Forestry Commission

Forestry EIA application guidance: Deforestation

This guidance is for anyone applying to the Forestry Commission (FC) for a 'stage 1' forestry Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) using the EIA deforestation application form (England). 'Stage 1' is the plain English term used to describe Applications for Opinions (and Basic and Full Notification in relation to afforestation).

This guidance is designed to be read with the application form. You may wish to read this guidance in full prior to completing your form. Alternatively, if you only require guidance in relation to specific parts of the forms, simply skip to the corresponding parts of this guidance that elaborate on that part of the form.

The EIA deforestation application form (England) can be found can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Part 1 – Applicant details

Use Part 1 to fill in the details of the person who has or who will have primary control of the land on which the project is being proposed. In most instances, this will be the land owner, leaseholder or a tenant.

If the person with primary control of the land has a Customer Reference Number (CRN) from the Rural Payments Agency or a Single Business Identifier (SBI) for their business, please fill this in here. If not, leave these sections blank.

If you are completing this form as an agent of the person with primary control of the land, you should not insert any details relating to yourself or your business in this section.

Part 2 – Agent or woodland manager's details

Use Part 2 to fill in agent details. If you do not have an agent, please leave this section blank. The agent or woodland manager is the person you have authorised to act on your behalf in relation to the proposed project.

If the agent has a Customer Reference Number (CRN) from the Rural Payments Agency, please fill this in here.

You do **not** need to supply the Forestry Commission with an agent authority form to submit a standalone 'stage 1' EIA application for deforestation (i.e. the EIA deforestation application form (England)) on behalf of your client. However, you may require one if you are applying for other permissions or licences.

Part 3 – Property details

Please provide property details so the FC can identify the land where the project is being proposed. Please provide an OS grid reference for the centre of your proposal area. You can obtain an OS grid reference using the Forestry Commission's map browser.

If you have a County Parish Holding (CPH) number issued by the Rural Payments Agency, please add it in this section. If not, please leave blank.

If you don't know the local planning authority, you can find them through your local council.

Part 4 – Proposals on or affecting sensitive areas

Whether your proposal lies completely or partly within one of these 'sensitive areas' will impact upon what threshold your proposal falls within.

Some thresholds allow for you, and the FC, to **presume** that the proposal will not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment (and therefore an EIA 'stage 2' Application for Consent, incorporating an Environmental Statement, is unlikely to be required). However, this presumption is **not a guarantee**, and only provides a 'starting point' for the FC's decision.

All other proposals will be examined by the FC without any presumption of the proposal's effect on the environment.

The thresholds determine which statutory timescales apply for the FC to respond to your EIA 'stage 1' application. For more information, see the threshold table for deforestation in Annex 1 of your form.

Forestry proposals within some sensitive areas and other statutory designations require a separate consent from the authorities responsible for those sites (for example Historic

England in relation to Scheduled Monuments). Applicants must ensure that all necessary permissions are in place prior to starting any forestry works. You can find out more about your key obligations on Forestry project checks: Constraints. This tells you what actions you need to consider after running a land information search in relation to individual constraints.

4.1 Is your proposal on any of the following sensitive areas?

You must answer 'Yes' or 'No' to each of these nationally important designations to declare whether your proposal sits within their area.

You can use the Forestry Commission's Land Information Search and DEFRA'S MAGIC Map to identify these sensitive areas, with the following caveats:

- **Proposed SSSIs:** although Sites of Special Scientific Interest are mapped, proposed SSSIs are not; if your land has been proposed as a SSSI then you, as the land owner, will have received communications from Natural England about the proposal. Declare the proposed SSSI here. If you have not received a notification from Natural England then you may assume that the land is not a proposed SSSI. Agents must check with their clients prior to making this assumption.
- **The Norfolk Broads:** are mapped as a National Park.
- **'Local' Nature Reserves:** The forestry EIA regulations list 'local' nature reserves that are not designated by local authorities as a 'sensitive area'. These are nature reserves that are designated by bodies other than the local authority, such as a National Park Authority or town or parish council. There are fewer nature reserves that are in this category. They will be mapped on Forestry Commission's Land Information Search and DEFRA'S MAGIC Map as 'Local Nature Reserves'. If a search indicates a local nature reserve on your land, check Natural England's Designated Sites page to see whether its declaring authority is a local authority (such as a borough or county council) or otherwise (e.g. a National Park Authority). If the declaring authority is **not** a local authority, the local nature reserve will be considered a sensitive area.

Many of the identified sensitive areas require separate permissions from bodies other than the FC before works on those sites may commence. Refer to the Forestry project checks: Constraints to help guide you on what you need to do in relation to particular constraints. Applicants must ensure that all necessary permissions are in place prior to starting their approved forestry project.

4.2 If you have indicated 'yes' to any of the sensitivities listed in Part 4.1 please provide details of its features and of the reason for designation(s).

You can find details of designations on the relevant statutory body's web page. For example, SSSIs are listed on Natural England's Designated Sites view.

If you are not sure who to contact, Forestry project checks: Constraints will give you further information.

4.3 If your proposal sits outside a sensitive area, does it still have the potential to affect the features of interest within a sensitive area?

The Forestry Commission's Land Information Search tells you when your proposal is within 500m of a constraint, including those that make up 'sensitive areas' (as listed in 4.1). If your proposal is within 500m of a sensitive area, you may still affect that sensitive area. Declare this in 4.3.

You should also consider sensitive areas that are further away if they are linked to your proposal in some way. This could be via a watercourse or because of the flight path of a particular bird species. If you are unsure, you can ask for advice from the statutory body that governs that sensitive area. A list of these is found on Forestry project checks: Constraints.

4.4 If the site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), what is its listed condition?

Refer to Natural England's Designated Sites view, where you will be able to find the listed condition for all SSSIs, or ask your Natural England advisor.

For SSSIs that have multiple condition assessments across the site, tick all that apply.

Part 5 – Proposal size

5.1 What is the size of your deforestation proposal?

Tick the threshold in the table that applies to the area of trees (in hectares) that you intend to fell. This table matches the thresholds in the Regulations and will help determine how the FC processes your EIA 'stage 1' application.

You will be asked about adjacent projects in Part 7, so do not include adjacent projects here.

Part 6 – Proposal overview

6.1 Please tick the purpose that best applies to your proposal

Please indicate the aim of your proposal here.

6.2 Please provide an overview of your deforestation proposal.

Give your answers to the nearest tenth of a hectare. You can use the Forestry Commission Map Browser to measure the area of your project.

Please also split this into the respective areas of conifer and broadleaf you plan to remove.

Use the Forestry Commission's Map Browser layers to measure how much of your project sits on sensitive areas (as listed in Part 4).

You will be asked about adjacent projects in Part 7, so do not include adjacent projects here.

6.3 Please outline the aims and objectives of your deforestation proposal.

You must provide a brief but detailed overview of your deforestation proposal, **proportionate to the scale of your proposal**. If your proposal aims to restore open habitat, you will be asked to give further details in Part 10.

You aims and objectives are: the purpose of your forestry proposal, and measurable outcomes you want it to deliver e.g. in terms of habitat restoration, improved biodiversity, or recreation and leisure. You may wish to refer to the list of open habitats policy criteria in Part 10 of the form.

It is government policy that there is a presumption against the authorisation of deforestation. Refer to the <u>government policy on when to convert woods and forests to open habitat in England</u>. Your response should summarise why this presumption should be set aside. You will be asked to elaborate on this in Part 10.

Comment on the design of your proposal, describing its features, including site access and explain how this will help deliver your aims and objectives.

You should also show this in your site maps and plans (see Part 15).

More information
You should follow the good practice for forest management set out in the <u>UK Forestry Standard</u>.

The Forestry Commission practice guide <u>Design techniques for forest management planning</u> can give you further help on designing felling proposals.

<u>Managing forest operations to protect the water environment</u> sets out good operational practice for felling.

Part 7 – Adjacent projects

Any EIA deforestation projects completed within the last five years, adjacent to your proposal must be considered as part of your proposal. This may change your proposal area and therefore how the FC processes your application.

Adjacency is relevant to establishing the land sensitivity and threshold of your project. **You do not need to seek engagement with stakeholders in relation to adjacent projects.**

You should consider projects to be 'adjacent' if they are (in part or in whole) within 500m of the boundary of your proposal.

7.1 Is there a deforestation project adjacent to your proposed project that has been completed within the last five years?

An adjacent project may be on your land, or it may be on a neighbouring property.

A site survey should identify nearby deforested sites. Desk based checks are also possible. Projects that have come to the FC for grant funding can be found on online using the Forestry Commission's Land Information Search. Historical aerial photography, widely available online, can also be of use.

Please indicate 'Y' for Yes or 'N' for No.

7.2 How many hectares of deforestation have been completed on adjacent sites within the past five years?

Please give the area of recent completed projects. If there are none, please put 0 hectares here.

7.3 Adding this to your current deforestation proposal listed in 6.1, what is the combined total area of your proposal?

If 0 ha are being added (from adjacent projects), please just re-supply your original proposal area here.

7.4 Do adjacent projects sit within or affect additional sensitive areas (as defined in Part 4) not also covered by your proposal?

Adjacent projects could be on or affecting sensitive areas that your existing proposal did not affect. You, and the FC, will need to take these into account when considering your proposal's threshold. As in Part 4, Question 4.1, you should use the Forestry Commission's Land Information Search and DEFRA'S MAGIC Map to identify sensitive areas, and if there are any, give details of whether they are just a National Park or

AONB, or another sensitive area. Detail how they are affected by adjacent projects. If not, mark 'N' for No.

Part 8 – Information about the trees to be felled

Please tell us what trees you are intending to fell for your project by filling in the table.

More information about yield class

Yield class is a measure of the trees' average annual increase in (timber) volume on one hectare of land. It represents cubic metres per hectare per year, for example a yield class of 14 equates to 14 cubic metres per hectare per year.

If you do not know the yield class, running Forest Research's online Ecological Site Classification Decision Support System (ESC-DSS) for your proposal's grid reference is a quick way to get an indicative yield class for a range of species. This is not the primary purpose of the ESC-DSS, which recommends tree species for your site based on climatic and soil quality data. However, yield class (YC) is shown in the results table when you run a report for your site location. More in-depth information about yield class can be found on Forest Research.

Providing this information gives the FC an estimation of the value of the crop being felled and its carbon-capturing capacity. This can be weighed against your proposal's ecological value if you are creating open habitat.

Part 9 – Creating open habitat

Please confirm the type of open habitat you are creating, and where on your map / plan (i.e. within which management units or compartments) they sit.

A list of habitats is on the form. Please give the area of each you plan to create in your proposal.

The habitats listed in this form come from the list of habitats of principal importance for conservation in England. This list is defined in accordance with section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. More information, including definitions of these habitats, can be found on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's list of UK BAP Priority Habitats, which, whilst now out of date, formed the basis for the current section 41 list. You can also find information about priority open habitats in part 4 of the FC Field Guide: Priority open habitats and woodland creation.

If your habitat is not listed, or you are felling to create open space in woodland, please state this under 'Other'.

Part 10 – Open habitats policy criteria

Indicate which open habitat policy criteria your proposal aims to fulfil by marking 'Y' for Yes, and then explain how your proposal meets the objective. You may wish to refer to supporting evidence. If so, detail this in the form, and list the attachments in Part 14 – Stakeholders and evidence log.

Background information

The open habitats policy lists six scenarios where it is likely that the FC will be in support of conversion to open habitat, and where there may be grants and guidance available. One additional scenario: preserving or restoring geological features or the historic environment, is also likely to be supported, though it is not currently listed in the policy document. The scenarios are listed out on the form and supplementary information about each is listed below.

Refer to Part 5.2.1 of When to convert woods and forests to open habitat: Government policy for more information.

10.1. Extending and buffering areas of high quality habitat is a way in which even small open habitat restoration proposals can make a significant difference. The open habitat policy supports targeted projects that aim to consolidate high quality habitat in this way, especially habitat that is fragmented. For your project to fulfil this policy criteria, you should propose to extend or buffer high quality habitats which are fulfilling their biodiversity potential. You should provide evidence for how the fragmentation of the habitat is having a significant detrimental impact on its wildlife.

10.2. The open habitat policy may support proposals that provide wildlife links between areas of high quality habitat. For your project to fulfil this policy criteria, you should propose to link high quality habitats which are fulfilling their biodiversity potential. You should provide evidence for how the lack of connectivity is having a significant detrimental impact on its wildlife.

10.3. The open habitats policy may support proposals that seek to restore designated areas. Designated areas are listed on Natural England's designated sites webpage. They are sites with international or national conservation designation, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Area of Conservation, or a National Nature Reserve. More information on designated areas is found on the GOV.UK page: Find protected areas of

countryside. You should expect to provide endorsement for your project from Natural England in Part 14 of the form.

10.4. The open habitats policy may support proposals that enhance opportunities for species identified as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, set out under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

10.5. The open habitats policy may support proposals for introducing conservation grazing. Low intensity livestock grazing can be used as a method for creating and conserving open habitat and enhancing the biodiversity of that open habitat. Native species, such as native cattle breeds, graze the area to stop scrub taking over. These species need space, and so the open habitat policy supports proposals where new open habitat will extend or link areas of open habitat in a way which allows areas of practical grazing to form.

10.6. Proposals that restore geological and historical features may also be supported. If your proposal is looking to preserve or restore geological features or the historic environment, you may wish to refer to advice / endorsement you've received that indicates how removing the woodland will improve the condition of the site. This advice might be from:
- Historic England
- The local authority historic environment/ archaeology service
- GeoConservationUK
- The Geology Trusts.

See Part 12 – Environment Checks for more information about checking for existing environmental, historical and geological features on your site.

Part 11 – Proposed implementation and management

The FC support the creation of open habitat where there is a long-term plan for management in place, and the long term management will be effective in maintaining high quality habitat that fulfils its biodiversity potential.

If you are felling to create open habitat, see Section 5.4 Standards of conversion and management in When to convert woods and forests to open habitat in England: Government policy.

11.1 How will the site be managed and maintained in the long-term?

Without proper management, open habitat can easily become overgrown with scrub and eventually woodland. Please include how the site will be managed (e.g. with grazing, weeding, scrub clearance etc.) to prevent long term reversion to woodland.

Optional: you may wish to complete your own risk assessment to best show how you've reached the decision that the site is likely to be manageable long-term.

11.2 How will the proposal change the site's overall ability to cope with climate change?

The open habitat policy recognises that climate change represents the biggest long-term threat to biodiversity, both of woodland and of open habitat. Show that your proposal will follow good practice guidelines to minimise the effect of climate change, particularly on the biodiversity of the site.

You could also refer to Natural England's Climate Change Adaptation Manual (NE751). This classes different habitats by their climate change sensitivity, lists the potential impacts of climate change and outlines appropriate adaptation responses.

11.3 Please provide details of how carbon emissions will be minimised

You should use methods that minimise greenhouse gas emissions when converting your woodland to open habitat.

The UK Forestry Standard's guidelines on Forests and Climate change (Chapter 6) give further information about how the practices listed in 11.3 help minimise carbon emissions.

A good proposal will aim to mark, if not all, then most of the criteria listed in 11A.3. For more information on identifying areas of peaty soil, refer to Part 12 Environment Checks for water and soils.

Part 12 – Environment checks A – Land Use

A.i. Does the site contain established native woodland (50 years plus)?

This includes (but is not limited to):
- Wet woodland
- Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)
- Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for A.i.

Check for established native woodland
- Use the Forestry Commission Map Browser layers Protected sites and landscapes < Ancient Woodland < Ancient & Semi-natural woodland / Ancient replanted woodland to check for mapped long-established woodland.
- Conduct a walkover survey: ASNWs and PAWSs are not always nationally mapped, especially when smaller than 2ha. Wet woodlands often occur as localised patches in larger woods, so the best way to check for them is on the ground.
- On your walkover survey, look for indicators of your woodland site's age. Your woodland may well be older than the actual trees standing on the site. Look out for ground flora (indicator plants such as bluebells) and other indications, such as old hedge banks, that provide clues to your woodland's actual age.
- Check other mapping resources. Ancient woodland is mapped on the Ancient Woodland inventory by Natural England but not all small (under 2ha) woodlands will be mapped.
- The National Forest Inventory (NFI) has mapped Britain's woodland to various extents since 1919, and maps of woodlands are available on their website.
- You could also consider looking at old Ordnance Survey drawings, and historic maps.

If your answer to A.1 is 'Yes'
- You should mark established native woodland on your plan and explain how your proposal mitigates for it.
- Your local woodland officer can give you advice about ensuring your proposal is designed to account for mature native woodland.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for B.vi. attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Under the open habitat policy, ancient woodland, and established native broadleaf woodland (of 50-80 years and older) is unlikely to be approved for conversion to open habitat.

There is also a presumption against deforesting ancient woodland (woodland that has been in continuous existence since before AD 1600). This includes ancient semi-natural woodland (ANSW) and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS). In addition, established native woodland is likely to be a priority habitat – see B.i, below.

ANSWs are ancient woodlands. They are mainly composed of local native trees. The trees derive from natural seedfall or coppice, rather than planting.

PAWSs are planted forests of native or non-native tree species that have replaced the original 'natural' woods on sites that have a long history of woodland cover.

Wet woodlands are semi-natural woodlands dominated by alder, willows and birch, found on wet and poorly-drained soils. They are a section 41 priority habitat; a full definition of which can be found on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's list of UK BAP Priority Habitats.

For more information on designing open space in and near ancient woodland refer to the FC Practice Guidance on Managing ancient and native woodland in England, particularly chapter 6 on open areas within woodland.

Part 12 – Environment checks B – Biodiversity

B.i. Have any priority habitats (under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) or habitat features been identified within, or which may be affected by, the proposal area?

As for B.ii. below.

B.ii. Have any protected species or species of principal importance, or other species important to

the area, been identified within, or which may be affected by, the proposal area?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for B.i and B.ii

Habitat checks

- DEFRA's MAGIC map will show whether your site has been mapped as a priority habitat. Go to Habitats and Species < Various Priority Habitat Inventory layers to check.
- You should check for both priority habitats and habitat features using a walkover survey.

Species and habitat checks

- **For every proposal**, you must show you have been in touch with your Local Environment Records Centre (LERC). This centre can provide information they hold on habitats and species that have been recorded on your land. They should be the first place you contact. There may be a charge for the information they hold, but it could potentially avoid the need to undertake a site survey.
- Use DEFRA's MAGIC map and the FC Map Browser to check for nearby RSPB reserves and RSPB important bird areas, and priority creation areas for red squirrels. The latter are mostly found in the north of England. Contact the Biological Records Centre. This national centre has vast datasets on species from the volunteer recording community.
- Use the National Biodiversity Network's (NBN) Atlas to look for recorded priority habitats, important and recorded species, and other mapped environment features. NBN Atlas have controls on how the information they publish can be used. Read the terms and conditions for the use of published data and credit any data providers in any reports or plans you produce.
- Your local wildlife trust can provide advice based on any records they hold.
- The Woodland Wildlife Toolkit can provide information about important woodland species, and how to check for them. It is not designed to identify species that are present on any site, but gives practical guidance on how to plan forestry operations in a way that is sympathetic to the needs of identified species.
- You should record the existing deer population, if significant. This is particularly relevant for upland forests, where there may be a large red deer presence. Deforestation may displace deer, causing them to relocate and causing a detriment to the surrounding area. Information on best practice is available from the Deer Initiative.

Species and habitats surveys

- If initial investigations have identified priority habitats or species, you may need to undertake further surveys, such as a Phase 1 or Phase 2 Habitat Survey, or a species survey.
- Trained ecologists who can undertake survey work can be found using the directory provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Alternatively, a forestry agent will likely be able to organise these surveys on your behalf.
- If it is likely you will need a species survey, seek advice from the Forestry Commission. Take into account the seasonality of surveys and plan ahead to avoid delaying your project. Existing surveys can be used, but should ideally be from the most recent survey season. Surveys will be subject to verification by the Forestry Commission, which may require further information from you if the information is inadequate.

If your answer to either B.i. or B.ii is 'Yes':

- Mark your map / plan with habitat features and priority habitats.
- Explain how your project plan will avoid, mitigate or compensate for any effect on these habitats or species. For more information refer to the background information below.
- If you have a significant existing deer population, you should state how your proposal will mitigate for displaced deer. Best practice guidance is available from the Deer Initiative.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for B.i and B.ii. Attach any evidence – including copies of data searches and a report from the local environment records centre. You may also have information from other experts.

Background information

Priority habitats are set out under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. They are habitats of principal importance for conservation in England. More information, including definitions of these habitats, can be found on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's list of UK BAP Priority Habitats which, while now out of date, formed the basis for the section 41 list. You can also find information about non-woodland priority habitats in part 4 of the FC Field Guide: Priority open habitats and woodland creation.

Habitat features are indicators of remnant priority habitat and might include: features such as ponds, ancient hedgerows, wet flushes and spring lines.
Both priority habitats and habitat features have the potential to harbour important species, so it is important to identify them in your proposal's area. Your proposal should not result in the loss of an important habitat.

Certain species are protected in England under numerous lists or legislation. Other species are considered at risk, or important.

- European Protected Species, such as dormice, bats and otters, are protected in UK law under The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017.
- The schedules of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protect wild birds, certain animals and certain plants.
- The Red Data Book, maintained by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) maintains an international list, published as the Red Data Book, of species categorised by perceived risk. This includes a Red Data Bird List.
- The UK Red list for birds includes the IUCN red list, as well as an amber list of birds with unfavourable conservation status.
- Other species are identified as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

But a species of plant or animal does not have to feature on a list to be considered important to a local area.

Your proposal should not result in a loss of biodiversity in its area, and you should undergo the appropriate level of field checks, including surveys where needed, to check your proposal area for protected and important species. This may include looking beyond your proposal area at adjacent and nearby land.

Deforestation proposals may adversely affect red squirrels, whilst deforestation proposals near bird areas and reserves may present opportunities for open habitat restoration.

If you have identified a protected species you may need to commission additional surveys. Most protected species will require a licence in order to disturb them and their habitats. Rules differ for how the species is protected. You will be asked to confirm you understand your particular obligations towards European Protected Species, wild birds, and badgers in Parts B.iii. – v., below.

B.iii. Have you considered the effect your proposal will have on wild birds in the area and diversity of habitat(s) for wild birds?

As for B.v. below.

B.iv. Are you aware of the Good Practice guidance to safeguard European Protected Species when

undertaking forestry operations and the need to obtain a licence if you cannot comply with the Good Practice?

As for B.v. below.

B.v. Are you aware of the Good Practice guidance to safeguard badgers when undertaking forestry operations and the need to obtain a licence if you cannot comply with the Good Practice?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no for B.iii. – B.v

Landowners are legally obliged to take account of protected species.
Please indicate 'Yes' to parts B.iii. – B.v. to show that you are familiar with your obligations with regard to wild birds, European Protected Species, and badgers.

By indicating 'Yes' the Forestry Commission will take you at your word that you are familiar with these obligations.

More information on managing and protecting woodland wildlife, a checklist for protecting European Protected Species during woodland operations, and information on wildlife licences can be found on GOV.UK's 'manage and protect woodland wildlife' page.

B.vi. Have any Local Sites been identified that may be affected by your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for B.vi.

Check for Local Sites:
- Check local authority information online or contact the Local Environment Records Centre (LERC).
- If your local authority has a Local Nature Recovery Strategy they may have already prepared a map of Local Sites.
- For geological sites, The Geology Trusts can provide local records and maps.
- For geological sites, you can find county-based geo-conservation volunteer groups in England using GeoConservationUK. They will keep a record of geological sites that are important to the region.

If your answer to B.vi. is 'Yes'

- Describe the features identified on the form.
- Provide a map from the Local Environment Records Centre, your local authority, GeoConservationUK or the Geology Trusts.
- Engage with the authority who manage the site – often the local authority in partnership with other organisations – to find out how you can mitigate any impact from your proposal.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for B.vi. attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Local Sites are non-statutorily protected sites, designated locally for their substantive nature conservation importance, either for wildlife or geology. They are designated by locally developed criteria and are generally mapped at a county level.

Their names may vary across the country (e.g. Local Wildlife Site, Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), etc.), but they can all be referred to as Local Sites. There are over 40,000 such sites in England, some with as high quality biodiversity as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Local Sites are designated, monitored and protected by Local Sites Partnerships, usually involving a combination of the local authorities, The Wildlife Trust, and local records centres.

Part 8 – Environment checks C – Water and soils

The FC produces FC Practice Guidance: Managing Forestry Operations to Protect the Water Environment. This sets out how to design a deforestation proposal in a way that minimises its impact on water and soils. The FC will take these design principles into account when screening your proposal.

C.i. Have any water features or public or private drinking water supplies been identified within or which may be affected by your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.i.:

You can identify drinking water supplies using the following:
- Conduct a walkover survey to look for obvious drinking water sources and supply infrastructure.
- Check with relevant neighbours and landowners. Ask whether they have records or evidence of existing licence agreements, access routes or buried pipes.
- Check with the Environment Agency, local water company and local authority for drinking water supplies and associated infrastructure. The local authority or local water company may also have records of drinking water quality testing.

If your answer to C.i. is 'Yes':
- Mark drinking water-related features on your project map.
- You will need to incorporate appropriate buffer zones around certain water-related features. The UK Forestry Standard lists buffers in its Guidelines on Forests and Water. Make sure these buffers are visible on your maps.
- It is good practice to engage with the Environment Agency, local water company or local authority when your deforestation proposal is likely to impact on the yield of drinking water abstraction locations (where water is taken out of the ground). Use their advice to address your proposal's potential impact on drinking water supplies. Refer to their advice in your application.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what, if any, stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for C.i, attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information
Public and private drinking water supplies include water bodies that provide drinking water, and water supply infrastructure, such as abstraction points (where water is taken out of the ground), wells and bore holes, pumps and open / covered reservoirs.

C.ii Is your proposal in an area identified by the Environment Agency as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone or a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.ii.

Find Nitrate Vulnerable Zones and Drinking Water Safeguard Zones. Find out whether your proposal sits in these zones by using the Environment Agency's map of environment data for farmers and landowners. Nitrate Vulnerable Zones are also found as a layer on Defra's MAGIC map:

Designations < Non-statutory <Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (Surface water) (England)
and
Designations < Non-statutory Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (Groundwater) (England)

If your answer to C.ii. is 'Yes'

- If your proposal is in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone you should be aware of legal requirements outlined on GOV.UK
- If your proposal is in a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone (SgZ) you must take care when using any 'at risk' substances listed on the Environment Agency map (link above), as these could cause pollution of water. There is also water protection advice available on the Voluntary Initiative website.
- You may wish to engage with the Environment Agency.
- Make and keep a copy of the information from map data, records and reports, advice and other evidence.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.ii., attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Woodland can be used as a shelterbelt or buffer strip between agricultural land and watercourses to reduce the risk of nitrate pollution from fields into watercourses. The removal of such woodland as part of a deforestation proposal should be considered carefully.

Drinking water safeguard zones are designated areas in which the use of certain substances must be carefully managed to prevent the pollution of drinking water.

C.iii. Is the proposal in an area identified by the Environment Agency where groundwaters are at poor quantitative status?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.iii.

You can identify poor quantitative status by using the Forestry Commission Browser layer: Data < Targeting and scoring < W4W Less-than-good Quantitative Status

If your answer to C.iii. is 'Yes'

- Deforestation must not cause further deterioration to groundwater quantity. You can find out more about groundwater protection in the UK Forestry Standard.
- You may wish to consult with the Environment Agency to see whether your deforestation proposal is suitable for the area.
- You could also check that your deforestation proposal is suitable to the area by reviewing the area's River Basin Management Plan, if there is one available for your area.
- You can contact the Environment Agency for further advice. It will be useful to provide them with soil information when you do so, possibly from a site-based soil survey.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.iii., attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

"Groundwater" refers to all water beneath the surface of the ground. "Poor quantitative status" means that there could be limited groundwater availability.

Although afforestation is a more commonly associated with depleting water supply, deforestation may adversely affect water resources in certain soils – for example, on chalk; or in certain areas – for example, in upland areas, where felling trees might result in increased run-off.

Your proposal may affect how water drains from the site, and go on to affect the water quantity of statutorily protected river systems, such as SACs and SSSIs.

C.iv. Is your proposal in an area identified by the Environment Agency where the quality of riparian and/or surface water is an issue?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.iv.

Check your area's water quality:

- Conduct a walkover survey and mark any water bodies and riparian zones, flowing water, springs and flushes (where groundwater seeps up to surface level) on your map.
- Use the FC's Map Browser layer:
- Targeting and scoring < Water – Water Quality to find whether your proposal sits near a water body that is failing or at risk of failure due to water quality issues – these are areas that are 'high spatial priority' or 'lower spatial' priority on the map. If you have identified an area with a water quality issue, you will then need to identify which bodies of water your proposal could affect.

If you answer 'Yes' to C.iv.

- Contact the Environment Agency and get their advice on how your proposal might affect water quality in the area. Use this to inform your proposal design so you do not make water quality issues worse.
- You should consider the soil type in the area. Depending on the soil type, deforestation proposals can lead to higher erosion, which might lead to increased sedimentation in nearby water, again affecting its quality.
- You could also check that your deforestation proposal is suitable to the area by reviewing the area's River Basin Management Plan. If you are unsure, you can ask the Environment Agency for further advice.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.vi, attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

"Riparian" means related to or situated adjacent to a water course or water body, typically a river or lake.

Deforestation can deteriorate the condition/ status of aquatic ecosystems, and in some areas, can lead to water quality failure. Felling may increase sediment loads in streams, particularly on slopes, and, if not appropriately managed, fuel and lubricants from machinery can affect water quality.

Your proposal may go on to affect statutorily protected river systems, such as SACs and SSSIs.

C.v. Is the proposal in an area identified by the Environment Agency where acidification of surface water is an issue?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.v.

Identify areas where acidification is an issue:
- Use the Forestry Commission Browser layer: Data < Targeting and scoring < CS Water – Water Quality – Acidification
- You should look for areas that are 'failing to meet good status' and at 'risk of failure'.
- Check Forest Research's Acid Vulnerable Catchments (AVC) mapping, which marks areas that are 'at risk' or marked as 'fail'.

If your answer to C.v. is 'yes'
- Deforestation must not cause any further deterioration to surface water.
- You should engage with the Environment Agency or local water authority. For more information on recommended actions, look at the section on Acid Vulnerable Catchments in Forestry project checks: Constraints.
- You can refer to Forest Research Practice Guide 'Managing forests in acid sensitive water catchments'.
- You may have to carry out a Critical Load Assessment. This assessment confirms how much pollutant deposition the environment can tolerate. It is most likely to be needed if the catchment area is over 100ha, but the Forestry Commission will confirm whether it's required.
- If the assessment shows that deforestation is still appropriate, show how your project design in Part 6 meets assessment recommendations.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what, if any, stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for C.v, attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information
Forestry is known to affect water acidification. Increasing acidification can damage fisheries and cause adverse ecological changes to freshwaters.

C.vi. Is the proposal adjacent to a watercourse and/or does it affect flood defence structures or facilities?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.vi.

Check for watercourses, flood facilities and flood risk. Conduct a walkover survey and locate and mark the following:
- flowing water bodies
- flood plain boundaries
- flood defences*
- other flood and river control infrastructure

*Flood defences include any bank, wall, embankment, barrier, whether natural or artificial, against the inundation. This can include natural or artificial high ground and river control structures include measuring devices, sluices, weirs, pumps and pipes.

In addition to a walkover survey, check maps for any watercourses. Watercourses include all rivers, streams, ditches, drains, canals, cuts, culverts, dykes, sluices, sewers and passages through which water flows, except a public sewer or drain.
You can check long term local flood risk in your proposal area on GOV.UK. You can also find background on flood risk management on GOV.UK.
Identify the flood plain using the flood map on GOV.UK.

If your answer to C.vi. is 'yes'
- Record all features on your project plan/map.
- Read about environmental permits for flood risk activities on GOV.UK.

- If your deforestation proposal is close to flood defence structures or watercourses, you will need to contact the relevant authority, according to the buffers below:
    - Consult the Environment Agency if works are occuring within 8m of a main river, main river culvert or flood defence. A permit may be required. View a map of England's main rivers.
    - Consult the Environment Agency if works are within 16m of a tidal main river, tidal main river culvert or flood defence. A permit may be required.
    - Consult the Internal Drainage Board in areas covered by the Internal Drainage District if works are within 8m of a watercourse. You can find these districts on the Association of Drainage Authorities interactive map.
    - Consult the local authority for any planned structures in Ordinary watercourses.

- You may also need to engage with any relevant neighbours to find out whether existing flood structures will be adversely affected, or byelaws breached by, your proposal.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what, if any, stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for C.vi., attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

If your answer to C.vi. is 'yes', and your proposal is over 50ha and within a floodplain.

- Contact the Environment Agency at enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk and/or the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- The Environment Agency and/or Local Flood Authority may need to carry out a Flood Risk Assessment and may seek further information on your proposal in order to do so. Information required could include modelling to demonstrate:
    o a reduction in flood risk as part of a Natural Flood Management project
    o the deforestation will not result in an increase in flooding to third parties.
- Seek the advice of the relevant water company, Local Authority and any relevant neighbours who may also have views on the appropriateness of your deforestation proposal. They may have important input on emergency planning for flooding incidents.

Background information

Deforestation can cause increased flood risk and should be considered carefully.

C.vii. Have any other water features been identified within, or which may be affected by your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.vii.

Find water features:
- Conduct a walkover survey to look for water features other than drinking water supplies and watercourses. This may include adits (mine entrances used for drainage), springs, seepage and wetland areas, ponds and lakes.
- If you have already identified watercourses and drinking water supplies in C.i. and C.vi. you do not need to include these again here.

If your answer to C.vii. is 'yes'

Provide further information on the form:
- Mark water-related features on your project map.
- Seek Environment Agency guidance, or, if necessary contact the Environment Agency for advice if your proposal is likely to have a significant effect on a water feature.

- Use Part 14 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.vii, attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Water features are any bodies of water on your land, including boreholes, wells, adits, springs, seepage and wetland areas, ponds, lakes and watercourses. You should identify drinking water supplies and watercourses in parts C.i. and C.vi. as proposals affecting these require engagement with multiple statutory bodies. Other water features are less likely to require engagement, but you should seek advice from the Environment Agency if you are concerned about your project's likely effect.

C.viii. Is your proposal on or near an area of peaty soil?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.viii.

Find peaty soils:
- Use the FC Map Browser to identify peaty soils (in the layer Targeting and scoring < Natural England Peat Map). These are labelled as deep peaty soils, shallow peaty soils and soils with peaty pockets.
- The peat map does not cover all peaty areas, so you should also conduct a thorough walkover of your site, or a soil survey, particularly when peaty soils are known to be nearby.
- Make sure you also consider your proposal's impact on any bog or wetland habitat adjacent to your proposal.

If your answer to C.viii. is 'yes'

- Contact Natural England for advice.
- A full English Peat Strategy (EPS) and a decision support network for considering existing woodland on peat are expected in due course. Until then, refer to the and the interim peat strategy, the decision support framework for peatland protection and the establishment of new woodland (Interim), both of which show the FC's current position on forestry and peat.
- Detail how your project plan is designed to avoid, mitigate and compensate for any effect on peaty soil.
- If there are peaty soils and areas of deep peat, show where those lie on your map or plan and explain how your proposal accounts for them.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.viii. attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Peaty soils and organo-mineral soils (also known as shallow peat) have delicate hydrological systems that can be affected by nearby forestry projects. Peaty soils are particularly good at absorbing carbon over time. You should avoid works that compromise the hydrology of adjacent bog or wetland habitats or work that disturbs peaty soils.

Part 12 – Environment checks D – Landscape character

D.i. What is the national landscape character area?

How to identify national landscape character

- Identify the national landscape character (NCA) on MAGIC, using the layer Landscape < Landscape Classifications < National Character Areas (England)
- Write it on your form as it is written on MAGIC e.g. 'Severn and Avon Vales'

Background information

England is divided – by natural lines in the landscape, rather than by administrative boundaries – into 159 distinct National Character Areas (NCAs).

Natural England's online list of all NCA profiles provides data, landscape descriptions and statements of environmental opportunity which should inform the design of your deforestation proposal.

D.ii. What is the local landscape character type?

How to identify local landscape character

- Contact the local authority to find out whether there is a character statement for the area. They may have carried out a landscape character assessment (LCA) and be able to provide you with a map.
- Describe the local landscape in a few words, for example 'wooded estate downland'.
- Only very large proposals are likely to span more than one character area.

Background information

Local landscape character statements are usually produced by the local authorities and are used to identify and describe variation in the character of the landscape. These authorities

also have the power to designate local landscapes of importance (local landscape designations, or LLD) in order to protect them from man-made interventions.

D.iii. Does the local / national landscape character support deforestation in this location?

If you are minded to mark 'Yes', first make sure you:
- Conduct a walkover survey of your site, taking plenty of photographs.
- Use the UK Forestry Standard's guidelines on landscape (UKFS – Landscape, section 6.4) to make sure your proposal design accounts for local landscape characteristics.
- Refer to any landscape character assessments and the National Character Area for your proposal location.
- Evidence stakeholder engagement, particularly with neighbours, on impacts such as loss of view, obstruction of access and others.
- When your proposal is in a protected landscape, such as a Heritage Coast, consult with the relevant authority on your proposal's potential to integrate into the landscape. Forestry project checks: Constraints lists possible protected landscape types.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for D.iii. attach any evidence, such as details from the character assessment and log your proposed mitigation.

Part 12 – Environment checks E – Historic environment

E.i. Have any local historic environment records identified features which may be affected by your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for E.i.

Find historic features:
- **For every proposal**, you must provide your correspondence with the local authority historic environment/archaeology service and obtain Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) maps. If local HLC data is not available, national HLC available in the 'Landscape' section of Defra's MAGIC map can be used.

- You may also wish to check (or ask the local authority historic environment service to check) the following sources for historic features:
  - LiDAR data (available from the Environment Agency)
  - Selected historic mapping where known to exist (this may involve visits by the specialist to selected archives – the local historic environment service will be able to advise, or use online resources such as those provided by the National Library of Scotland and old-maps.co.uk)
- Conduct a visual inspection yourself of your site to identify potential historic environment features or those identified within the HER, e.g. ridge and furrow or burial mounds. You must look over existing woodland carefully. Historic features often survive well in existing woodland, but many have not yet been archaeologically studied.
- Where HER data, HLC data and/or visual survey identifies significant evidence, the local historic environment service or Forestry Commission may recommend specialist surveys, which you should be prepared to commission. These could include:

  - Analytical archaeological survey (level 1 walkover)
  - Aerial investigation and mapping

If your answer to E.i is 'yes'
- Show known historic environment features on the project plan/maps.
- Detail how your project plan and operational plan are designed to avoid, mitigate or compensate for any effect on the historic environment. Historic assets can be adversely affected by felling, removing roots and stumps, vehicle movements and infrastructure associated with your deforestation proposal. A historic feature's setting can be an intrinsic part of its value, but this can be fundamentally changed by deforestation.
- Consider how you can complement or enhance the historic environment, and improve public access, through deforestation. In some cases it can be appropriate to restore open habitat on sites that were open habitat in the recent past or provide public access to and interpretation of heritage features. In other cases, root damage to historic assets mean that deforestation is the endorsed course of action.
- Commission specialist surveys (e.g. archaeological walkover surveys) where evidence is significant. Seek advice from local historic environment services and/or the Forestry Commission where appropriate.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what, if any, stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for E.ii. attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Local historic environment features are important historic sites. They include visible earthworks, buried archaeological remains, ruins and structures. They are not generally mapped at a national level, with scheduled monuments being the notable exception.

Additional considerations should be given to burial grounds (which are protected by the Burial Acts) and aircraft crash sites (which are protected by the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986).

Part 12 – Environment checks F – Open access land

F.i. Is your proposal in an area of Open Access land, or within Dedicated (Open Access) woodland, as defined by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for F.i.

Check for open access land. Use Defra's MAGIC map and Natural England's open data to identify the type of open access land your project might affect.

You should check for the following types of land:
- Registered Common Land
- Section 15 Land (Mountain, Moor, Heath or Down)
- Section 16 Land (Dedicated Land)

These layers are defined by the CROW Act 2000. If any of these fall in your proposal area, you must answer 'Yes' to F.i.

Use Defra's MAGIC map layers:
- Access < Countryside and Rights of Way Act, Section 15 Land (England)
- Access < Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Access Layer (England)
- Access < Registered Common Land (England)

Use Natural England Open Data and search for 'CRoW Act 2000 - Section 16 Dedicated Land' to see if your proposal affects any dedicated land.

If your answer to F.i. is 'Yes'

- Deforestation is likely to improve access. Even so, be aware that your deforestation proposal should maintain the existing levels of access to the land – in most cases, this will be the preservation of a path or desire line.
- Conduct a walkover survey to identify paths and desire lines, and places where users congregate.
- Map the location of any routes, points of interest and vistas on your plan.
- Engage with your Local Access Forum to reach an agreement on your plans to deforest open access land.
- Engage with local stakeholders who have an interest in accessing the land, and use their local knowledge to inform your proposal design (for instance, neighbourhood, rambling or equestrian groups).
- If your deforestation proposal is on Common Land, you may need to seek consent from the Secretary of State before you commence works. See Forestry project checks: Constraints for more information on legal requirements.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what, if any, stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for F.i. attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.

F.ii. What area (ha) of the proposal is on land subject to CROW Open Access?

Use the MAGIC map or the FC's Map Browser to measure how much of your proposal sits on open access land, looking for the layers listed in F.i. Give this area to the nearest tenth of a hectare.

Background information

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) normally gives a public right of access to land mapped as 'open country' (mountain, moor, heath and down) or registered common land. These areas are known as 'open access land'.

Dedicated land is land that has been voluntarily (but permanently) 'dedicated' by the owner. As with open access land, dedicated land is subject to a permanent legal public right of access.

Part 12 – Environment checks G – Wildfire

G.i. Has a risk of wildfire been identified in your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for G.i.

Check for wildfire risk:

- Refer to Operations Note 40 for advice on identifying wildfire risk.

- Using the survey templates provided in Operations Note 40, survey your site and all neighbouring land (where possible) to identify existing habitats and land use. Use this to determine what level of wildfire risk exists, and how this may change by implementing a deforestation proposal.

- In particular, consider areas adjacent to the proposal boundary that contain "high risk" habitats (e.g. existing lowland heath or grassland habitat types).

- The Community Risk Register in your Local Resilience Forum is a useful assessment of risk in your area and may contain details of wildfire risk.

If your answer to G.i. is 'yes'

Either:

Tell us how you intend to mitigate this risk.

Or:

Provide a wildfire risk assessment (see Operations Note 40).

- Completing a Wildfire Risk Assessment may indicate that you need a Wildlife Management Plan. A Wildlife Management Plan would be expected if you were creating higher risk habitat, such as lowland / upland heath, or grassland.

If you don't complete a wildfire risk assessment

- Contact the relevant Fire and Rescue Service and other stakeholders for advice and show how you have used this advice in your project plan. A list of possible stakeholders and a template letter is provided in the Appendices of Operations Note 40.
- Use Part 14 of the form to record what, if any, stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for G.i., attach any evidence, and log your proposed mitigation.
- For information on forest management techniques that mitigate wildfire risk, use the Forestry Commission's Practice Guide Building Wildfire Resilience into Forest Management Planning.

Background information

Compared to woodland, open habitats in England generally present an increased wildfire risk. Open habitats dry out to a far greater extent than woodlands during sustained hot weather, and therefore catch alight far easier. People using open habitats for recreation can increase that risk even further.

In particular, the risk of wildfire incidents and their impacts increase when significant vegetation and timber debris remain on the site following the conversion of woodland to open habitat.

Part 13 – Compensatory Tree Planting

In accordance with government policy, the FC may require you create new woodland elsewhere near your proposal site as part of your deforestation proposal. This is known as compensatory planting.

The FC will consider your proposals against the criteria set out in Section 5.3.3 'Compensatory tree planting' of When to convert woods and forests to open habitat in England: Government policy, in conjunction with where the compensatory 'bar' is set at the time of application.

The FC monitors the level of deforestation against the level of new woodland creation on an annual basis. The level at which the bar is set to require compensatory planting may be adjusted, in order to ensure that there is no overall loss of woodland.

13.1 Are you proposing compensatory tree planting?

Use this section to indicate whether you are creating new woodland in an alternative location as part of your deforestation proposal.

13.2 If compensatory planting is not proposed, please explain why not.

It is likely that your proposal will require compensatory planting. If you consider that this is not required, then the FC expect to see evidence that supports this decision from Natural England and / or Historic England. These bodies should state how the woodland adversely impacts on a nationally or internationally designated site.

For example, in the case of Natural England, Natural England might state how a woodland is negatively impacting on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified as an open habitat, or notified for a particular open habitat species.

Use Part 14 of the form to record what, if any, stakeholder engagement you have undertaken and attach any evidence.

13.3 Please indicate if you are submitting an EIA application form.

Mark 'Y' or 'N' to show whether you are submitting an EIA afforestation application form.

13.4 If you are not submitting an EIA afforestation application form, please explain why not.

Information on the EIA afforestation threshold and the EIA afforestation application form are available on GOV.UK.

If you are not submitting an application form, please state why in the box supplied. If you believe compensatory planting is not required for your deforestation proposal, you can refer the FC to the answer you submitted for 13.2.

If you are undertaking compensatory planting but are not submitting an EIA application form for the planting, please ensure full details of your compensatory planting are included in your proposal overview (Part 6) and on your project maps.

Part 14 – Stakeholders and evidence log

14.1 In the table on the form, record the individuals and organisations who have been contacted regarding your proposal.

The FC will not undertake stakeholder engagement on your behalf. You must undertake your stakeholder engagement prior to submitting your application. Feedback from stakeholder engagement is necessary to finalise your proposal. However the FC may consult with other bodies to validate the information, and interpretation of that information, that you provide in your completed application.

Alongside the stakeholders recommended in Part 12 – Environment Checks, you can find a list of potential stakeholders on Forestry project checks: All projects. This list is not exhaustive.

Please indicate whether a copy of correspondence with the stakeholder has been submitted with your application. It is always good practice to submit a copy of the actual correspondence had with stakeholders so that the FC can assess this first hand.

Please summarise what actions you took based on recommendations by stakeholders, to avoid or mitigate for any adverse affect on your proposal area. This should be reflected in the final design of your proposal, shown in your proposal overview in Part 6.

14.2 Use the evidence log on the form to list supporting information which you are including in your application.

To help the FC process your application without having to request more information, please list any attachments/ printed material you are sending in support of your application and, if possible, which question on the application form they support. This should include:

- Relevant correspondence from the stakeholders listed in 14.1
- Any extra maps, plans, surveys and information to support Part 12 – Environment Checks
- You **must** include a map from the local authority historic environment/archaeology service**.**

You may also want to include the following details, to show any other reasons why your proposal should go ahead:

- A grant scheme work schedule
- A SSSI condition assessment
- Current photographs showing the site's current situation
- Photographs of the target habitat taken nearby – these will help show the likely visual impact of your proposal.

Part 15 – Project maps

15.1 Please indicate that your map fulfils FC requirements by confirming the statements on your form.

To design a UKFS-compliant deforestation proposal you should prepare a number of maps. You may be supplying the following maps as part of your project design:

- Landscape Context Plan
- Site Context Map
- Design Concept Plan
- Site Appraisal Plan
- Operational Plan
- Local Historic Environment map

More information about suitable project maps is found at the top of the application form.
The FC expect you to be able to mark 'Yes' for every statement in 15.1.

For more information on including a map of local historic environment features, refer to Part 12 E – Environment Checks

15.2 Please mark 'Y' or 'N' for the statements on the form to show whether or not they apply to your project map(s).

For more information on adjacent land refer to Part 7 – Adjacent Projects.

For more information on habitats and species, water-related features, local historic environment, local geological features, and open access land refer to Part 12 - Environment Checks

Part 16 – Declarations

You (the applicant or agent) should tick this declaration, and sign on the line.
To insert a digital signature, you should open the form in Adobe Reader.
Your application will not be accepted if this information is not provided or is not complete.

Please email or post completed applications to your <u>local FC admin hub</u>.

Part 17 – Applying for EIA Consent (Optional)

You do not need to fill in this part of the form unless you want the FC to immediately consider your application as a 'stage 2' EIA Application for Consent.
You can ask the FC to immediately consider your application as a 'stage 2' EIA Application for Consent under the regulations, rather than wait for a 'stage 1' EIA

Opinion on whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, whether an EIA stage 2 Application for Consent is in fact required.

Proceeding immediately to stage 2 is only likely to be beneficial to you if you are confident that your proposal is highly likely to have a significant effect on the environment, because of its location within a designated or sensitive area, its scale, or for some other reason.,

If you are planning to proceed immediately to 'stage 2', speak to the FC first, by contacting your local woodland officer.

The FC strongly recommends that you apply for a 'stage 1' EIA Opinion of your proposal first, (by completing and submitting this form) and allow the FC to evaluate if EIA 'stage 2' Consent would be required.

For more information on applying for EIA Consent, including the drafting of an Environmental Statement, refer to the scoping guidance: Undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment in Forestry (Scoping) and Preparing an Environmental Statement (PDF, 652KB, 31 pages).