

Afforestation Grant & Premium Scheme 2014-2020

A Guide to Grant and Premium Categories



Grant and Premium Categories (GPCs)

The Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme 2014-2020 supports the planting of new forests and offers a range of planting options designed to accommodate a variety of sustainable timber production and ecological objectives.

The afforestation grant and premium categories (GPCs) are determined by the category of land planted and tree species planted.

GPC 1 – Unenclosed/Unimproved land: Typically comprises of upland sites and marginal soils. The amount of unenclosed land in any application for financial approval is restricted.


GPC 2 – Sitka Spruce/Lodgepole Pine: Does not comply with scheme requirements in isolation and can only be approved as a component of a larger project comprising of other GPCs.

GPC 3 – 10% diverse mix: Comprises of a mix of Sitka Spruce/ Lodgepole Pine together with at least 10% diverse conifer (approved conifer other than SS/LP). Broadleaves adjacent to roads and watercourses may also form part of this 10%.

GPC 4 – Diverse: Acceptable conifer species, other than Sitka spruce and Lodgepole Pine.

GPC 5 – Broadleaf: Acceptable broadleaf species other than Oak and Beech.

GPC 6 – Oak: Pure oak, however nurse species may be planted where additional shelter is required.



GPC 7 – Beech: Pure beech, however nurse species may be planted where additional shelter is required.

GPC 8 – Alder: Pure Alder; up to 10% can be of other species for diversity.

GPC 9 and GPC 10 – Native Woodland Establishment: Supports the establishment of new native woodlands on ‘green field’ sites. Its focus is on native species, minimal site disturbance and long-term ‘close to nature’ forest management. It presents opportunities for planting in various environmentally sensitive areas e.g. NATURA sites.

GPC 11 – Agro-Forestry: A combination of forestry and pasture. Controlled grazing by sheep and cattle is permitted but trees must be protected. Silage and hay production is also permitted. Trees are planted at a reduced stocking rate per hectare. Acceptable species include oak, sycamore and cherry (other species considered).

GPC 12 (a & b) – Forestry for Fibre: Supports the growing of productive tree species to produce wood fibre for energy and other wood products over 10 to 15 years. Eligible species are Italian Alder, Hybrid Aspen, Eucalyptus and Poplar with preference to improved genetic material. Trees are planted at a reduced stocking rate per hectare.

Important – All GPCs must remain under forestry and therefore are subject to a replanting obligation.

Afforestation - focus on timber production (GPC 1-8)

Grant and Premium Categories 1-8 fund the establishment of a 'conventional' forest with the main objective of sustainable commercial timber production. There can of course be other additional objectives.



Both conifer as well as broadleaf tree species can be considered. Initial stocking rates range from 2,500 trees/ha for most conifers to 3,300 trees/ha for broadleaves.

Careful consideration should be made in matching tree species to site types. It is important that the landowner appreciates the difference between tree species and the different time scales to achieve returns.



Native Woodland Establishment - focus on nature creation (GPC 9-10)

Grant and Premium Categories 9-10 support the establishment of new native woodlands on 'green field' sites.

The Native Woodland Establishment categories provide opportunities to protect and expand Ireland's native woodland resource and associated biodiversity.



This is a key biodiversity measure and it also supports a wide range of other benefits and functions arising from native woodlands, relating to reversing wider habitat fragmentation, the protection and enhancement of water quality, landscape, cultural heritage, wood and non-wood products and services, the practice of traditional woodland management techniques, environmental education, and carbon sequestration.

Grant application for Native Woodland Establishment is made by the forest owner in association with a Native Woodland Scheme approved Registered Forester.



Agroforestry - combining trees with pasture (GPC 11)




Grant and Premium Category 11 supports the establishment of silvopastoral agroforestry' – the combination of forestry and pasture. It allows farmers to farm conventionally while growing a timber crop in the same fields.

Silvopastoral agroforestry permits grazing by sheep or young domestic stock during spring and summer for the first six to eight years. Trees must be protected and tree shelters checked regularly. Once trees are of a sufficient size, tree shelters can then be replaced with plastic mesh and larger stock can be introduced.

Silage and hay production is also permitted. It is important that appropriate machinery is used when cutting silage and/or hay so as to ensure that the trees are not inadvertently damaged.

Acceptable species include oak, sycamore and cherry but other species can also be considered on a case by case basis. Large plants (90 cm - 120 cm) should be used. Planting should be carried out using pit planting where possible.

Initial stocking rate should be between 400 and 1,000 trees per hectare equally spaced out. Minimum plot size is 0.5 ha while minimum plot width is 20 metres.



Forestry for Fibre - growing trees for fuel (GPC 12a & 12b)

Grant and Premium Categories 12a and 12b support the establishment of productive tree species to produce wood for biomass.

The objective of this measure is to meet a forecasted supply-demand gap for fibre for energy and other wood product applications by growing

multiple crop rotations on a 10 to 15 year cycle with wood biomass yields in the region of 150-300 m³/ha.



Eligible species are Italian Alder, Hybrid Aspen, Eucalyptus and Poplar with preference given to improved genetic material.

Trees are planted at a minimum of 2,000 plants/ha for GPC 12a and 1,400 plants/ha for GPC 12b where Aspen is planted.

Stocking must be maintained at a minimum of 80% over the first five years of the period of premium payment. Planting should be carried out using pit planting where possible.

Minimum eligible area is 1 ha with a minimum width of 40 metres.



‘Teagasc advice is available through one to one consultations, field days and training courses’


What is my next step?

Teagasc can help if you are looking for further information on the Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme.

Contact your local Teagasc Forestry Adviser who can provide independent advice and support. Please see map overleaf for contact details of your local Teagasc Forestry Adviser.

Keep yourself informed...

with up to date, detailed and accessible forestry information provided by Teagasc:

- Teagasc Forestry Advisers
- www.teagasc.ie/forestry
- Teagasc Forestry e-News: forestry news emailed directly to you.
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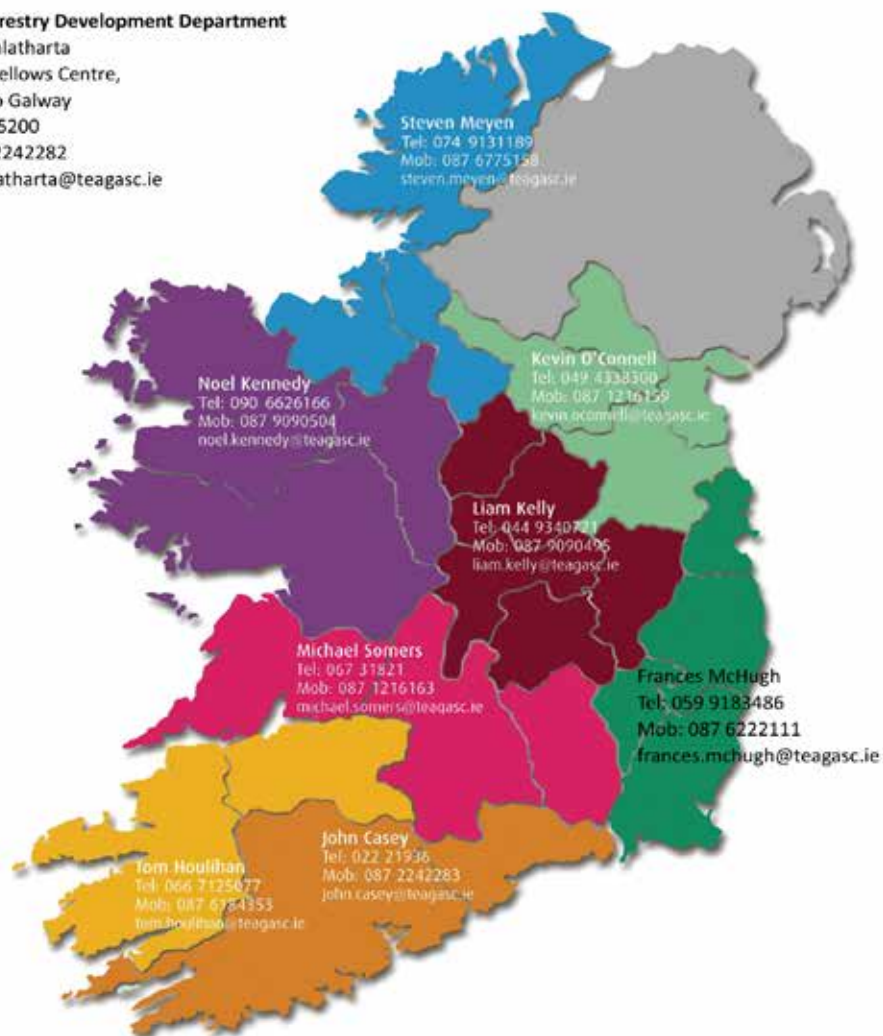
For more information on applying for an Afforestation Grant, please read this brochure in conjunction with **Teagasc Farm Forestry Series No.7 brochure “Establishing a Farm Forest – How do I get the work done?”**

For all your forestry advice and training needs

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