

## **Afforestation Grant Scheme: Frequently Asked Questions**

The following FAQ's are provided for quick reference. The *Guide to the Afforestation Grant Scheme* contains more detailed information.

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### **When can I apply?**

The 2018 funding round runs from 23 February to 14 May 2018, for planting in the winter of 2019.

### **How do I apply?**

Download an application form, or email [funding@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:funding@mpi.govt.nz) to get one sent to you; thoroughly read the *Guide to the Afforestation Grant Scheme*. The form and the Guide are available from [www.mpi.govt.nz/ags](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/ags)

### **Is the grant for planting this year?**

No. The application and assessment stages are timed to allow nurseries and applicants to have enough time to make sure the most effective planting can take place in the winter of 2019.

### **How do I know if my land is eligible for a grant?**

The Guidelines contain full criteria for eligible land. If in doubt, call the AGS team on 0800 00 83 33 or email [funding@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:funding@mpi.govt.nz)

### **My land was in pines at 1990, but has been harvested, the deforestation liability paid to the Crown and grazed. It's now reverting to weeds. Would this land be eligible for the AGS scheme?**

No. The land must be new forest planting. It must not have been 'forest land' on 31 December 1989.

### **Why is the grant rate fixed at \$1300 per ha?**

The grant rate of \$1300 per/ha has been based on historical averages and is designed to make a contribution to the initial costs of establishing a forest for long-term benefit. The grant has been set at a uniform rate in order to provide applicants with certainty in order to make informed decisions.

### **Why can't I plant more than 300 ha?**

The fund is intended to encourage and support small to medium scale foresters/landowners to plant forests of between 5-300 hectares of indigenous or exotic species. If you are interested in planting more than 200 hectares, please contact the AGS team as you may be eligible to plant with MPI's Crown Forestry.

**If a number of ha are planted, can they be offset in terms of the minimum establishment standards of 750 stems per ha after the first year?**

**For example, an overs and unders approach whereby if one area performs well in terms of survival rate, but another fails to reach 750 stems per ha, the loss is compensated for and no replanting is necessary.**

No. If areas within the grant area do not meet the minimum establishment standard then funding may be withheld for those areas until the minimum standard is achieved. In practice, representative sample plots of the grant area will be measured so this will in effect allow for some “overs and unders”. Typically if the initial plots indicate a less than satisfactory stocking/survival rate, additional plots will be measured to determine whether the understocked areas are merely a small isolated anomaly (in which case they are unlikely to affect payment) or whether they are indicative of more widespread failure.

**Can I use the grant to plant indigenous trees, such as manuka?**

Yes. A forest may be planted in any species that meets the definition of a ‘forest species’ as defined in the Climate Change Response Act, provided they are suitable for the site, conform to local government plans, and do not pose a wilding risk. If there is doubt, MPI will discuss the suitability of the proposed species for the site with the applicant.

**Could this new planting not lead to an increased risk of wilding conifers?**

As part of the process, applicants are required to assess the risk of wilding conifers based on the land type and the trees proposed to be used. MPI will advise as appropriate and can decline an application if the risk is seen as too high.

**Is naturally reverting land eligible?**

No. Forests must be planted; establishment by natural regeneration or seeding is not eligible.

**How is the money paid out? Am I at risk if the planting fails?**

Successful applicants may claim for payment when the forest is successfully established to the minimum establishment standard of 750 stems per hectare and free of significant weed competition. Payment is subject to verification by MPI upon inspection. If planting failure occurs or applicants are unable to plant due to unforeseen circumstances, they should speak to MPI about when the planting can occur.

**Who is responsible for the forest for the first 10 years of the contract, is it the Government?**

No. The grantee maintains the grant-aided forest to the minimum establishment standard for four years, and to at least 300 stems per hectare for the remaining term of the agreement.

Ongoing monitoring by MPI will occur for 10 years from the date of planting to ensure the forest has been maintained to the required standard. If the minimum standard is not maintained throughout the 10 year term of the grant agreement, the Grantee may be required to re-plant to the minimum required standards or to re-pay the grant to the Crown with interest.

**What happens at the end of the scheme?**

The Grantee owns the new forest and any products from it. After the expiry of the Agreement the forest may be harvested, or registered in the ETS or PFSI, and the participant would earn carbon credits from the agreement expiry date.

**Is there a requirement for the landowner to replant after harvest?**

This will largely depend on your regional plan requirements and you should check with your regional council before undertaking felling operations.

**Is a Certificate of Title the same as a DP?**

No. A/several CT number(s) must be provided with your application.

**In the forest management plan, should spraying be pre- or post-planting?**

Either, it will depend on the characteristics of the land e.g. existing weed or grass cover. Seek advice from your regional council or forestry consultant.

**How many photos should I provide with my application?**

There is no set number. The key is to identify current vegetative cover and where the photos have been taken from. See the Guide for more information on photos.

**My application was declined last year due to the total area being less than 5ha. I disagree, can someone come to view the site?**

The technical assessment uses a well-established methodology. This assessment would not change materially after an on-site inspection.