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Dear Mr Cassells,

Forest Expansion Scheme

Confirmed Letter of Offer

Thank you for returning a signed copy of the terms and conditions form which was included with your conditional letter of offer. I am pleased to confirm funding under the Forest Expansion Scheme for a total up to £26,432.80¹ for establishment.

This scheme is part financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development through the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014 -2020.

What you need to do now

Carefully read the Woodland Creation Plan you supplied, ensure you understand its contents and carry out all works as specified. Failure to do so will result in loss of grant and leave you subject to penalties.

You may commence work on this project from the date of this letter and the period of approval is conditional on you carrying out the work and submitting your claim for first instalment by **31 May 2018** at the latest. There is no deferred application process.

You have approval only to plant within the approved area; anything planted outside this will not be grant-aided.

The Forestry Grant Schemes information booklet which describes the rules and procedures of the Scheme is binding.

¹ detailed in the Costs Spreadsheet included with your Conditional Letter of Offer









State Aid

All State Aid under this scheme will comply with Article 32 of Commission Regulation (EU) 702/2014 [as published in the Official Journal of the European Union, L193 pages 1 – L193/75, 1.7.2014]

The aid is granted in the framework of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (NIRDP) in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 and the delegated and implementing acts adopted by the Commission pursuant to that Regulation.

I wish to make you aware under Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 702/2014 from 1 July 2016, information on each individual award exceeding €500,000 is published on a comprehensive State Aid website.

How to claim

Details on Claiming Forestry Grant Schemes are specified in the Information Booklet.

Once the initial planting has been carried out, you should complete a claim form for each block planted, this is your claim for the first instalment of grant. Your claim must be consistent with the approved Costs Spreadsheet which describes your application and the maximum support that you are eligible for at individual operation level.

Subsequent claim forms for years 2019 to 2020 are also enclosed for claims to be made in years 2 and 3 as illustrated on the costs spreadsheet. These claim forms must be returned by the date shown on each form and will be subject to the late claims penalty system.

You should ensure each section is completed correctly and that you have attached any supporting documents, for example fully completed **receipted** invoices from your agent, contractor or any supplier and bank statements. It is in your interest to do this so that we can process your claim promptly and issue payment to you. When completed and checked, return your claim form(s) to the address on this letter.

This grant scheme requires you to submit –

- An original receipted invoice detailing each item for which you are claiming financial support.
- An original bank statement or statements proving payment to your suppliers.
- A copy of cheque(s) / copies of the electronic transaction between you and your suppliers.

We will check your claim to ensure all the required information has been correctly and completely submitted before we validate it for payment. The European Commission require us to select risk and random inspections as part of this validation process. We will apply a selection methodology to select these claims and our findings will









be subject to a <u>Penalty System [enclosed]</u>. For this reason it is important that you check that your claim is correct.

Penalty System

Late Claims - the European Commission requires the application of a penalty for late claims. In 2017/18 to avoid penalties the last date for receiving your claim will be on or before **31 May 2018.** Claims received after this date will be subject to penalties. Annex 1 gives a breakdown of the penalties that will be applied each year.

False or Misleading Claims - We will apply a selection methodology to select these claims and our findings will be subject to a <u>Penalty System</u>. For this reason it is important that you check that your claim is correct.

Payment

We will approve successful claims and process them for payment which will be made through the BACS system using the details provided to the department.

Consultation with Statutory Bodies

Some areas of land are deemed of such importance that they are formally designated under national and international legislation. It is your responsibility to make sure that the activities you carry out on site are in compliance with legislation. Further information of protected areas is available from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Further Information

If you or your agent has any queries regarding this approval, please contact us and we will do our best to answer them or put you in contact with someone who can. In the meantime, thank you for your interest in our schemes.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Sweeney
Scheme Manager

Encls.

- (i) Annex 1 Late Claims Schedule
- (ii) Approval Map
- (iii) Claim Form(s)
- (iv) Penalty System

cc. Indiwoods







