

## REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION

### The Scottish Government does not have the information

Under the terms of the exception at regulation 10(4)(a) of the EIRs (information not held), the Scottish Government is not required to provide information which it does not have. Scottish Forestry does not hold the data you have requested relating to the following questions:

(Q2) How much public funding is available each year over the next two years for forestry creation schemes in Scotland? Is any of this from the EU or EU funds? If so, how much?

(Q4) How many submissions/objections have been raised to forestry creation schemes across Scotland during the consultation period this year and during the consultation period in each of the previous two years? And how many specifically in Aberdeenshire?;

(Q5) How many of those submissions/objections have resulted in amendments to the forestry creation schemes across Scotland? And how many specifically in Aberdeenshire?;

(Q6) What particular points did the submissions/objections refer to/ what were the contents of the submissions/objections? Please also break this information down specifically into Aberdeenshire?;

(Q7) What is the total area of Sitka Spruce contained in forestry creation schemes submitted this year in Scotland? And in each of the previous two years? Please also break this information down specifically into Aberdeenshire?

(Q9) How many appeals have been made to amend or overturn the whole or part of forestry creation schemes approved this year in Scotland? And in each of the previous two years? Please also break this information down specifically into Aberdeenshire?

(Q10) How many have of these appeals have succeeded in amending or overturning the whole or part of forestry creation schemes approved this year in Scotland? And in each of the previous two years? Please also break this information down specifically into Aberdeenshire?

This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception.

While we recognise that there may be some public interest in information about the above questions, clearly we cannot provide information which we do not hold. In relation to the budget for the Forestry Grant Scheme, this is set as part of the Scottish Budget, which is presented annually to the Scottish Parliament, and therefore we do not have future year's funding figures.

In relation to data on objections, there is no third party appeal process under the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme and therefore no information on objections is held.

In relation to the area of Sitka spruce planted, this information is recorded at the claim stage (i.e. post planting and verification) and therefore this year's figures are not known; furthermore this is only collated by Conservancy boundary and not by local authority region, such as Aberdeenshire.

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### Information otherwise accessible

Under the terms of the exemption at regulation 6(1)(b) (information otherwise accessible) of the EIRs apply to that information. We do not have to give you information which is already publicly available and easily accessible to you in another form or format.

The information you asked for relating to the following questions:

1. How much publicly-funded money is available in this financial year for forestry creation schemes in Scotland? How much of this comes from the EU or EU funds?

This information is published in the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) budget category spreadsheet and SRDP plan under FGS Briefing Note 29: <https://forestry.gov.scot/publications/783-covid-response-fgs-april/download>. Currently EU funding contributes 52.89%

3. How many forestry creation schemes have been submitted in Scotland this year and for each of the previous two years?

From our publish FGS statistics – Number Woodland Creation options submitted in the Financial Year. No figure is available for 2020 as only 6 weeks into planting year.

<https://forestry.gov.scot/publications/standards-regulations-and-incentives/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-statistics?start=0>