

# England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) Grant Manual 2021

## Purpose

This Grant Manual presents the guidance to applicants on the England Woodland Creation Offer from 9 June 2021.

## Change log

Version	Publication Date	Key Changes
2.2	12 January 2022	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual Maintenance Payments rate increased from £200 to £300 per hectare.</li> </ul>
2.1	14 December 2021	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extend the Grant Funding Period for Capital Payments to two years, with the addition of a three-month final claim window.</li> <li>- Set minimum claim value of £5,000 unless final claim.</li> <li>- Clarify the position on the use of Paulownia species.</li> <li>- Add details to the requirements for Additional Contributions</li> <li>Rename the spatial layers used to target the EWCO Flood Risk Additional Contribution.</li> <li>- Clarify requirement that maps must include a six-figure grid reference.</li> <li>- Clarify eligibility for landlords to apply after a dispute.</li> </ul>
2.0	22 September 2021	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirm land in Environmental Stewardship can move to EWCO without repayments where conditions are met.</li> <li>- For applications over £50k letters from accountants must be from within three months of the application, and that we may also ask for to see accounts for one or more applications that have a value over £500k.</li> <li>- EWCO layer names in the Land Information Search.</li> <li>- Confirmation the grant will not pay for planting trees on land which is considered an existing woodland.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Redefining 'untrialled species; to 'species whose performance, potential for invasiveness and susceptibility to known plant health issues when grown in England is currently not proven'.</li> <li>- Requirements for integral woodland open space.</li> </ul>
1.3	21 July 2021	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarify the inclusion of untrialled species.</li> <li>- Confirm that wet signatures and Qualified Electronic Signatures (QES) will be accepted for the Agreement offer.</li> </ul>
1.2	7 July 2021	Updates to confirm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planting cricket bat willow is not eligible.</li> <li>- Land that is currently managed as Short Rotation Coppice or Short Rotation Forestry is not eligible.</li> <li>- The proportion of woody shrubs we will accept in an application.</li> </ul>
1.1	16 June 2021	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirm the Grant Funding Period for current applications (work must be completed and claimed by 31 March 2023) and define the Grant Funding Period.</li> <li>- Clarify the spatial layers for the Nature Recovery Additional Contributions and the stocking density for the Riparian Buffer Additional Contribution.</li> <li>- Set minimum claim value of £1,000 unless final claim.</li> </ul>
1.0	9 June 2021	First version at launch of EWCO

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# 1 Introduction

This Grant Manual explains how the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) works and what you need to do to apply. It also explains the requirements and processes that you must follow if your application is successful. This Grant Manual applies to EWCO applications received from 9 June 2021.

Further detail is contained in five appendices to this Grant Manual (available at the [England Woodland Creation Offer application form webpage](#)):

- Appendix 1: Standard cost items
- Appendix 2: Design guide
- Appendix 3: Consents guide
- Appendix 4: Common land and shared grazing
- Appendix 5: Natural colonisation guide

## 1.1 The England Woodland Creation Offer

EWCO supports the establishment of new woodlands and is administered by the Forestry Commission (FC). It is funded by the Exchequer through the Nature for Climate Fund, to support projects that will help us achieve Net Zero by 2050, at the same time as helping nature recovery and delivering other objectives in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#).

The main priorities for EWCO are:

- Combatting climate change by creating new woodlands that store carbon
- Contributing to nature recovery by creating new woodland habitat
- Improving water quality
- Reducing flood risk
- Providing climate change mitigation by cooling watercourses
- Creating woodlands that are close to people
- Increasing and improving recreational access in new woodland
- Encouraging ammonia capture to protect sensitive sites

EWCO will support woodland creation until 2024/25. It aims to support the creation of 11,000 hectares of new woodland by 2024/25 with £15.8M available for capital works to create woodland in 2021/22. EWCO will lead into our new future environmental schemes from 2024. As set out in the government's Agricultural Transition Plan, the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery Schemes will provide support for publicly funded woodland creation.

EWCO offers support for woodland establishment, via planting and via natural colonisation, through payments towards the capital items and activities required to

create new woodland. EWCO also includes ten years of annual Maintenance Payments to help establish the young trees once the capital works are complete. Grant Recipients must maintain the young woodland for a total of 15 years after the last capital works are complete. The EWCO Grant is conditional on the proposed woodland meeting the relevant requirements and guidelines of the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). The UKFS sets out the government's approach to sustainable forestry in the UK.

If your application is eligible and successful, your Grant could include up to four elements:

- Support for the **capital items and activities** to establish new woodland.
- **Annual Maintenance Payments** for ten years to help establish the young trees once the capital works are complete.
- Contributions (full costs in the case of infrastructure for recreation) towards the **actual costs of installing infrastructure** to either enable the establishment and future management of the woodland, or to provide or improve recreational access.
- Optional **Additional Contributions** where the design of the woodland and its location will deliver specific public benefits. You can apply for multiple Additional Contributions. The design requirements for the Additional Contributions require that you exceed the minimum requirements and guidelines of UKFS.

## 1.2 Customer and Land registration

You must be registered on [Rural Payments](#) and have a Single Business Identifier (SBI) before you can apply to EWCO. Please note you do not need to be a business to register. If you want to direct your EWCO payments to an authorised agent they must also be registered on Rural Payments. You must also have registered your land on Rural Payments before we can offer you a EWCO Agreement. We advise applicants to register their land before making an application.

## 1.3 Important information

EWCO is provided under domestic legislation. You may need to keep evidence and provide it when requested. Check [Section 7.4](#) for evidence and record-keeping requirements before you apply.

The Forestry Commission reserves the right to:

- Not award grant funding for some or all of the activities for which applications are invited
- Amend add or withdraw the elements of EWCO at any time. Where any such changes affect a current application, the applicant will be notified of the change and how it affects their application

## 1.4 Disclaimer

The Forestry Commission makes every effort to ensure this Grant Manual, its Appendices and associated Application Forms are accurate. However, neither the FC nor its respective advisers, officers, delivery partners, employees, other staff or agents:

- Makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of this documentation
- Accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the documentation or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information, nor shall any of them be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication

## 1.5 Guarding against fraud

Fraudsters may target land managers who receive grant payments, and we are aware that in the past some customers have received emails, texts and telephone calls claiming to be from the Forestry Commission, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) or Defra.

Remember:

- Never discuss your bank account details with someone you do not know
- We will not ask you to make a payment over the phone
- Delete any emails or texts you do not believe are genuine, and do not open any links. Our main email addresses are:
  - [EWCO@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:EWCO@forestrycommission.gov.uk)
  - [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk)
  - [rpa@notifications.service.gov.uk](mailto:rpa@notifications.service.gov.uk)
- Be cautious about what information you share externally, particularly on social media

If you suspect an attempted fraud or feel you have been the subject of fraud, you can contact:

- [Action Fraud](#) (the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime) online or on 0300 123 2040
- If the attempt relates to information held by the RPA or claimed to be from the RPA contact the RPA's Fraud Referral Team on 0800 347 347 or [FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk](mailto:FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk)

We apply controls to guard against fraud and monitor all financial transactions for potential instances of fraud, and any circumstances where we believe there could be an attempt to obtain grant funds by deception will be fully investigated.

## 2 Overview

You can submit an application to EWCO at any time of the year. Please note that it could take three to five months from the point of us receiving a valid application to an Agreement being offered, depending on factors such as stakeholder engagement on your woodland creation proposal. As a result, applications received after October each year are unlikely to receive a EWCO Agreement in time to plant that winter.

### 2.1 Tree supply and biosecurity

You should speak to a tree nursery to ensure sufficient planting stock will be available for your project.

It's important the plants and trees you use are free from pests and diseases. Where possible, get your plants from nurseries with clear plant health management standards in place including, for example, nurseries with [Plant Healthy certification](#) or similar.

### 2.2 The EWCO Agreement

If your application is eligible and successful you will be offered a EWCO Grant. If you accept the offer you will enter into an Agreement with the Forestry Commission. This Agreement will consist of:

- The EWCO Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions (or simply “Terms and Conditions”)
- Annexes to the above, which include this EWCO Grant Manual
- The Grant Offer Letter
- The Grant Recipient’s Application Form
- An Agreement Map
- An Access Map (if required)
- The Acceptance Letter

Your Grant could include the four elements of EWCO set out in [Section 1.1](#). You must use the EWCO Application Form Part B to provide detail on the elements you are applying for in each compartment or block of woodland in the application. The final version of the EWCO Application Form Part B we agree with you will be part of your Agreement and set out the work you need to do and payments you will receive.

Your Agreement duration will include two periods: a **Grant Funding Period** and an **Obligation Period**.

### 2.2.1 Capital element of the EWCO Agreement

The capital element of your EWCO Grant includes the payments for standard cost items and actual cost items. The **Grant Funding Period** will run for two years from the **Commencement Date** of your Agreement until the **End of Capital Funding Date**. The Grant Funding Period may not run for this full period if you finish the work before then. During this period, you must complete all the capital works (activities supported through standard or actual costs). You will have an additional three months from the End of Capital Funding Date to submit your claim for payment. We will not accept claims received after this date unless we agree an amendment to extend the **Grant Funding Period**.

You must not submit a claim for payment until you have paid for the capital items in the claim and the payment for them has left your bank account. You must not begin capital works before you have formally accepted your EWCO Agreement.

Support for the standard costs under your EWCO Agreement (excluding payments towards the actual costs of infrastructure for management and to enable recreation) is subject to a cap that limits the amount that can be paid. The cap is taken as an average per hectare across the whole application. The payment cap is an average of £8,500 per hectare over the gross area of the scheme. If you use the MS Excel spreadsheet version of the EWCO Application Form Part B this will be calculated automatically.

If the average value of your application per hectare is more than the cap you may need to work with us to reduce the average value of your application by reducing the number of capital items. This will require working with your Forestry Commission Woodland Officer to make sure you understand what you need to do to prepare a woodland creation scheme that still includes all the necessary items and activities to ensure the woodland will establish.

If a scheme requires capital works that exceed the cap your EWCO Agreement will require all of the capital items and activities to be undertaken even though your payment for standard costs will be limited to the cap. We will work with you to develop the scheme but the final decision on the capital items and activities that are required to ensure woodland will establish is the Forestry Commission's.

You must:

- Maintain any capital items funded through the scheme for 15 years from the date of final payment for the capital items. This is called the **Obligation Period** of the Agreement. Your Agreement may be subject to inspection during the Obligation Period

- Have management control of the land for the length of the Agreement (the Grant Funding Period to undertake the capital work and Obligation Period). [Section 3.2](#) explains how this requirement applies if you are a landlord or a tenant

### 2.2.2 Maintenance element of the EWCO Agreement

You must confirm you wish to include annual Maintenance Payments in your Agreement in Application Form Part A.

To support the successful establishment and ongoing maintenance of the new woodland you will need to:

- Replace any trees that die, to ensure required stocking density is maintained by year five and to ensure canopy closure will be obtained by year 20 after planting
- Ensure all planted trees are kept free from competing vegetation and grazing animals
- Maintain tree protection (fencing, shelters, spiral guards)
- Maintain planned temporary open space
- Remove and dispose of tree guards in an appropriate manner (e.g., recycle) when no longer required and by year 15 in all cases
- Ensure all trees are suitably protected against herbivores, (browsing and bark stripping animals), either individually or collectively, and maintain this protection throughout the Obligation Period
- Avoid using any herbicides if trees are being planted on land next to a watercourse

#### If you decide not to receive annual Maintenance Payments

If you do not wish to take up the Maintenance Payments then you must continue to maintain the capital items, funded through the capital element of the Agreement, for 15 years following the date of the final capital payment (the Obligation Period – see [Section 2.2.1](#)). You must confirm you understand this requirement in the EWCO Application Form Part A and that you understand we may inspect the scheme during the Obligation Period. You can find more information about inspections in [Section 7.3](#).

The exceptions to this rule are leaky woody dams. These standard cost items have to be maintained for two years from the date they are claimed for.

Where the Additional Contribution for recreational access is included in the Agreement, permissive access must be maintained on the site for at least 30 years, along with the associated signage advising the public of the permissive access over the site.

### 2.2.3 Additional Contribution element of the EWCO Agreement

Additional Contributions are optional and will be available where the woodland's location and design will deliver public benefits (see [Section 4.3.4](#)). Additional Contributions are made in recognition that woodland creation can make contributions to the following public benefits:

- **Nature Recovery** – available where woodland creation will expand areas of existing native woodland, create new native woodlands, or will expand habitat for red squirrel populations. This Additional Contribution will help woodland-dependent priority species to recover
- **Water Quality** – available where woodland creation will help reduce pollutants through land use change that reduces fertilizer application or by creating woodland that intercepts pollution and sediment before it reaches watercourses.
- **Flood Risk** - available where woodland creation can help reduce the risk of flooding
- **Riparian buffers** - available where woodland creation with native broadleaved species will provide the dappled shade that will improve aquatic ecology, and benefit wildlife dispersal (e.g., otter) along the corridors of habitat this creates.
- **Close to settlements** – available where woodland creation will provide social benefits by being close to people
- **Access** – available where woodland creation will provide permissive access for recreation on land that does not current have access to it, for at least 30 years

Additional Contributions are paid once the associated capital works are complete. Where the location and design of the woodland means that multiple benefits will be provided, Additional Contributions for different public benefits can be stacked.

## 2.3 How applications are selected

EWCO is a criteria-based competitive scheme, with funding offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants need to score their applications and we will review this. We will offer Agreements to applicants with proposals whose scores meet or exceed a threshold score. The threshold score set is based on available budget and is reviewed every three months. The current score will be shown on the [EWCO GOV.UK webpage](#).

You need to score your own application first by filling in the Scoring section of the EWCO Application Form Part B. You need to meet or exceed the current threshold score for us to accept your initial application and take it forward.

Once you have agreed your final application with your Woodland Officer, we will give it a final score. If your application has a final score equal to or greater than the threshold score that applied at the time of your initial application, we will offer you an Agreement.

The highest scores under EWCO are for applications that have the greatest positive impact on:

- Climate change – read: [Climate change: impacts and adaptation in England's Woodlands, Tree species and Provenance](#), and [Managing England's Woodlands in a Climate Emergency](#) for more information
- Using private finance to support woodland creation – see [Section 4.3.5](#)
- Nature Recovery – see [Section 4.3.4](#) and Appendix 2
- Water quality – see [Section 4.3](#) and Appendix 2
- Planting riparian buffers - see [Section 4.3](#) and Appendix 2
- Flood risk prevention – see [Section 4.3](#) and Appendix 2
- Public access and other social benefits – see [Section 4.3](#) and Appendix 2
- Ammonia capture to protect vulnerable Sites of Special Scientific Interest

If your application is unsuccessful you can re-apply at any time. However, you will be advised to change your application to increase its score, so that it has a chance of meeting the threshold score.

If budget becomes limited and the value of applications received is likely to exceed the available budget, we will set a closing deadline for further applications. Applications received before the deadline will be prioritised based on their score until the budget is exhausted. If any scores are tied, applications that have the greatest points for the provision of public access will be prioritised. We will notify applicants of any change to this approach through our [eAlert](#) and on GOV.UK.

## 2.4 What the grant cannot pay for

EWCO cannot be used to pay for the cost of any of the following, which will not be considered Eligible Expenditure:

- Any capital works initiated before the Agreement Commencement Date
- Any capital works required in the Agreement, but which mean the average capital value of the Agreement exceeds the cap on capital items and activities (see [Section 2.2.1](#))
- Planning application fees or other transactional fees
- Agent fees or other advisory fees (unless included in the quotes for infrastructure)
- Meeting legal requirements, including planning conditions
- Woodland creation for short rotation coppice and/or short rotation forestry
- Creating Christmas tree plantations or planting cricket bat willow
- Planting trees on land which we consider to be an existing woodland

## 3 Who can apply and what land is eligible

To confirm your eligibility for EWCO you will need to complete the declaration on the EWCO Application Form Part A. You must also confirm your commitment to abide by the [Code of Conduct for Recipients of Government General Grants](#). If you do not do this or if, during our processing of your application, we find any part of your application is not eligible we will reject part or all of your application.

As long as they have control of all the land and all the activities needed to meet the Obligations of the Grant for the full duration of the Agreement, EWCO is open to land managers who are either:

- An owner occupier
- A tenant
- A landlord
- A licensor

On tenanted land both tenants and landlords will need to agree to the proposal.

We will use the government's 'Spotlight' system to undertake due diligence checks on applicants and to ensure the safe award of EWCO funds. Spotlight enables the checking of information on grant applicants from across government to reduce the risk of fraud, dual-funding and the mismanagement of grant aid.

### 3.1 Eligible Land

#### 3.1.1 What land can be entered into the scheme

You can include land that is not already classified as woodland as part of your EWCO application as long as there is no existing legal requirement or obligation to create woodland on the land. Land that is currently managed as Short Rotation Coppice or Short Rotation Forestry is not eligible for EWCO.

#### 3.1.2 Ineligible land

The following land is not eligible for EWCO and you cannot include it in your application:

- Any land which is not entirely within England
- Developed land and hard standing (including permanent caravan sites and areas used for permanent storage)
- Land that is already part of another obligation which is incompatible with EWCO.

- Land where you do not have management control for the duration of the Agreement
- Land that is subject to a dispute between a landlord and tenants
- Land that is currently in an agri-environment agreement which has more than six months to run unless the RPA agrees the land can be removed from that agreement - see Section 3.3.1.

## 3.2 Management control

You must have management control of the land and all activities needed to meet the requirements of the EWCO Agreement for its full duration (see [Section 2.2.1](#)). If you do not, you must get the written consent of all other parties who have management control of the land and activities to undertake these activities for the duration of the Agreement.

### 3.2.1 Tenants

If you are a tenant applying for an Agreement in your name, you must have:

- Control of all the activities needed to meet the scheme requirements for the chosen capital items
- Security of tenure for the duration of the Agreement
- Management control of all the Agreement land for the duration of the Agreement.
- Agreement from your landlord to enter into the Agreement (your landlord must countersign the EWCO Application Form Part A). If you are not able to do this, you cannot include that area of land in your application

If the landlord takes over a EWCO Agreement from you once your tenancy has ended, they must be eligible to do so. Tenants should seek legal advice on their position should their tenancy cease unexpectedly before the end of any EWCO Agreement.

If you are a tenant, including under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986, the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 (a Farm Business Tenancy) or equivalent, it is your responsibility to check that you do not breach the terms of your tenancy by joining EWCO.

### 3.2.2 Landlords

If you are a landlord and can show that you retain management control over the land that has been let to a tenant to enable woodland creation you can include that land in a EWCO application.

Landlords will not be able to apply for funding on any land that is or has been subject to dispute within the last 12 months, for example, a contested notice to quit. You must declare this in your application.

As the Grant Recipient, you must give your tenant a copy of the EWCO Agreement. We may ask you to provide evidence to show that you have done this. It is your responsibility to make sure that your tenant does not breach the Terms and Conditions of the Agreement.

### 3.2.3 Partnerships

If you are in a business partnership, you can apply to EWCO.

### 3.2.4 Licensors

If you are a licensor, you can apply to EWCO. It is your responsibility to make sure that the licensee does not breach the Terms and Conditions of the EWCO Agreement. You must make sure that the licensee is aware of the requirements of the Agreement, as relevant to the licence, and include these in the licence agreement.

### 3.2.5 Licensees

If you are a licensee, you may be eligible for EWCO in certain circumstances if you can demonstrate full management control of the land for the duration of the Agreement.

### 3.2.6 Land owned by public bodies

Land owned or run by a public body is eligible for EWCO where woodland creation is not already required or paid for through:

- Payment from EU and Exchequer funds
- Grant aid from any other public body
- Any other form of legally binding obligation, including tenancies

Public Bodies applying to EWCO must meet the following conditions, which recognise that public land is a public asset:

- Public bodies should ensure land is managed in line with [Managing Public Money](#), including through disposing of surplus land and buildings in a way that delivers value for the taxpayer, boosts growth and delivers new homes.
- Estates professionals and policy teams should therefore consider how land retained for tree planting and woodland creation can be used for this purpose whilst meeting other departmental outcomes and delivering wider public benefits. You should keep a record of this decision-making, which we make ask to see.
- Provide public access over at least half of the site, except where to do so would unavoidably undermine public safety. This must be through either permissive access for at least 30 years, or a dedicated right of access over the site.

In addition, where central government departments or their arm's length bodies apply to plant trees on their land, the relevant HMT Spending Team must agree with the intention to undertake to the permanent land use change before a EWCO Agreement will be offered. This is to ensure specific proposals for woodland creation on public land represent good value for the public. You will need to provide evidence that your HMT Spending Team is content with your EWCO application. Further information can be found in [Classification of public bodies: guidance for departments](#).

Land owned by public bodies that is planted under EWCO will not be eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme unless it is managed by a private body or a local authority.

Public bodies applying to EWCO are encouraged to partner with third party organisations wherever this is possible and appropriate to deliver the creation and management of new woodlands. This can secure better value for public money, increased community engagement, and a wider range of environmental and social benefits from the woodland. While this is not a requirement to apply to EWCO, we will monitor it. You will need to confirm in the EWCO Application Form Part A if an application from a public body includes a third party and, if not, any steps you took to determine whether a partnership opportunity was available. This will allow us to monitor how and where partnerships are enabling public bodies to plant and manage woodlands.

If you are a tenant of a public body, you may be able to apply to EWCO - see [Section 3.2.1](#). If you are a tenant of a public body, please [contact a Forestry Commission Woodland Officer](#) to discuss your application.

### 3.2.7 Joint applications and consortia

Applications from multiple land managers are eligible for EWCO.

Once potential applicants have read this Grant Manual and have decided to pursue a joint EWCO application, they will need to agree on the person who will make the application on their behalf – the 'lead applicant'. If the application is successful, the lead applicant will become the named Grant Recipient on behalf of the land managers; they will be responsible for all requirements of the Agreement. We will need all the land managers to countersign the EWCO Application Form Part A to confirm their consent that the lead applicant can act on their behalf, including entering into a EWCO Agreement.

The lead applicant will be the main business contact for the EWCO application and subsequent EWCO Agreement. This person will sign the EWCO Agreement on behalf of all the land managers, act on behalf of the land managers and receive EWCO payments. Any action to recovery grant funding under a EWCO Agreement will also be with the lead applicant. The Single Business Identifier (SBI) of the lead applicant will be used and they may authorise an agent to act on their behalf.

An agreement to collaborate between the land managers will have to be established to support the EWCO application and meet the requirements of any subsequent EWCO Agreement. This should ensure compliance with the EWCO Agreement will be the shared responsibility of those who are party to the agreement to collaborate, but day-to-day administration will be the responsibility of the lead applicant. It will also need to set out a formula to apportion payments to the land managers, and arrangements to reimburse the lead applicant if the recovery of grant funds is required. The Forestry Commission will not be involved in the drafting, production or any disputes related to this private agreement, but you will need to provide evidence of these arrangements to us if you are asked to.

### 3.2.8 Compatibility with the Basic Payment Scheme

You can claim Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) on land in a EWCO Agreement provided the land meets certain eligibility requirements. Non-agricultural land is considered eligible for BPS on the condition that the non-agricultural land was used with entitlements to claim under the Single Payments Scheme in 2008.

For more information read section 9 in [Guidance on woodland grant schemes and BPS: Operations Note 42](#).

## 3.3 Land receiving other funding or under other agreements

You cannot use EWCO funding to carry out capital works that are required under other agreements. For example, work might be required as part of a tenancy agreement or grant schemes such as:

- Environmental Stewardship
- Countryside Stewardship
- English Woodland Grant Scheme
- Farming Recovery Fund
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Inheritance Tax Exemption
- Other woodland creation schemes from the FC and woodland creation partnerships

You must declare that any work proposed as part of your application does not breach the conditions of any other agreement. We will carry out checks to make sure that capital works are not funded twice from public money. If we find a EWCO application would result in a conflict between government funding or dual-funding we will reject the application, and if this is found to be the case where an Agreement is in place we may recover the EWCO Grant funds paid to date and close the Agreement.

If your application is on land that is already in an Environmental Stewardship (ES) or Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreement, Natural England and RPA will check it to make sure the work is compatible. However, it is your responsibility to make sure that you and the land are eligible. See Section 3.3.1 for more information.

The [Woodland Carbon Guarantee](#) (WCaG) is an incentive scheme to help accelerate woodland planting rates across England. You can make a WCaG application alongside applications to EWCO.

### 3.3.1 Applications on land currently in Environmental Stewardship (ES)

You can apply to EWCO on land currently in an ES agreement if the agreement has less than six months to run. Where we process an application within the six months we will not issue an EWCO agreement until it has expired.

If the land in your EWCO application is under an ES agreement with more than six months to run or you want a EWCO agreement before the ES expires you may apply to EWCO but you will need to remove the land from your ES agreement. It may be possible to do this without a repayment of the ES payments as long as the following conditions are met:

- a) The transfer of land into EWCO will result in a net improvement in environmental management on that land<sup>1</sup>, compared to management under the existing ES agreement; and
- b) The ES agreement remains viable after transfer of the land and removal from the ES agreement.

When we receive a EWCO application for land in an ES agreement we will arrange for the RPA to assess whether these conditions are met. The RPA will make this assessment with advice from Natural England. We will inform you of the result of the assessment. If these conditions are not met then your application will require further consideration from the RPA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. If these conditions are met, then your EWCO application and amendment to your ES agreement can be processed in parallel.

If conditions (a) and (b) are met you will need to request a Land Transfer and Amendment (LTA1) form from the RPA. You must complete and submit this form to the RPA, to request amendment to your ES agreement. You will can request the LTA1 from the RPA by either:

- email [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk); or,

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<sup>1</sup> Land under specific Higher Level Stewardship options is unlikely to pass this test.

- telephone: 03000 200 301

You may also need to submit a Rural Land and Entitlements (RLE1) form to adjust the boundaries of any land parcels, if you wish to move only part of a land parcel into EWCO. This form can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tell-the-rural-payments-agency-about-land-changes-and-entitlement-transfers>. To help us process your EWCO application please send us a copy of your LTA1 form and any RLE1 when you have sent it/them to the RPA.

Please note the ES amendment will not be finalised until the EWCO application has been processed. Where the EWCO application is successful, we will offer a EWCO Agreement in Principle. You will then need to instruct the RPA to complete the amendment to allow the EWCO agreement to go live.

For enquiries relating to EWCO or this process, please contact [EWCOenquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:EWCOenquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk). For enquiries relating to conditions (a) and (b), or the process of removing land from an ES agreement, please contact [ruralpayments@rpa.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@rpa.gov.uk).

### 3.3.2 Applications on land currently in Countryside Stewardship (CS)

You can apply to EWCO on land currently in an CS agreement if the agreement has less than six months to run. Where we process an application within the six months we will not issue an EWCO agreement until it has expired.

Where the CS agreement has more than six months to run you may choose to take land out of a current CS agreement to make an application to EWCO. This will be subject to repayments and/or fees. The exception to this maybe moving rotational options under a Mid Tier Agreement to different land parcels – this may be possible without a repayment.

In all cases you must agree with the RPA removal of the land from the CS agreement before you submit your EWCO application. To request a change to your CS agreement you must contact RPA by either:

- email: [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk); or
- telephone: 03000 200 301

## 3.4 Common land and shared grazing

Common land and shared grazing is eligible for EWCO. Commoners/graziers need to agree and name one person to sign the application. This person will then be responsible for maintaining any subsequent EWCO Agreement, if accepted, on behalf of all the commoners/graziers.

Applications on common land that include the Additional Contribution for recreational access will need to include evidence that there is not an existing right of access over the land.

If your application is on common land or an area of shared grazing, you must read Appendix 4, which sets out further requirements. You must complete and submit a copy of the [EWCO Common Land and Shared Grazing Supplementary Form](#).

Proposals on common land or areas of shared grazing may need consent from the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – for example where the work would prevent or impede access or for works to the surface of the land. For more information on consents, please see Appendix 3.

## 3.5 Business viability test

We will complete due diligence checks on applications and applicants, including checks on previous grant performance and the background of the potential grant recipient, plus basic financial checks. If we assess your application as not financially viable, we may not offer you an Agreement. Applications involving capital expenditure over certain limits will require additional evidence and undergo additional checks.

If the value of capital items (including support for any actual costs infrastructure) exceeds £50,000 you will need to provide evidence of your capability and capacity to deliver the project by submitting a statement from a chartered accountant. The statement must be dated within the last three months. If the value of capital items (including support for any actual costs infrastructure) exceeds £500,000 in the application (or more across multiple applications and agreements with the same person) we may also ask to see accounts for the last three years. This is to confirm that the business or SBI has the resources from trading profits, reserves or loans to undertake the work proposed in the application. If this is required, we will need this before we can offer an Agreement.

Where confirmation from an accountant is needed, they will need to provide a letter on headed paper, dated within the last three months, that confirms at least the following:

- They are a chartered accountant and act as the accountant for the applicant

- They can confirm that the applicant has sufficient finances to complete the capital works in the application and how these funds will be sourced (e.g., savings, loan etc.
- Their understanding of the total value of the capital works in the application

## 4 How it works

This section provides information about the main elements of the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO). If the process and application requirements for EWCO change, the [EWCO GOV.UK page](#) will be updated and we will notify any current applicants in writing within 14 days.

A Forestry Commission Woodland Officer will assess your application to make sure that the proposed woodland creation is appropriate. To support this process, you will need to prepare a Woodland Creation Plan by completing the relevant parts of the EWCO Application Form Part B. This is not needed if you have a Woodland Creation Design Plan approved by the FC through the [Woodland Creation Planning Grant](#).

### 4.1 Preparing a woodland creation plan

The Woodland Creation Plan forms part of the EWCO Application Form Part B, which you must complete and submit as part of your application. Your Woodland Creation Plan must show how the proposal meets the [UK Forestry Standard](#) (UKFS) and its associated guidelines. Your Woodland Creation Plan will also need to give the reasoning for the capital items that support the tree establishment (for example, protection requirements).

In your Woodland Creation Plan you need to record the objectives for the new woodland and give key details such as the tree species you plan to plant, proportions, stocking density and percentage of open space. The planting density (measured in 'stems per hectare') varies depending on the species choice and the objectives of the proposed Agreement.

To receive support under EWCO the proposal must be compliant with the relevant requirements and guidelines of the UKFS and secure the minimum threshold score. This will generally mean that the proposal's planting design meets requirements set out in the proposal level scoring criteria or is specifically designed to provide the benefits that merit the Additional Contribution(s) (see [Section 4.3.4](#) and Appendix 2). This includes species, stocking density and open ground.

The planning of your new woodland should consider how it will accommodate features of interest such as historic monuments or priority habitats that may be impacted by woodland creation. There is guidance on the forest design process in the UKFS and the FC [Practice Guide on Design techniques for forest management planning](#).

You should consider building resilience to climate change into your woodland design. Find more information in the FC publication [Managing England's Woodlands in a Climate Emergency](#) and [Climate change impacts and adaptation in English woodlands](#).

To support a EWCO application that includes Additional Contributions you will need to describe the objective(s) for woodland creation (for example, planting for water, planting for nature recovery or planting for combined objectives) in your Woodland Creation Plan. You can find guidelines on planting for nature recovery, water and social objectives in Appendix 2. You will need to meet these to be eligible for Additional Contributions.

You will also need to record information on any constraints to woodland creation in the Woodland Creation Plan and show how you have considered these in the woodland's design. To do this you will need to acknowledge and consider environmental sensitivity, protected species and designations in and around the proposed site and any impacts the proposed scheme may have.

You need to make sure the capital works in your application will not damage important features such as priority habitats and historic or archaeological features on or next to where the work will take place. This may mean you need to speak to neighbours and interested parties to explain the work. You should consult with neighbours and interested parties before you send your initial application, and your proposal will be published on a Public Register for 28 days.

If the capital work needs to be scheduled around seasonal activity, you must make sure you plan this well in advance.

Providing detailed information will mean we can assess the proposal under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. **You do not need to submit a standalone EIA enquiry form related to your proposal in addition to your EWCO application.** You can find more information about the EIA process for woodland creation online at [Environmental Impact Assessments for woodland: overview](#). The check we carry out at this stage does not confirm the details are correct. We may ask you for more information at a later date or recover money we have already paid you if we find an issue.

#### 4.1.2 The Woodland Creation Planning Grant

If your proposal is over five hectares in area, it may be eligible for the [Woodland Creation Planning Grant](#) (WCPG). WCPG contributes towards the costs of gathering and analysing the information land managers need to consider to ensure their proposals for new woodland take account of any impacts on: biodiversity, landscape, water, soil, the historic environment and local stakeholders and considered the impacts of climate change.

WCPG requires you to produce a UK Forestry Standard compliant plan for creating the woodland that shows how you have taken into account any constraints and opportunities.

**If you are applying to (or have an existing agreement under) WCPG you can only apply for EWCO once we have made you a Stage 2 Offer under the WCPG.**

WCPG has a separate application process and is open to applications all year round.

## 4.2 Eligibility requirements

### 4.2.1 Planting area, stocking and species

To be eligible for a EWCO Agreement, your application must cover a minimum area of 1 hectare with individual blocks of at least 0.1 hectare each. Blocks must have a minimum width of 20 metres (with the exception of riparian buffers and shelterbelts, which can have a minimum width of 10 metres).

Where you are proposing to create woodland through natural colonisation the land must also meet the requirements in [Section 4.4](#) and Appendix 5.

Areas of integral woodland open space are eligible for EWCO but where the area exceeds 20% of the gross woodland area (or a discrete area of over 0.5ha of non-linear open space), agreement from your Woodland Officer will be required. The inclusion of such areas is at the Forestry Commission's sole discretion. Open space includes woodland tracks, rides, way leaves and other permanent open areas.

The minimum stocking density for planting broadleaves expected under EWCO will usually be 1,100 trees per hectare for broadleaves and 2,500 trees per hectare for conifers. EWCO will not pay for stocking higher than 2,500 trees per hectare but applications can include higher stocking densities. Lower stocking of broadleaves - 400 trees per hectare - may be permitted in exceptional circumstances where this will support nature recovery. In all cases we will agree the minimum required stocking density with you.

All applications must satisfy current UKFS guidelines with regard to species choice and open ground. We will accept up to 20% woody shrubs, and up to 30% where justified and planting for the Nature Recovery Additional Contribution. We may accept up to 15% species whose performance, potential for invasiveness and susceptibility to known plant health issues when grown in England is currently not proven. The use of such species will be at the discretion of the FC. Your Forestry Commission Woodland Officer can confirm the species to which this applies.

EWCO does not fund the planting of Paulownia species. However, Paulownia species can be included within a woodland creation proposal submitted to EWCO. The use of Paulownia species will be assessed as part of the application through the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

EWCO supports the planting of UKFS compliant woodland where the proposed long term silvicultural system is coppice management. This does **not** include energy crop schemes, short rotation coppice or short rotation forestry.

EWCO does **not** support the planting of cricket bat willow (CBW).

### 4.2.2 UKFS compliance and biosecurity

To receive support under EWCO the proposal must be compliant with the relevant requirements and guidelines of the UKFS and secure the EWCO minimum threshold score. The UKFS sets out the legal requirements and industry good practice guidelines for woodland creation and management.

The species you select to create the new woodland must take into account any phytosanitary (plant health) restrictions or measures in place relating to preventing the introduction and spread of invasive tree pests and diseases, as well as the potential impact of existing threats. You must also consider how you can implement appropriate biosecurity measures for the project and site, such as procuring trees for planting from pest and disease-free areas (see [Section 2.1](#)). You can find information on [Tree pests and diseases](#) and biosecurity in [Prevent the introduction and spread of tree pests and diseases](#) guides on GOV.UK.

## 4.3 Payments

There are four types of payments available under EWCO:

- Support for the capital items and activities to establish new woodland through **standard costs**.
- 10 years of **annual Maintenance Payments** to help establish the young trees once the capital works are complete.
- **Contribution towards the actual cost** of installing infrastructure to either enable the current and future management of the woodland, or to provide recreational access.
- Optional **Additional Contributions** where the location of the woodland and its design will deliver. You can apply for multiple Additional Contributions on the same land where it touches the right spatial layer and the design is compatible.

### 4.3.1 Standard cost items and activities

You must use the EWCO Application Form Part B to record the capital items you want to include (for example: number of trees, gates and shelters, metres of fencing, etc.).

You can choose items from the list in Annex 1. Each item has a payment rate that is the value of a one-off payment that will be paid towards the cost of that item or

activity. Capital payments for items and activities will be paid at 100% of standard costs, based on national averages. Payments will be made once the work is completed.

### 4.3.2 Annual Maintenance Payments

You may be eligible for annual Maintenance Payments. If your Agreement includes this, you will receive annual payments of £300 per hectare to maintain your woodland and any capital items that were funded under the Agreement for 10 years.

Annual Maintenance Payments will be paid in autumn each year. The first five years payments will be triggered by payment of the final claim for capital work. To trigger a claim that autumn, a claim must be made by 31 August that year. Claims will be required at year six to trigger the further five years' payments.

### 4.3.3 Payments towards actual costs of infrastructure

EWCO may support the actual costs of the following:

- Infrastructure required to support the establishment and future management of the woodland. We will provide 40% of actual costs based on a quote agreed with us.
- Recreational infrastructure to provide high quality public access where new permissive access will be provided or the work will improve existing recreational access provision – see the list of items below. We will provide 100% of actual costs based on a quote agreed with us. You will not be able to charge for the use of these facilities.

These payments will be capped at 10% of the total capital cost of your proposal or 5% of remaining EWCO budget, whichever is lower.

For infrastructure to manage the woodland, the specifications for the works must meet national legislation, following the construction, design and management (CDM) regulations for forest roads and tracks. Further information can be found within [Forestry Commission Operations Note 25](#).

For infrastructure to enable or improve recreational access needs, the specifications for the works must meet [minimum access standards](#). We will support the items below (if you want to include other items this will require agreement from your Woodland Officer):

- All ability footpath
- All ability gates (in line with BS5709 2018)
- Post and disk waymarker

- Routed waymarker
- Interpretation boards - physical or digital
- Bench with backrest
- Footbridge – all ability access (surface and width)
- Footpath steps
- Ramp
- Small carpark

All ability access is assumed to be suitable for all terrain buggies and off-road mobility scooters. Benches without back rests and stiles are not suitable for some people and are therefore not funded. RADAR gates do not meet the requirements to be “all ability” and as a result are also not funded.

To apply for actual cost payments applicants will need to declare they have the financing required to undertake the work in the EWCO Application Form Part A. Applicants will also need to provide specifications and three quotes for the work, along with an explanation as to why the infrastructure is needed with their application (Application Form Part B).

To support any actual costs items and work we will select the specification and quote we consider to be most appropriate for the work – this will usually be cheapest unless there is good reason to select another one – and offer grant support based on this. We may also seek our own quote to assess the value for money offered by the three quotes submitted by the applicant. We may also require that this quote is used as the basis for any actual cost items in the EWCO Agreement.

Payments will be made on completion of the work. Grant Recipients will need to provide evidence that the work is complete with their claim by providing photos and copies of the invoices.

If you want to include support for infrastructure for woodland management in your application you must confirm whether permitted development rights apply to any proposed roading with your local planning authority (and relevant highways authority, as needed) as early as possible. You need to provide evidence of this with your application. Where planning permission is required you will need to obtain consent before work is undertaken and we may ask to see evidence of this as part of an inspection.

#### 4.3.4 Additional Contributions

Additional contributions are optional and will be available where the woodland’s location and design will deliver public benefits (see Appendix 2 for specific design requirements). These are one-off payments and can be claimed with the final claim for capital work (i.e., once all the capital works are completed). This includes areas where natural colonisation is used as the establishment method.

Where the location and design of the woodland means that multiple public benefits will be provided, Additional Contributions for different benefits can be stacked on the same area of land.

### Nature Recovery (either £2,800 or £1,100 per hectare)

This Additional Contribution will help woodland-dependent priority species to recover. There are two rates for this Additional Contribution. The two rates cannot be stacked on the same area and where the higher rate touches the compartment or block the higher rate will apply (unless creating woodland for red squirrels). The rate that applies will depend on the location, objective and composition of the new woodland:

- Higher rate (£2,800): available where the new woodland will expand areas of existing native woodland with new native woodland.
- Lower rate (£1,100): available where the new woodland will create areas of new native woodland or will expand habitat for red squirrel populations

This Additional Contribution will be awarded on the following basis.

- **Spatial targeting:** Proposed woodland meeting the design requirements must, for the:
  - Higher rate – touch the High Spatial Priority Area in the '**EWCO Biodiversity - Priority Habitat Network**' layer.
  - Lower rate - touch either of:
    - the Lower Spatial Priority Area in the '**EWCO Biodiversity - Priority Habitat Network**' layer.
    - the '**EWCO Biodiversity - Priority species- Red Squirrel – Woodland Creation**' layer.

You can check the location of the woodland in relation to these layers on the [Forestry Commission's map browser and Land Information Search](#).

- **Species mix:** Up to 30% of the species mix can be made up of woody shrubs. Unless you are planting to expand habitat for red squirrel, the planting for this Additional Contribution must follow the guidance for creating new native woodland: 80% or more of new woodland must be made up of native species, but you can include a proportion of non-native or naturalised, advancing/honorary species as follows:

- Up to 20% of the species mix can be non-native (these provide further climate change resilience).
- Up to 20% of the native species can be 'naturalised' or 'advancing' (native elsewhere in Britain), or 'honorary' natives (broadleaves native to northwest Europe and expected to be adapted to conditions in the near-future climate).
- Where an Additional Contribution is applied for in relation to Nature Recovery, faster growing non-native species should be planted as a fail-safe mixture i.e. a predominantly native broadleaved stand will be produced in the event of no further management. A fail safe mixture can be achieved by planting faster growing non native species either singly or in small individual groups of 3 – 5 trees scattered intimately throughout the predominantly native broadleaved area.

If you are planting the woodland to expand habitat for red squirrel you must apply the design requirements specified in Appendix 2.

- **Stocking density:** A minimum of 1,100 stems per hectare is generally required. Lower stocking may be agreed for woodland edges, upslope for visual landscape fit, and where this will benefit black grouse (where present). Closer spacing may be used where timber quality is important; this will also accelerate canopy closure to provide earlier opportunities for specialist woodland plants and animals to colonise.

### Water Quality (£400 per hectare)

Available where woodland creation is in catchments that are in moderate or poor water quality status, where woodland can help reduce pollutants through land use change that reduces fertilizer application or by creating woodland that intercepts pollution and sediment before it reaches watercourses. This Additional Contribution will be awarded on the following basis:

- **Spatial targeting:** Proposed woodland meeting the design requirements must touch a High Priority area '**EWCO Water – Water Quality**' layer on the [FC's map browser and Land Information Search](#).
- **Species mix:** UKFS compliance with no one species more than 50% of the mixture for climate adaptation. Productive broadleaf or conifer species will provide the greatest benefits for water, but larger scale planting of conifers should be avoided where water resources are an issue. Up to 20% of the species mix can be made up of woody shrubs.

- **Stocking density:** Minimum of 1,100 stems per hectare (closer spacing recommended across runoff pathways) and a maximum of 20% open space.

### Flood Risk (£500 per hectare)

Available where areas of appropriately designed new woodland in the right location can help reduce the risk of flooding. This Additional Contribution will be awarded on the following basis:

- **Spatial targeting:** Proposed woodland meeting the design requirements must touch either 'Opportunity for Floodplain Woodland' or 'Opportunity for Wider Catchment Woodland' in the '**EWCO Water – Flood Risk**' layer on the [FC's map browser and Land Information Search](#). If your proposal is not within this spatial area, confirmation of a benefit from the local flood authority or Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers will be accepted. Applications involving cross slope or run-off prevention woodland will be verified and advised upon by Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers.
- **Species mix:** UKFS compliance with no one species being more than 50% of the mixture for climate adaptation. Broadleaf or conifer species are effective, with broadleaves along watercourses (see the [riparian buffers Additional Contribution](#)). Up to 20% of the species mix can be made up of woody shrubs.
- **Stocking density:** Minimum of 1,100 stems per hectare and a maximum of 20% open space (with the exception of a standard requirement of 40% in riparian buffers). Higher stocking and lower levels of open space away from the watercourses recommended to increase hydraulic roughness and water to infiltration. Denser final woodland structure supports slope stability and reduces riverbank erosion.
- **Ground preparation:** No pre-planting drainage or land preparation work that creates new ditches or drains, or that would increase drainage to an existing watercourse, including sub-soil drainage.

### Riparian buffers (£1,600 per hectare)

Available where woodland creation with native broadleaved species will provide the dappled shade that will improve aquatic ecology by reducing summer water temperatures and benefitting wildlife dispersal (e.g., otter) along the corridors of habitat this creates. This Additional Contribution will be awarded on areas up to 50 metres from the watercourse on the following basis:

- **Spatial targeting:** Proposed woodland meeting the design requirements will be planted within 10 metres of the watercourse and within the '**EWCO - Keeping Rivers Cool**' layer on the [FC's map browser and Land Information Search](#).
- **Species mix:** Native species (excluding advancing or honorary native species) to provide dappled shade and ensure that the seed of invasive tree species are not transported by watercourses. Up to 30% of the species mix can be made up of woody shrubs.
- **Stocking density:** 1,100 stems per hectare and a standard requirement of 40% open space to create woodland that provides 50% dappled shade at the riverbank.
- **Ground preparation:** No pre-planting drainage or land preparation work that creates new ditches or drains, or that would increase drainage to an existing watercourse, including sub-soil drainage. The use of tree guards should be avoided in riparian zones where there is a risk that they could be washed away in flood events.

Where the Riparian Buffer AC is applied for in conjunction with Water Quality AC And / OR Flood Risk AC the woodland design should meet the design requirement for the Riparian Buffer A/C within the spatial target area for the Riparian Buffer. The area within the Riparian Buffer will attract each of the relevant ACs. Outside the Riparian Buffer the Water Quality and /or Flood Risk design requirement must be met.

### Close to settlements (£500 per hectare)

Available where woodland creation will provide social and environmental benefits by being close to people. This Additional Contribution will be awarded on the following basis:

- **Spatial targeting:** Proposed woodland meeting the design requirements touches the '**EWCO - NfC Social**' layer in the [FC's map browser and Land Information Search](#).
- **Species mix:** UKFS compliance with no one species more than 50% of the mixture for climate adaptation. Broadleaf or conifer species effective, with broadleaves along watercourses (see riparian buffer Additional Contribution). Up to 20% of the species mix can be made up of woody shrubs.
- **Stocking density:** Minimum of 1,100 stems per hectare.

### Recreational Access (£2,200 per hectare)

Available where the woodland meets the requirements of the 'Close to settlements' Additional contribution and permissive access for recreation on foot will be provided on land that does not currently have access to it, for at least 30 years.

- In order to be eligible for the Access Additional Contribution permissive access must be offered over the whole area (that ACs are applied for) in conjunction with the creation of a path network, including linking to existing PROW, to be agreed with the woodland officer.
- Applicants applying for the Additional Contribution for Access must provide an Access Map showing the routes which will be created to facilitate permissive access on foot and where signage is to be located.
- Recipients of this Additional Contribution will need to advertise that there is access to the site through, for example, waymarkers or signage at entry points, and online maps. The promotion can be physical or digital but must be agreed with us and installed prior to claiming the Grant.

### Ammonia Capture

There is no Additional Contribution for ammonia capture but EWCO supports action to address air pollution. Additional points are therefore available for creating shelterbelts designed to capture ammonia emissions from farm sources<sup>2</sup> in locations where there is a potential risk of air pollution impacting a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – where sensitive habitats or species could be impacted by direct toxic effects of ammonia, nitrogen deposition or acidification from ammonia emissions.

Points for this benefit will be awarded on the following basis:

- **Spatial targeting:** Proposed woodland meeting the design requirements touches the '*EWCO - Nfc Ammonia emissions capture for SSSI*' layer in the [FC's map browser and Land Information Search](#).
- **Species mix:** The backdrop planting should include a proportion of conifers, whilst the main body of the planting should include faster growing tree species with a large leaf area to achieve benefit as quickly as possible. See Appendix 2 for more detail. Up to 20% of the species mix can be made up of woody shrubs.
- **Stocking density:** Backdrop planting at a minimum of 2,500 (the maximum stocking density that will be funded under EWCO), and main planting at a minimum of 1,100. See Appendix 2 for more detail.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, livestock buildings, slurry stores, composting site, free-range poultry or pigs.

### 4.3.5 Private finance

Additional Contributions are payments that recognise the public benefits the new woodlands will provide. They are optional and stackable, and applicants are encouraged to pursue private finance in place of the relevant Additional Contribution(s).

Where private finance is used for a particular public benefit during the duration of the Agreement, we will not pay the relevant Additional Contribution(s) and will reclaim this portion of the Grant payment if this is found to have occurred.

You can opt out of an Additional Contribution to take offers of private finance at any point until the Additional Contribution is claimed. You can let us know if you wish to do this in your final capital claim form but letting us know as soon as possible will help us reallocate the budget. After the Agreement Obligation Period ends, Grant Recipients can seek private finance for those benefits previously supported through Additional Contributions, subject to being able to demonstrate relevant natural capital market entry requirements.

To access private finance markets for ecosystem services, proposals will need to meet any additionality requirements that may be required in order for an investment to be made. This is a matter for applicants and Grant Recipients to agree with private investors, or with validation bodies where seeking certification under a code of practice. Opting out of the relevant Additional Contribution(s) that private finance will support or buy will help meet additionality requirements.

EWCO makes no Additional Contributions for carbon. However, the EWCO Application Form Part B supports registration with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#) (WCC) to access private funding for 'Woodland Carbon Units' and the [Woodland Carbon Guarantee](#) (WCaG). The WCaG offers opportunities for guaranteed government payments for Woodland Carbon Units captured by your project at an agreed price.

Registration for the WCC is voluntary, but we strongly encourage applicants to provide the necessary information in the EWCO Application Form Part B if they're interested in registering. By doing this the EWCO Application Form Part B will generate a WCC summary which the applicant can use to easily transfer information to the WCC calculator. From 1 July 2020 you need to register your project with the WCC **before** it is planted.

We will review EWCO's Additional Contributions and may withdraw them as markets for other public benefits develop and make private finance more readily available.

## 4.4 Support for natural colonisation

EWCO supports natural colonisation as a means of establishing new woodland. Subject to your Woodland Officer's discretion, supported by where necessary with advice from a Forestry Commission ecologist or Natural England Advisor, natural colonisation may be supported by EWCO on areas of land within 75 metres of a viable seed source of at least two tree species. We may, in exceptional circumstances, agree to this distance being extended.

Non-native species in appropriate locations would equally qualify for support for natural colonisation, for example to support the expansion of plantations or create mixtures of native and exotic species. Ash will be treated as a viable species as the natural colonisation of ash will allow the establishment of resistant genotypes.

Detail on the requirements that must be met for EWCO to support natural colonisation and how it will be monitored can be found in Appendix 5.

## 4.5 Scoring applications

Your application will be assessed through a scoring process. You are responsible for filling in the score form in the EWCO Application Form Part B. Points are awarded for:

- **Woodland design for climate change adaptation** – Points determined at proposal-level
- **Using private finance in place of Additional Contributions** – Points determined at proposal-level
- **Size** – Points determined at proposal-level
- **The public benefits your application will provide** – Points determined at block or compartment level, depending on whether the block or compartment does both of the following:
  - Meets the minimum design requirements.
  - Touches the spatial layer or area on the Land Information Search.

Points are available where the following public benefits will be provided due to the woodland location and design (see [Section 4.3.4](#) and Appendix 2):

- Nature recovery.
- Natural flood risk management.
- Water quality.
- Riparian buffers.
- Being close to settlements.
- Providing recreational access.

- Where the woodland will enable support ammonia capture in areas that could protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Because scoring is affected by location, you will need to identify the area of the application that is touching the areas where woodland creation – of the right design – can deliver the public benefit. You can check this using the [FC's map browser and Land Information Search](#). The data layers you need to check for each Additional Contribution are set out in Section 4.3.4.

If you wish to score points for either natural flood risk management or water quality outside of the targeting layer you will need to provide a letter of support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer or the Environment Agency.

The size of the proposal will affect the score. Larger proposals will score higher because of the greater benefit they offer. However, the total score for a proposal is averaged over the application areas to enable a comparison of smaller and larger proposals.

An initial application needs to reach the minimum threshold score (see [Section 2.3](#)) to be eligible for further processing and the final application must also achieve this number of points to be offered an Agreement.

## 4.6 Application maps

You need to provide a map that shows all areas of proposed woodland creation and associated capital items with your application. If your application is successful and we offer you an Agreement, the map you sent with the application will become the "Agreement Map", so it needs to be clear, legible and meet the standards in [Section 6](#).

## 4.7 Authorising an agent

You can complete the application and make a claim yourself or authorise an agent to do so on your behalf.

If an agent will be acting on your behalf to complete an application or claim forms, you need to give them the appropriate permission levels by completing an [Forestry Commission Agent Authority Form](#). If you have already authorised your agent to act on your behalf with us and wish these existing permissions to apply to your EWCO application, you need to confirm this on your EWCO Application Form Part A.

## 4.8 Restrictions on agricultural activity in woodland areas

You cannot use any land subject to a EWCO Agreement for any agricultural activity (regardless of when the trees are established) because this is the point at which land is

set aside for non-agricultural use. At this point you must submit an RLE1 form to notify the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and register the land as a permanent non-agricultural area with an effective date of 1 January the following year.

Providing you meet all eligibility requirements you can continue to claim Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) on land in the EWCO Agreement. If applicable, you will be required to take action to continue to correctly claim BPS after tree planting. Read general advice on how woodland grant agreements affect BPS eligibility in [Guidance on woodland grant schemes and BPS: operations note 42](#).

## 4.9 How we process your application

Before we can offer an Agreement, the following must take place:

- A Forestry Commission Woodland Officer must visit your site to review the application with you. They will check that the woodland design is appropriate and meets the UK Forestry Standard and check that the items you applied for are suitable.
- We will publicise the proposals on the [Public registers for consultation on forestry projects](#) to make sure the local community knows about and can comment on the proposals to create a new woodland.
- We will consult with any statutory consultees (organisations that must be notified or provide consent for the proposal).

This means that it may take three to five months for us to process your application. Timescales vary because each application is different, but we will process your application as quickly as possible. If you have already created a Woodland Creation Design Plan through the Woodland Creation Planning Grant (see section 4.1.2) timescales are likely to be shorter. An application that requires consent or agreement from other parties because of potential impacts on designated sites or that includes actual cost support for woodland infrastructure can take longer. During peak periods of work, it may take longer for us to process your application.

Preparing a detailed Woodland Creation Plan based on prior engagement with key stakeholders will help us to process your application. [Contact your Forestry Commission Woodland Officer](#) as early as possible to receive advice and guidance to develop your application and understand how long it will take for us to process it.

Site visits needed as part of the application process can be carried out before you submit your initial application. We recommend a joint site visit between you and your Woodland Officer and any relevant statutory bodies if the application may need consent or agreement from other parties.

If your application is successful, we will offer you a EWCO Agreement once we have completed the final checks and confirmed the threshold score has been met or exceeded

(see [Section 2.3](#)). If your application is unsuccessful, we will let you know as soon as possible and why it has not been unsuccessful.

## 4.10 Your Agreement Commencement Date

The Agreement will start on the date you sign your Grant Offer Acceptance Letter (the Commencement Date). Acceptance of an **In Principle** Grant Offer<sup>3</sup> will not start your agreement - you will still need to accept the formal Grant Offer (which we will provide as soon as possible after In Principle Grant Offer is accepted).

The annual Maintenance Payments element of your Agreement and the Obligation Period will begin once your final capital and Additional Contribution claim has been paid.

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<sup>3</sup> We make in principle offers to provide applicants with confidence that a EWCO offer is available to them so they can release the land from an existing CS or ES agreement. The land must be free of commitments under CS or ES before we can offer and start the EWCO agreement.

## 5 How to apply

To apply you need to take the following steps.

### 5.1 Register with the Rural Payments service

You must be registered on the [Rural Payments service](#) before you can apply to EWCO. Once you're registered, you will receive a Customer Registration Number (CRN), a Firm Reference Number (FRN) and a Single Business Identifier (SBI). These numbers must be supplied where specified in the EWCO application. This is to conduct due diligence checks on all applications and to enable payments. If you want to direct your EWCO payments to an authorised agent they must also be registered on Rural Payments.

You must also have registered your land on the [Rural Payments service](#) before we can offer you a EWCO Agreement. To enable this, we advise applicants to register their land before making an application.

If the land is already registered on the Rural Payments service, its land use and boundaries may need to be updated to reflect the new woodland – you will need to fill in an RLE1 form and send it to RPA to do this. The use of marker posts or stones may be needed when splitting land parcels for woodland creation before planting or fence lines are put in place. You can find guidance on splitting land parcels including marking permanent boundaries to split land parcels at [RLE1 form and guidance](#). The land must be linked to the lead applicant's SBI before we can offer an agreement.

### 5.2 Complete your application

Before making your application, please read the [Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions](#). You will need to confirm you have read and understand the Terms and Conditions in order for us to consider your application.

To make an application you will need to complete and submit:

- EWCO Application Form Part A and Part B
- An Application Map showing where the woodland creation will take place (see [Section 6](#) for details)
- Any quotes and supporting documents if you are applying for contributions towards infrastructure for woodland management or recreation
- Where applicable, a EWCO Common Land and Supplementary Grazing Form.
- Where applicable, one EWCO Natural Colonisation Initial Site Assessment Form for each application area in which natural colonisation will be the method of establishing trees

You will need to have any necessary permissions or consent in place before you carry out any work and provide evidence of this if we request it to support an inspection. You do not need to provide it with your application.

You must complete your application in English and the value of any quotes you provide must be in Sterling. If you do not complete a question or make the required declarations in the EWCO Application Form Part A, or if you provide an answer that shows your application is not eligible for EWCO, we will reject your application.

We will accept additional documents that support your application, but you must make their purpose and link to the application clear. We also reserve the right to request further information to support your application where we feel this is required (for example, to support an application for actual costs support for infrastructure).

You can get the application forms from on GOV.UK: [England Woodland Creation Offer application form](#).

If you are unable to download the forms, please contact us by email at [EWCO@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:EWCO@forestrycommission.gov.uk) or by post:

England Woodland Creation Offer - EWCO  
Forestry Commission  
National Office, England  
620 Bristol Business Park  
Coldharbour Lane  
Bristol, BS16 1EJ

### 5.2.1 Confidentiality

If any elements of your application should be treated as confidential, please let us know. You can do this with an additional document supporting your application, setting out which information is confidential and why.

## 5.3 Submitting your application

You can apply to EWCO throughout the year. You should email your completed application forms and supporting documents to [EWCO@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:EWCO@forestrycommission.gov.uk) or you can contact us by post at the address above.

## 5.4 Working with us on your application

We will carry out checks to make sure your application is complete and eligible. If it is incomplete, we will contact you to request the additional information. We will also check the application's score meets or exceeds the threshold score – see [Section 2.3](#).

If these checks are passed, a Forestry Commission Woodland Officer will visit your site and carry out consultation and assessment. They will agree any changes to your application with you. This will be recorded in a final version of the EWCO Application Form Part B, which will form part of any subsequent EWCO Agreement along with the EWCO Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions and Agreement Map.

## 5.5 Accepting your Agreement

Once the final proposal is agreed and documented in the final version of the EWCO Application Form Part B and all consents, permissions etc. are in place, we will write to you to offer you a EWCO Agreement. You can accept or reject the Agreement offer by signing the Acceptance Letter and returning it to us using the contact details in [Section 5.2](#). We will accept wet signatures and Qualified Electronic Signatures (QES) for your final agreement. If you accept the Agreement, you will be confirming that you have read, understand and accept the EWCO Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions.

If you accept the Agreement, you have two years to complete the capital works. You will then have a further three months in which to claim for the capital works. Details of the Agreement requirements and its management are in [Section 7](#).

## 5.6 Where to get help

Forestry Commission Woodland Officers provide technical advice on woodland creation applications. You can also contact your local Woodland Officer for pre-application and technical advice before you make your application. Your Woodland Officer will give you advice and let you know if you need to provide more information with your application and will work with you to provide technical advice after you've submitted your initial application. You can find contact details on GOV.UK at: [Office access and opening times](#).

## 5.7 Getting consent

It is your responsibility to get all consents, approvals or permissions that you may need to carry out the work funded under your Agreement. These consents, approvals and permissions must remain effective for the duration of the Agreement and we may ask to evidence of this. Appendix 3 provides guidance on the types of consent that may be needed and where to obtain this from.

Please note that if you are applying for woodland infrastructure you will need to check with the local planning authority and relevant highways authority (if applicable), if permitted development rights apply to any woodland infrastructure you wish to include in your application. This will determine if full planning consent is needed and which authority (Local Planning Authority or the Forestry Commission) will be responsible for a decision on whether consent is needed under the Environmental Impact Assessment

Regulations. You will need to send evidence of the planning authority's position on woodland infrastructure with your application.

### 5.7.1 Other considerations

When you carry out work under the Agreement, remember that you must not breach any other rules or laws, such as:

- Breaking byelaws.
- Obstructing public rights of way.
- Blocking or restricting access to 'open access' land.
- Affecting oil or gas pipelines.
- Breaching your cross-compliance requirements in relation to any other existing commitments you hold, where applicable (for example, if you claim BPS payments).

## 5.8 Withdrawing your application

You can withdraw your application at any time by sending an e-mail or writing to us using the details in [Section 5.2](#). Please explain the reason(s) why you are withdrawing your application. This feedback will help us improve EWCO and our service.

If you wish to remove part of the land from your application, please either:

- Send an e-mail or write to us at the address in [Section 5.2](#) if you have not yet been contacted by a Woodland Officer about your application.
- Notify your Woodland Officer if you are already working with them on your application.

## 5.9 Disputes, appeals and complaints

If you are unhappy with a decision we have taken about your application or Agreement, you can make an appeal. If you are unhappy with service you have had from the FC, you can email, write or call us. Full guidance about how to make a complaint or appeal is available [online](#).

## 6 Mapping Standards

### 6.1 Preparing a map for your application

A map showing all areas of proposed woodland creation and associated capital items must be provided with your EWCO application. If the application is successful and you are offered an Agreement, the map supplied with the application will become the "Agreement Map". It therefore needs to be clear, legible and meet the standards set out below (see Section 6.3). Please note that applicants will be responsible for providing updated maps following any agreed changes to the proposed Agreement or capital items.

### 6.2 How to create a map

You can use your own map as long as it meets the standards in Section 6.3, or you can use a base map requested through the [Forestry Commission's Map Request Service](#). If you use this service, the Forestry Commission will supply a blank base map for you to mark up by hand to show your proposal.

If you need a map from our Map Request Service please request it as early as possible. We will supply base maps to applicants either by post or electronically (via email).

### 6.3 Minimum mapping standards

When creating an Application Map, you must comply with the following rules:

- The map must show all the land on which the woodland creation works and items will be undertaken. The boundary of the site must be clearly marked by a coloured line. This must encompass the entire area included within the applications
- The location of the proposed work must be shown and marked with a coloured line, the capital items should be listed next to them or in a legend. This includes proposed planting areas and must show any fence lines and the type of fence
- Any proposed areas of open space within the proposed planting areas must be shown
- The map number and the total number of maps (e.g., '1 of 3') must be visible
- Single Business Identifier (SBI) – consisting of nine digits; application year; and Property or site name (as detailed on the application form) must be shown
- The name of business or applicant – this should be the name (beneficiary) that is registered with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) for the SBI, must be shown
- Include a six figure OS grid reference for the centre of the map
- If a mistake is made do not use correction fluid; strike through the mistake instead

- If the land parcels run over more than page, an overview map of the entire scheme must be provided

Further maps can be provided to support an application, containing further detail. These maps should be based on an appropriate OS map (the [Forestry Commission Map Request Service](#) can be used if needed) or GIS-generated digital map. Maps must be based on a scale of 1:2,500 or 1:5,000, or for large schemes 1:10,000.

These might show the following:

- Planting design – showing species
- Watercourses and open water
- An Access Map - a map showing the routes where permissive access by foot will be offered and where signage promoting permissive access will be installed plus any date on which the access may be suspended. The Access Map will be submitted with any application that includes the Additional Contribution for recreation and will be included in the Agreement Map(s) that form part of the Agreement
- Open ground map –identifying features that justify or support internal open space, e.g., Public Right of Way, rides or tracks, wayleaves, etc.

## 7 Scheme requirements and Agreement management

You must read and meet the requirements detailed in this section as these are mandatory for all EWCO Grant Recipients. 'Grant Recipient' means the person (whether an individual, company or other entity) who has entered into the EWCO Agreement as defined in the Grant Funding Agreement.

### 7.1 Entering into an Agreement

If your application is successful, we will send you a Grant Offer Letter. If you want to accept a EWCO Agreement, you must return the signed Acceptance Letter to us within 15 working days of the date of the Grant Offer Letter. If you do not accept your offer within this time, we will withdraw it. The Commencement Date and End of Capital Funding Date of any EWCO Agreement will be set out in the Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions document and the Grant Offer Letter.

#### 7.1.1 Agreement duration

Your Agreement will include:

- Two-year Grant Funding Period for Capital Payments
- The capital period will be followed by a 15-year Obligation Period
- A further Grant Funding Period of 10 years is available for annual Maintenance Payments, after the capital period, for those Grant Recipients who wish to make use of it. This will coincide with the first ten years of the Obligation Period
- Where the Agreement includes the Additional Contribution for recreational access permissive access must be maintained with associated signage for 30 years

You can choose to close a EWCO Agreement early. Where this is to transfer into a future environmental scheme (Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery Schemes) it will be permitted without penalty at agreed points once you have secured your place in one of those schemes. In other scenarios, we will decide whether to reclaim the payment made so far under the EWCO Agreement. This will be determined by the extent to which the Agreement objectives have been met but the default position will be that the Grant will be repaid.

#### 7.1.2 Agreement amendments

We will consider changes to planting year and works but this will be at our discretion and based on available budget. We make no guarantee that a change will be possible. We may terminate the Agreement, or reclaim or reduce payments, where we consider the changes will not deliver the objectives of the EWCO Agreement.

### 7.1.3 Changes of ownership (successions) and management

We may allow successions to EWCO Agreements and accept changes in management control. Part-successions may also be considered as long as this will not result in the Agreement area(s) being smaller than the minimum eligible area.

If we allow a succession or change in management control, we will pay the new landowner the remaining Grant due if they take on and comply with the Agreement. However, we will reclaim any Grant funds paid to the previous owner, even after any land sale, if the Terms and Conditions of the Agreement are not met. If you want to manage this liability you must put in place an Agreement with the new landowner.

You must notify us of a succession or any change in the management control that may affect the Agreement – using the contact details in [Section 5.2](#) – within three months of the date that the land sale completes, or within 30 days of a change in management control. If you do not, the EWCO Agreement will be terminated, and the Grant recovered.

At the point of a succession or change of management control, we have the right to terminate the Agreement and may at that time recover the Grant if the objectives of the Agreement have not been met.

## 7.2 Making claims

Send your claims to us using the contact details in [Section 5.2](#). Claims for capital work must be made within three months of the End of Capital Funding Date, unless we agree an amendment to extend the Grant Funding Period. You must have paid for the capital items that you are claiming for, and the payment must have left your bank account before the End of Capital Funding Date. A claim form will be made available online from the EWCO GOV.UK webpage at a later date and, until publication, can be requested from us using the contact details in [Section 5.2](#).

Any claim you make must be for at least £5,000, unless it is your final claim for grant outstanding grant. Claims for capital work must be supported with invoices, till receipts or bank statements that show the expenditure.

Once we have paid your final claim for capital work, we will pay any Additional Contributions that are included in your Agreement. Where appropriate your final claim for capital work will also trigger the first five years' annual Maintenance Payments. You will need to claim the last five years' annual Maintenance Payments in year six of the Obligation Period.

## 7.3 Inspections

Agreements are subject to inspection to verify that the requirements of the Agreement, including completion of the capital and maintenance work, have been met. This will include inspections during the Obligation Period. You will receive 48 hours' notice of an inspection. You must allow authorised inspectors to access the land under the Terms and Conditions of your Agreement.

## 7.4 Evidence and record keeping

The table below summarises the evidence you will need to supply to support a EWCO application or claim, when this is required, whether you need to retain a record and for how long.

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Checks</b>	<b>Record keeping</b>
<b>Evidence of expenditure</b> (invoices, till receipts, bank statements, delivery notes, evidence of using your own labour, etc.).	Required to support claims for standard cost items and infrastructure.  All records kept must be dated on or after the Agreement Commencement Date. We will reject claims and will not pay them if, during an inspection, we find that you ordered or bought items before the start of the Agreement or that you carried out part or all of the work before, or after, the Agreement period.	We will retain this evidence for our records until your obligations under the EWCO Agreement expire.
<b>Evidence of eligibility for central government departments or their arms length bodies</b> – evidence you have notified your HMT Spending Team of the intention to undertake permanent land use change.	Required to support an application.	We will retain this evidence for our records until your obligations under the EWCO Agreement expire. To be retained by the public body in line with the public body's record retention policy.

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Checks</b>	<b>Record keeping</b>
<b>Evidence of eligibility for Public Bodies</b> – evidence the decision to put land into a EWCO Agreement land is in line with <a href="#">Managing Public Money</a> ; with the land put forward for EWCO not compromising other departmental outcomes and delivery of wider public benefits.	We may ask to see this evidence during our processing of an application or at any time during the Agreement period.	To be kept at least seven years after the final payment of Grant, or if post payment obligations apply, until your obligations under the EWCO Agreement expire.
<b>Evidence of consent to undertake work</b> (e.g., planning permission for forest roads)	We may ask to see this evidence at inspection.  You must provide confirmation with your application from the local planning authority of whether planning permission is required for any infrastructure.	To be kept for at least seven years after the final payment of Grant, or if post payment obligations apply, until your obligations under the EWCO Agreement expire.
<b>Photographs of infrastructure for woodland management or recreational access</b>	Required to support claims showing installation of infrastructure. Failure to provide this may result in your claim being delayed or withheld.	We will retain this evidence for our records until your obligations under the EWCO Agreement expire.
<b>Photographs of standard cost items and work</b>	We may ask for photo evidence of standard costs items or activities to confirm site details if a site visit or inspection cannot be arranged. If requested, the photos must be supplied within 15 days. Failure to provide this may result in your claim being delayed or withheld.	We will retain this evidence for our records until your obligations under the EWCO Agreement expire.

## 7.5 Photographic evidence quality

Requirements apply equally to digital photographs or those supplied as paper photographs. All photographs must meet the following standards:

- Photographs must be in focus and clearly show the relevant capital item or environmental feature. If you send your images by email, please send as JPEG files. Digital images should not be smaller than 600 x 400 pixels and ideally the image file size no larger than 400KB. Printed photographs must be no smaller than 15 cm x 10 cm

- Photograph to identify the environmental feature or capital item(s) concerned – it is your responsibility to have sufficient evidence that the investment or required management has taken place. For example, more than one photograph may be needed where the work exceeds the frame or is not clearly evident from a single photograph
- Where possible, include a significant feature to provide authenticity (for example, ditch, fence, farm building, road, telegraph poles)
- Mark the photographed feature's location, and direction from which the photograph has been taken, with an 'X' and an arrow on a copy of a map (or map extract) of the Agreement area
- Where scale or continuity is important, include a feature, or introduce one (for example, a quad bike or vehicle, or use a sighting pole – two metres high with 50cm intervals marked in red and white). Take pictures consistently from the same spot for before and after photographs of the capital item

### 7.5.1 Labelling photographs

Label photographs with the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid reference and compartment number (or land parcel reference if you use these to manage your land) for the field parcel where the works are taking place. Give the EWCO Agreement reference, the name of the capital work the photo is showing, and the date. If you are sending more than one image, also include the image number.

## 7.6 Publicity requirements

The Terms and Conditions require you to comply with all instructions and guidance relating to acknowledging and publicising the support provided. This includes using any materials or templates which are provided for this purpose.

## 7.7 Force majeure

You may be unable to meet your requirements under the Agreement because of force majeure or exceptional circumstances. If this happens, you must write to tell us within 15 days from the date on which you (or any person authorised to act for you) identify the issue. You will need to provide evidence in writing to show:

- What has happened
- How the event meant you were unable to meet the scheme rules

Force majeure or exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- The death or long-term professional incapacity of the Grant Recipient
- A severe natural disaster seriously affecting the holding
- A plant disease affecting part or all of the Grant Recipient's trees

- Expropriation of all or a large part of the holding (provided that the expropriation could not have been anticipated at the time the application)

We will consider the facts to decide whether or not the Grant Recipient is relieved of all or part of their obligations under the Agreement, and whether all or part of the Grant should be withheld or repaid. If you are aware of the issue when entering into your Agreement, then it is unlikely to fall under force majeure or exceptional circumstances.