NEW ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN SCOTLAND

Q1 Do you agree with the proposed approach for a dedicated Forestry Division in the Scottish Government (SG) and an Executive Agency to manage the NFE?

- **No** - we recommend these should be managed by an arm's length non-governmental public body (NGPB). It requires a governance structure of independent non-executives to provide challenge. The NGBP needs to have an input to policy and strategy otherwise we have real concerns that the proposed dedicated Forestry division will be simply dictated to by the Scottish Government of the day.

- It needs an entity to maintain a balance and overview and plan ahead giving firm decisions in the arena of other competing land uses. This requires the active and experience of the forestry industry to maintain the economic drive.

- With reference to RDC and SNH, experience of board support at a practical level has been useful in getting things done. One suggestion for the NGBP would be to have the Forestry Commissioner for Scotland as the Chair, with the Board being the Chairs of the five Regional Forestry Forums (to provide a geographic spread) with nominees from ConFor and the Woodland Trust.

Q2 By bringing the functions of FCS formally into the SG we intend to benefit from greater integration. *What do people think about this (positives & negatives / opportunities & threats)?*

- Retain the expertise of farmers and foresters but with integrated thinking and opportunities to move forward shared interests by policy integration.

- We do not agree that the functions of FCS should be brought into the SG. There is a real opportunity to bring agriculture and forestry closer together on many of the sites, not an either/or situation.

- Huge opportunities for marginal hill land and smaller holdings – forestry is a way out of marginality problems. It requires a greater flexibility. Farmers are not foresters and often do not understand trees as a crop. Equally, foresters are not farmers. We need education, advice and an integrated agro-forestry grants structure. Current grant structures are too rigid, either agriculture or forestry. We should emulate the Forestry Farmers of Norway.
Streamlining of process is essential to achieve the targets for forestry and woodland planting.

The range of benefits of forestry should be highlighted and emphasised which includes the management of other land/open ground, habitat and ecosystem protection and services, water management and flooding, carbon sequestration, modifying climate change, grazing lets, wild land, starter farms, recreation, health and wellbeing benefits of walking, mountain biking etc, tourism, landscape, archaeology, peatland, riparian interests and fishing.

Q3 How should we ensure that professional skills and knowledge of forestry are maintained within the proposed new forestry structures?

- We need to ensure that we have people who know about forestry deciding on the development of policy.
- This includes having ICF members or other experienced people obliged to give time and input to education and the maintenance of skills. They must take exams and have CPD, guard against isolation and keep skilled people communicating with each other. We need to be open and learn from Scandinavia.
- Governance and accountability are critical. How appointments will be made is key to the whole thing.
- The CNPA is a good example where 3 different routes for appointment – S.G. or residents or reps from 5 different local authorities – ensures balance and a range of skills and interests.
- Referencing Jim MacKinnon’s report – use experienced ICF members to self-regulate within a formal code of conduct and disciplinary procedures. This should include peer review.
- It is vital to ensure contractor training and use/maintain expensive modern machinery locally.
- The Forestry workforce should be within rural community to support rural living and incentivise youngsters to train and remain in rural areas.
- Resource constraints mean less training and where FC has historically given more practical training this is now reducing. Ensure commitment to E&T link which is vital for forestry body and industry. Should be commitment to work with industry in facilitating that.
- Forestry and health not given an appropriate mention in Skills Investment Plans or the development of training courses in Colleges. A greater need to work with long term industry needs.
Q4 What do you think a future land agency for Scotland could and should manage and how might that best be achieved?

- New body should be based on timber prices and other income.
- Incentivising to achieve targets requires radical action and the long term value of investment is driven by government incentives and policies.
- Long term funding is critical.
- Must retain flexibility so don’t close structure and remit, especially given long-term nature – must be underpinned by SG funding.
- Don’t rule out owning non-forest land but don’t lose sight of core aim of FES is to provide timber but also to provide a very wide range of benefits.
- Don't lose the essence of continuity of supply to processing sector.
- Timber production in line with UKFS.
- Sustainable forest management which delivers social and environmental benefits.
- Is not to be micro-managed by minister.
- Should have aspirational targets.
- FES good at managing land not necessarily good to manage all land.

Effective cross-border arrangements

Q5 Do you agree with the priorities for cross-border co-operation set out by SG? i.e. forestry research and science, plant health and common codes such as UK Forestry Standard? Y/N  YES

- This needs a joint agency- securely and jointly funded to ensure knowledge exchange. We suggest retaining the Forest Research Agency linked to the Governments. We need to ensure that Scotland can commission research. The forestry industry should be able to contribute and to commission research.
- Inventory forecasting and operational support (IFOS) necessary for strategic planning as well as statistics and so must stay cross border.
- The mechanism to fund the agency must ensure that no one country can unilaterally pull out of the agreement and there is compulsory EU reporting to consider in this.
It is the knowledge exchange in cross-border functions which is valuable and needs to participate in sharing with other countries both at home and further afield within Europe and internationally, especially Scandinavia (which may be more closely aligned with the Scottish focus). That needs formal commitment to skills and knowledge sharing.

Q If no, what alternative priorities would you prefer? Why?

Q6 In your view, how might cross-border arrangements be delivered effectively to reflect Scottish needs? E.g. An agreement between countries? Scotland taking the lead on certain arrangements?

- Yes, Scotland to take lead where they can and where most relevant to their own forestry science and research but also to have a mutual share of common codes re timber quality etc.

- Should be more focus on accurate inventory figures and canopy reports to help shape targets for the next 25-50 years including timely accurate inventory maps, some of which are badly out of date but which are needed as visual aids to customers/investors in industry

- Needs to be an explicit link to future investment.

- Forest Research has a world-wide reputation which is good for Scotland, should be University led with explicit links with other research bodies.

- Should be securely jointly funded

- Needs to have training accessible across countries

Legislation and regulation

Q7 Should the Scottish Ministers be placed under a duty to promote forestry? What does this mean and what does it look like?

- Yes- but need to remember the very real and controversial issues in the H&I of potential rewilding, the scale and severity of deer-culling required, whether to fence or not together with access, landscaping and environmental safeguards

- Keep “balance” in the definition

- Need to remember the roles of forestry in multi-purpose e.g. health and well-being as well as timber production

- There is no mention of people!
• Currently insufficient financial resources. Need to incentivise to achieve targets. This should require front end incentives to plant. Allow for flexibility to rollover funding year to year.

• FCS provides support and continuity of supply to sawmills at a time of low timber prices. Financial support for transport including improvements to single track roads, bridges, rail and sea transport including the JST barge.

• To achieve stated and measurable targets.

• A duty to promote and deliver

• Must encompass both public and private forestry.

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