



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Forestry Programme 2023-2027

IFA Farm Forestry Conference 8 June 2023

Forestry Programme 2023-2027








- Budget of €1.318bn secured
- Support for the biggest and best-funded Forestry Programme ever in Ireland

Purpose of the Programme



- Working Group 2 of Project Woodland drafted a new vision and Strategy for forestry in Ireland.
- The right trees in the right places for the right reasons with the right management supporting a sustainable and thriving economy and society and a healthy environment.
- Represents diverse forests with multiple objectives and benefits supporting industry, employment, ecosystem services and educational and recreational amenities.

Ireland's National Forest Strategy

FOREST FOR CLIMATE	FORESTS FOR WOOD	FORESTS FOR PEOPLE	FORESTS FOR NATURE	FORESTS FOR ECONOMY
				
Forests sequester and store carbon. Irish forests and their soils currently store over 300 million tonnes of carbon	Wood provides sustainable building materials and replaces materials made using energy from fossil fuels	Forests provide places for recreation. Our public forests provide access on 400,000 ha	Forests provide important habitats for plants and animals, protect water quality when established sustainably	Forests produced 4 million cubic metres of timber in 2020, support a vibrant forest industry

Forest Strategy provides opportunities to identify actions to deliver on these 5 strategic themes

High Level Goals



Forest Strategy determined 3 main needs the plan should address:

1. Increase Forest Cover.
2. Greater focus on delivering environmental, social and recreational, benefits for people from new and existing forests.
3. Mobilising the existing timber resource, to include expanding the value added potential of timber within a growing bio economy.



Proposed Interventions



The Forestry Programme 2023-2027 will consist of 8 Interventions to address the 3 needs:

1. Forest Creation
2. Creation of Agroforestry Systems
3. Infrastructure and Technology investments
4. Sustainable Forest Management
5. Developing skills and empowering the forest sector for Sustainable Forest Management
6. Open Forest Measure: Social, cultural & heritage forests (existing forests)
7. Climate Resilient Reforestation
8. Reconstitution

Schemes offered will flow from each Intervention.

Afforestation & Forest Types



Forest Type	
FT1	Native forests
FT2	Forests for water
FT3	Forests on Public Lands
FT4	Neighbourwoods
FT5	Emergent Forests
FT6	Broadleaf (mainly oak and Beech)
FT7	Diverse Broadleaf
FT9	Seed Orchards
FT10	CCF
FT11	Mixed high forests: Diverse Conifer, minimum 20% broadleaves
FT12	Mixed high forests with Sitka spruce, minimum 20% broadleaves
	Woodland Environmental Fund

Intervention 1 – Forest Creation



Aims to increase forest cover whilst also delivering ecosystem services with environmental and climate benefits.

Afforestation Scheme:

- Target of 8,000ha per annum broken down by 12 forest types.
- Propose to increase premiums to 20 years for farmers.
- Propose to increase grant and premium rates significantly.
- 20% broadleaf now mandatory for all conifer forest types.
- Annual broadleaf target will increase to 50% of total annual planting.
- New Forest Types proposed – Forests for water, Emergent Forests, Neighbourwoods, Seed Orchards, and Continuous Cover Forestry
- Woodland Environmental Fund option will continue - €1,000 per ha top up by a company to the landowner

Forest Creation – Proposed Rates



	Forest Type	Proposed Grant/ha	Proposed Annual Premium/ha	Proposed Duration of Premiums for farmers	Proposed Duration of Premiums for non-farmers
FT1	Native forests	€6,744	€1,103	20	15
FT2	Forests for water*	€6,744	€1,142	20	15
FT3	Forests on Public Lands**	€10,544	n/a	n/a	n/a
FT4	NeighbourWoods***	€10,200	€1,142	20	15
FT5	Emergent Forest	€2,500	€350	20	15
FT6	Broadleaf, mainly oak	€6,744	€1,037	20	15
FT7	Other Broadleaf	€4,314	€973	20	15
FT8	Agroforestry	€8,555	€975	10	10
FT9	Seed Orchards	€10,000	€1,142	20	15
FT10	Continuous Cover Forestry	€5,421	€912	20	15
FT11	Mixed high forests: Conifer, 20% broadleaves	€4,452	€863	20	15
FT12	Mixed high forests with mainly spruce, 20% broadleaves	€3,858	€746	20	15
Native Tree Area Scheme will be paid at FT1 and FT2 rates. Premiums will be paid over 10 years rather than 20 at a rate of €2,206 per ha annually for NTA1 and €2,284 per ha annually for NTA2					

* Additional payment of €1,000 per ha will be paid to landowner on completion of planting

** Grant includes Trails, Seats & Signage Facilities payment

*** Grant includes Facilities payment

Intervention 2 – Agroforestry



- Aims to facilitate landowners in planting forests and continuing to produce food through agriculture.
- Support will continue to be offered through the Afforestation Scheme for Silvopastoral systems with a target of 100ha annually.
- Number of pilot schemes to examine the feasibility of expanding our offerings. Silvoarable, Forest Gardening and Forest Farming.

Intervention 3 - Infrastructure and Technology investments



Aims to support sustainable development of access to the national forest estate for economic, protective and social purposes.

Changes to Forest Road Scheme – Target of 125km per annum as per Climate Action Plan with suggested increase of rate to €55 per metre. Top up payments for Ecologically Enhanced Road and Engineering Design Support Measure. Special Construction Works expanded.

Other measures

- Temporary Forest Access Measure - facilitate the use of temporary bridging.
- Forest Machinery Grant - One-Off Payment/Purchase support.
- Central Tyre Inflation Systems also will be supported.
- Investment Aid for the Development of the Forest Tree Nursery Sector.
- Forest Technology Challenge Grant - grant support for the innovation and development of technological tools to support programme delivery and sustainability.

Intervention 4 - Sustainable Forest Management



- Native Woodland Conservation
- Coppice and Coppice with Standards
- Woodland Improvement Scheme
- Continuous Cover Forestry Scheme
- Environmental Enhancement
- Seed stand management

Intervention 5 – Developing skills and empowering people for sustainable forest management



Aims to support forest owners to be able to recognise the full potential of their forest and become active forest managers.

We propose to deliver this through:

- Continuing the successful Knowledge Transfer Group Scheme currently offered
- Training Call for Proposals - open competitive process, to identify the training/educational gaps and establish how best to meet these requirements.
- Forest Promotion – call for proposals
- Continuous Professional Development

Intervention 6 – Open Forest Measure



- Aims to support existing Social, Cultural and Heritage forests.
- Delivered through expansion of Neighbourwood and new Schemes.
- The Active Forest - “close-to-home” forests or “neighbourwoods” for activities like cycling, orienteering etc
- Heartwoods – forests with a strong focus on health ‘green prescriptions’
- Forest Classroom – support for facilitators who will be trained to act as ‘educators’
- Heritage Forests - protection and enhancement of cultural and heritage aspects of our forests.
- Grants will be offered and a Payment for Ecosystem Services premium may be available for private forest owners.

Intervention 7 - Climate Resilient Reforestation



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’*
- Element 2: Reforestation for Native Woodlands
- Element 3: Reforestation for Biodiversity and Water
- Element 1: Reforestation for Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF)

Intervention 8 – Reconstitution



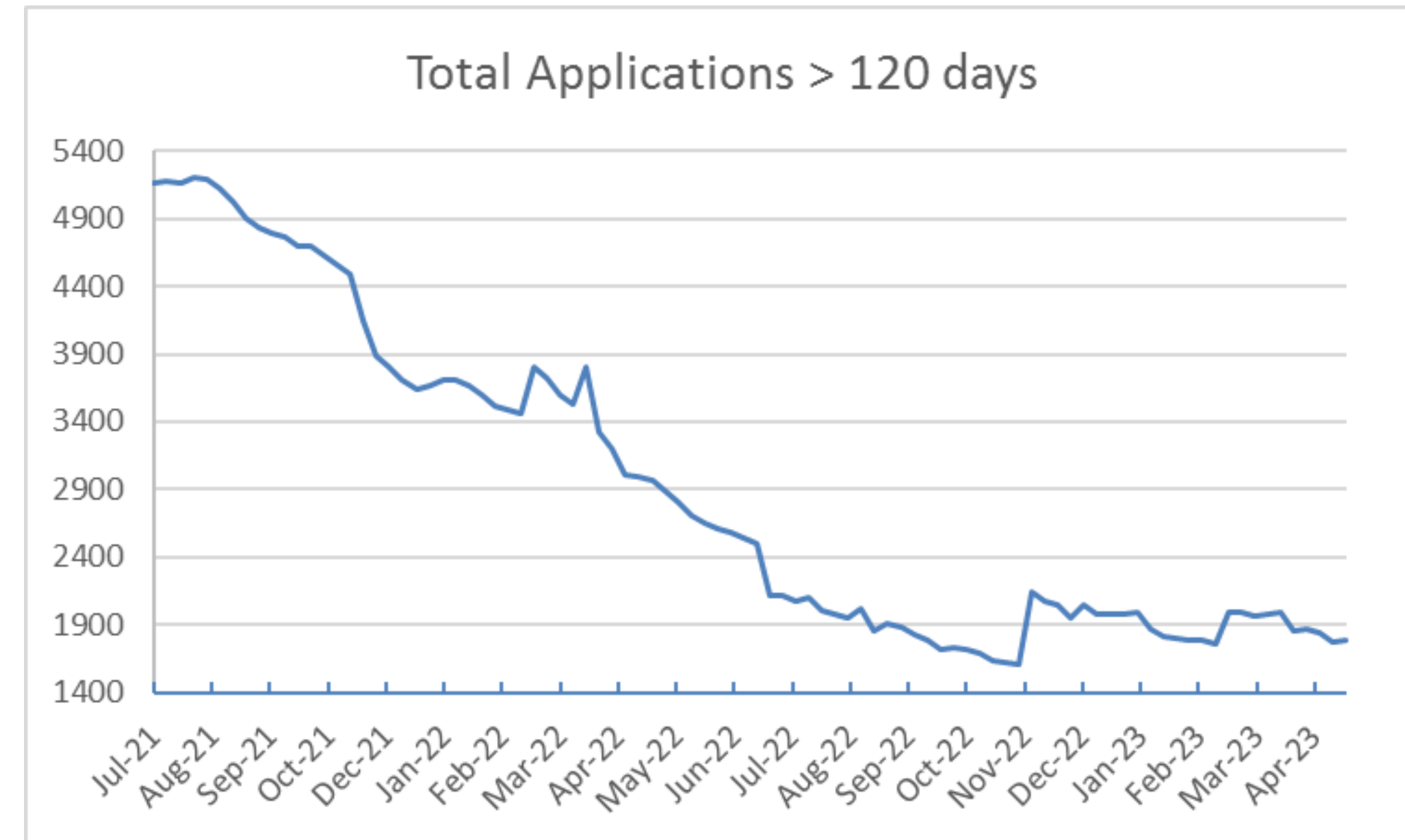
- Aims to restore and retain forest land and forest ecosystems following significant damage by natural causes.
- Open to all private forest owners in Ireland. Individual schemes will be restricted to specific forest types/ages classes/other criteria dependent on occurrences of pest and disease outbreaks and other natural occurrences.

Licencing progress to date



- **Forestry licensing**

- 4,700 licenses issued in 2022, up from 2,700 in 2020.
- 1,000 more licences issued than applications received
- Turnaround times improved
- Appeals down from 1,000 to < 80



Looking ahead...



- Subject to receipt of State Aid approval from the European Commission
- Farmer participation will be key in delivery of 1.3 billion euro package
- 67% of land in agricultural use – we need farmer buy in
- Planting trees is a progressive farm level option
- Afforestation key in delivery of wider agri policies and enhance sustainability credentials
- Planting trees and managing existing forests through measures in program will help
- Managing run-off, sequestering Carbon and creating habitats = win win to improve farm level sustainability
- DAFM acknowledges that licencing system that delivers will be key
- Ongoing work on implementing outputs from McKinnon, Project Woodland & Philip Lee report.
- Many other efficiencies being developed internally (validation, training, engagement)



Thank you