plot not adjoining other forests must not be less than 1 hectare in total.
b) Where a proposed conifer forests adjoins existing forests of 0.75ha or greater then a minimum conifer forest size of 0.25 hectare applies.
c) A conifer plot within a forest must not be less than 0.25 hectare.

Broadleaf forest*:*

a) A broadleaf forest must not be less than 0.1 hectare.
b) A broadleaf plot must also not be less than 0.1 hectare.

2.3 MINIMUM WIDTHS:

All plots must be 20 metres or greater in width, as measured tree-to-tree (i.e. excluding open spaces such as aquatic buffer zones, public road setbacks and archaeological exclusion zones).

In certain situations, e.g. to cater for landscape design and existing features, 10% of the proposed area can be less than 20 metres in width to a minimum of 10m in width.

For the purposes of the Climate Resilient Reforestation Pilot Scheme the above minimum width criteria will be applied at the individual plot level. A forest made up of a number of plots must satisfy the minimum width rules for every plot.

2.4 SPECIES SELECTION

The tree species proposed for planting should be chosen according to the suitability of the species to the site and soil. A list of the acceptable tree species for grant aid under the Scheme is set down in the *Forestry Standards Manual*.

2.5 TREE PROVENANCE, PLANT HEALTH AND PLANTING STOCK SELECTION

Detailed standards and specifications for species selection under the Scheme are set down in the *Forestry Standards Manual*.

2.6 STOCKING LEVELS

Forests and plots must comply with the minimum stocking levels and spacing as described for each element.

2.7 GENERAL SITE REQUIREMENTS

The general site requirement for each element is described in Sections 5, 6 and 7 of this document. Other, general site requirements for grant aid under the Scheme, including rules governing unplanted areas and setback distances, are set out in the *Forestry Standards Manual*.

2.8 SILVICULTURAL STANDARDS

The silvicultural standards required for grant aid under the Scheme are set out in the *Forestry Standards Manual*.

2.9 MAPPING

DAFM Mapping Standards are detailed in the *Forestry Standards Manual* and form part of the terms and conditions that apply to all maps submitted under this Scheme. They are contained in the *Forestry Standards Manual* which is available at:
gov.ie - Forestry Standards Manual (www.gov.ie)

Annex 3

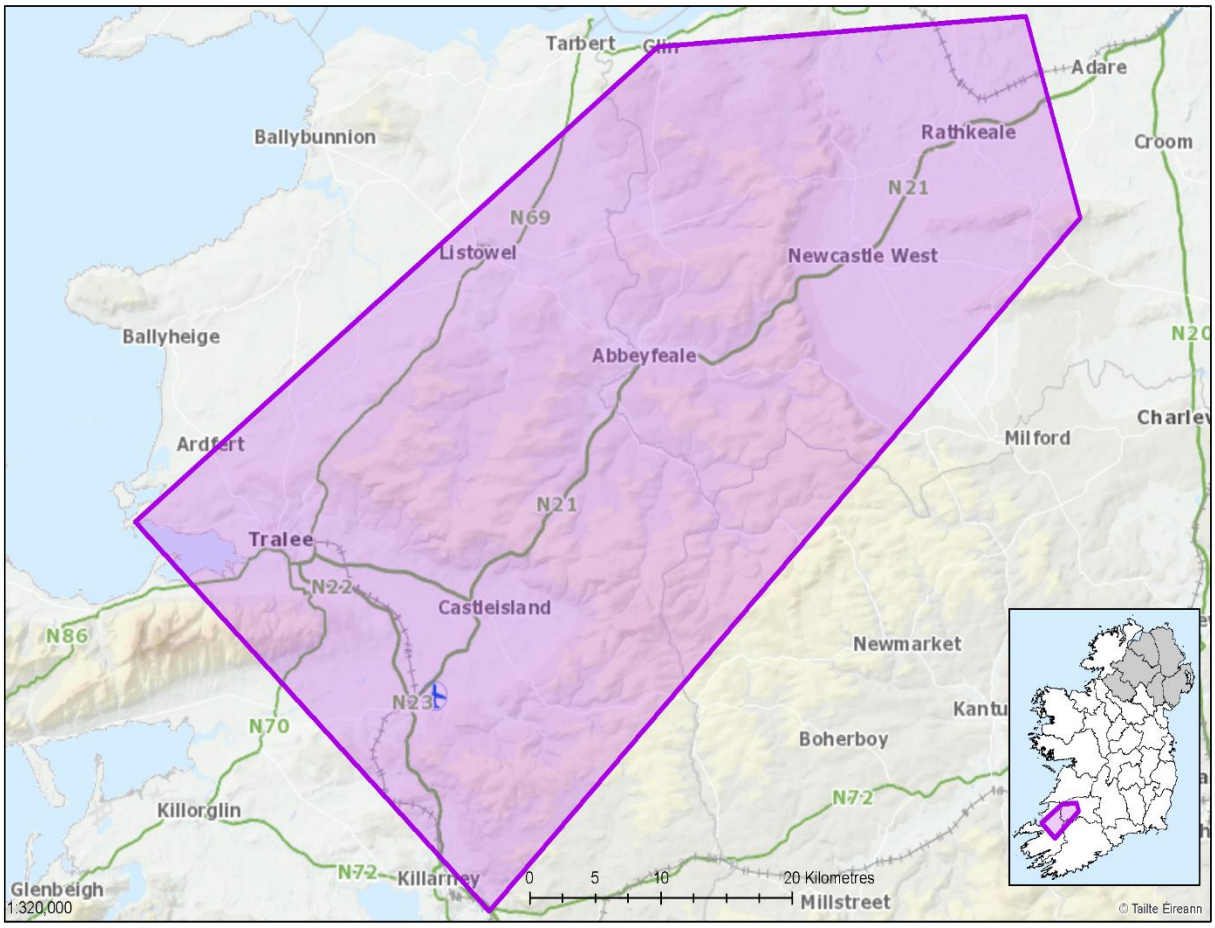
Penalties

As detailed in the *Forestry Scheme Penalty Schedules (DAFM 2023)*

Annex 4

Area of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat distribution gap

Area of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat distribution gap



Annex 5

Definitions

For the purposes of this Scheme:

- **'Applicant'** means a person who has applied for Approval under the Scheme or has planted woodland following an Approval under the Scheme;
- **'Approval**' means Scheme Technical Approval granted by the Minister;
- **'Application, Technical Approval'** means an application for the Minister's approval to reforest a forest under the terms of all current legislation, guidelines and the conditions of this scheme.
- **'Application – 1st Instalment Grant'** means an application to receive a 1st instalment of grant and 1st annual premium following the reforestation t of a forest within the terms of the Pre-planting approval.
- **'Application – Second Instalment Grant'** means an application to receive a 2nd instalment of grant, which can be claimed for payment 4 years after the completion date of the forest reforestation.
- **'Application - Annual Premium'** means an application which is to be submitted annually to DAFM to receive a subsequent premium.
- **'Appropriate Assessment"** means an assessment in accordance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011)
- **'Barrier to connectivity'** includes anything that prevents any pathway of connectivity from being utilised by the target species. In relation to terrestrial wildlife corridors this can include roads that cross the wildlife corridor, lighting which can render it unsuitable for use by bats, deer fencing which can be impassable by terrestrial mammals, gaps in vegetation and disturbance**.**
- **'Registered Forester'** means a qualified person named on the Register of Foresters and Forestry Companies, available from the Department.
- **'Completion Date'** means the date the reforestation works are completed.
- **'DAFM'** means the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- **'Department'** means the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- **'Distribution gap for lesser horseshoe bats'** is the area in County Limerick and North Kerry where there are little to no known roosts present. This gap has arisen due to habitat fragmentation and/or loss of roosting sites (Lyons, F. 2014; Linehan *et al,* 2021). DAFM Forest Service has taken the available data on this gap, adjusted it to take into consideration the most up to date available information and to remove identifying roost locations for those unpublicised roosts. The area can be mapped beginning at the SAC at Curraghchase, Co. Limerick, east to Knockfierna, Co. Limerick, south to Killarney, west to Fenit, north to Glin, Co. Limerick and ending back at Curraghchase.
- **'Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)'** means an assessment in accordance with the Forestry Regulations 2017 (S.I. No. 191 of 2017), as amended.
- **'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'** is defined as a person who carries out an agricultural activity such as 'the rearing or growing of agricultural products including harvesting, milking, breeding animals and keeping animal for farming purposes'.
- **'Foraging habitat for bats'** includes broadleaved woodland, scrub and occasionally semi-natural grasslands.
- **'Forest'** is as defined in the Forestry Act, 2014, - "land under trees with (a) a minimum area of 0.1 ha, (b) tree crown cover of more than 20% of the total area, or the potential to achieve this cover at maturity".

- **'Forestry Environmental Guidelines'** means the following publications as amended from time to time: 'Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines'; 'Forestry and Landscape Guidelines'; 'Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines', 'Forest Biodiversity Guidelines'; 'Forest Harvesting and the Environment Guidelines';
  'Forestry and Aerial Fertilisation Guidelines'; 'Forestry and Forest Protection Guidelines'; 'Otter Guidelines' and 'Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Requirements'. The Minister may, from time to time, amend the guidelines or add further guidelines to this definition.
- **'Forestry Division'** means the Forestry Division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- **'FT'** means Forest Type implying forest function and species planted.
- **'Immediate Family Member'** means Spouse, Parent, Brother, Sister, Son or Daughter.
- **'Important Habitat'** will vary depending on the species the habitat relates to, but in general and in relation to bats it means semi-natural habitats, broadleaved woodland, wetlands, designated sites, riparian habitat, stone buildings, underground caves, cellars, souterrains, scrub, permanent linear features that may be used as a commuting corridor and microhabitats within the site that may provide biodiversity to the area. Barriers to connectivity should be avoided or mitigated against through planting or other means where necessary.
- **'Joint Management Consent'** means consent submitted by the owner of specific lands consenting to the payment of grants and/or premiums to an immediate family member who jointly manages the forest.
- **'Lease'** means a term of years absolute in possession for at least 40 years from the commencement date of the contract under the Scheme.
- **'Microhabitats'** are those small areas within a site that provide different habitats to those around them. These can be important areas for biodiversity and maintaining connectivity between them is important. Microhabitats can develop around standing or fallen deadwood, ponds, riparian zones, ridelines, mature broadleaved trees, water hotspots and scrub.
- **'Minister'** means the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- '**Municipality**' is a single administrative division having corporate status and powers of self-government or jurisdiction as granted by national and regional laws to which it is subordinate.
- **'Penalty Schedules'** means the schedules outlined and described in the "*Forestry Schemes Penalty Schedules*" document.
- **'**Forest**'** means a plot or number of plots on the same holding, planted in a single planting season and the subject of a single application identifier or Contract Number.
- **'Plot'** means a discrete area of one species, or a species mix with a forest.
- **'Scheme'** means the Climate Resilient Reforestation Pilot Scheme
- **'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.
- **'Wildlife corridor'** is a connecting corridor that can be used by wildlife to commute from one important area to another. Different species will have different requirements for these. Wildlife corridors for bats should be a minimum of 10m wide, they should not be entirely straight to prevent wind tunnelling and they should be unlit. They should have 3 rows of broadleaves along at least one side of them, outside of the corridor. The edge of the broadleaved side should be scalloped to create microhabitats for invertebrates. Wildlife corridors should connect areas of standing and fallen deadwood, hedgerows ponds, clearings, pockets of broadleaves and important external features.