



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Trees and Forestry Forum

Tuesday 12th July, 11:30-13:30



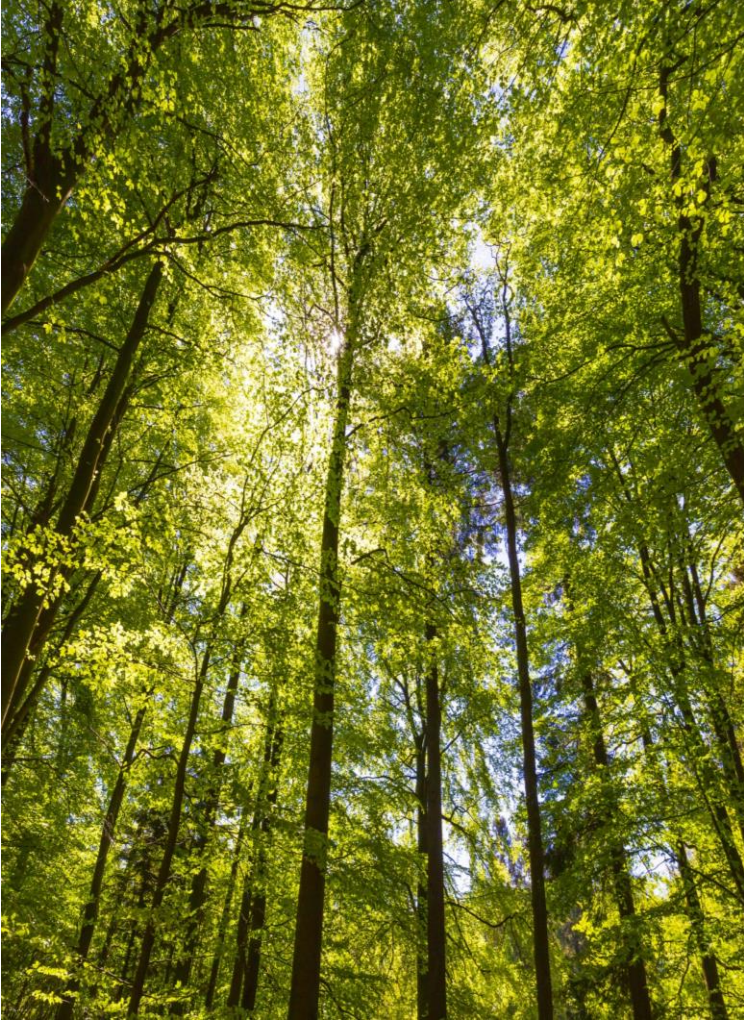
Environment
Agency



Forestry Commission



Agenda



1. Welcome
 2. Nature Recovery Green Paper Consultation Responses:
 - *Including Slido*
 3. England Trees Action Plan Update:
 - *Reflection on the halfway point of the Programme*
 - *Including Slido*
 4. Research and Development Update:
 - *Including Breakout Rooms*
 5. AoB and Update on Next Meeting
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Nature Recovery Green Paper: Consultation Responses



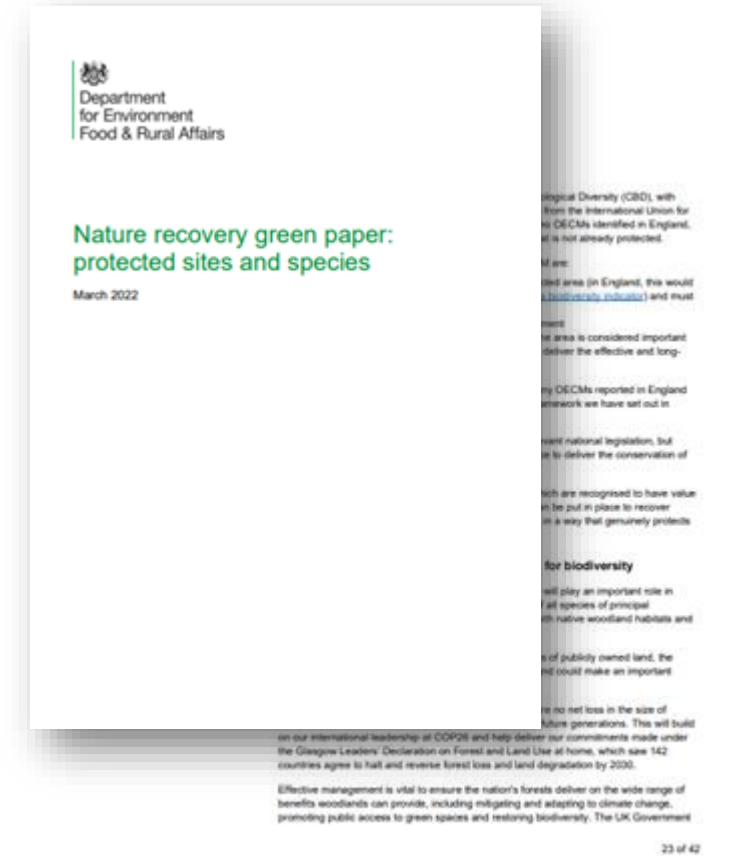
Forestry Questions

The Nature Recovery Green paper launched on 16th March closed on 11th May 2022. We asked respondents to share their views on the following questions:

Q. 19. What are your views on our proposal to establish priority areas for afforestation?

Q. 21. What are your views on our proposal to reform forestry governance and strengthen protections for the Nation's Forests?

Q 22. What are your views on our proposal to adjust forestry permanency requirements for certain project types?



If you have questions you would like to ask during our presentation, please use the slido link join at [slido.com](https://www.slido.com/join/#3451260) with #3451260 or at this [link](#). We will be answering questions at the end of the presentation.

Establishing Priority Areas for Woodland Creation

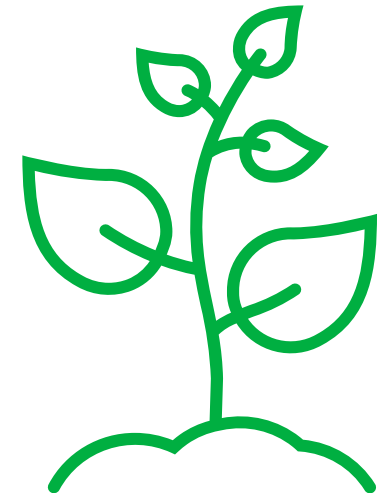


Q. 19. What are your views on our proposal to establish priority areas for afforestation?

Afforestation Strategic Assessments: Establish priority areas for woodland creation by completing large landscape scale mapping exercises. This would allow certain areas to be green-lit for afforestation.

Summary

Responses to this proposal were mixed, with a significant proportion of stakeholders demonstrating caveated support, either supporting the mapping exercise but not the suggestion that it would make Stage one EIAs unnecessary or supporting the idea of fast-tracking applications but not the proposed landscape scale approach.



For

- **Reduction in complexity:** Stakeholders reflected that, as predicted, the complexity of grants and regulation, including multiple consultations needed, *is* one of the most significant barriers to new planting. This confirmed for us that this proposal was addressing a significant blocker to woodland creation.
- **EIA Reform:** Many stakeholders welcomed this proposal as part of wider EIA reforms and saw a more strategic approach as an opportunity for a wider rationalisation of the overall implementation of the EIA process.
- **Strategy:** Stakeholders welcomed the idea that forests should be strategically planned and assessed on a landscape scale and reflected that it could be part of a wider land-use strategy, taking a strategic approach to the use of all land across the UK.

Against

- **Top-Down approach:** Several stakeholders disagreed with the Top-Down Approach landscape scale mapping takes. Concerns were raised about the lack of local knowledge and the loss of nuance, as well as impact on a changing landscape that might not be considered at a single mapping point. I.E the movement of breeding waders.
- **Deliverability:** Stakeholders expressed concern at the feasibility of this proposal, questioning how even a well-resourced project could deliver this same level of nuance that is present at a local scale, on such a wide national scale.
- **Species recovery:** Concerns were raised about the impact of this proposal on nature recovery, with stakeholders concerned it demonstrated a primacy of woodland creation over careful consideration of risks to native species.



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Forestry Governance Reform and Strengthening Protections for the nation's forests



Q. 21. What are your views on our proposal to reform forestry governance and strengthen protections for the Nation's Forests?

Forestry Commission Governance: Consider new statutory duties and powers for the Forestry Commission, which reflect the social and environmental importance of its woodlands as well as their timber value.

No Net Loss: Strengthen our commitment on no net reduction in size of the nation's forests managed by Forestry England.



Summary

Responses demonstrated broad support for further protections of the Public Forest Estate and for governance reform. Several responses highlighted the need for a wider scope and more expertise, as to better support nature recovery and 30x30 objectives. The need to balance nature driven reforms and green recovery was noted.

For

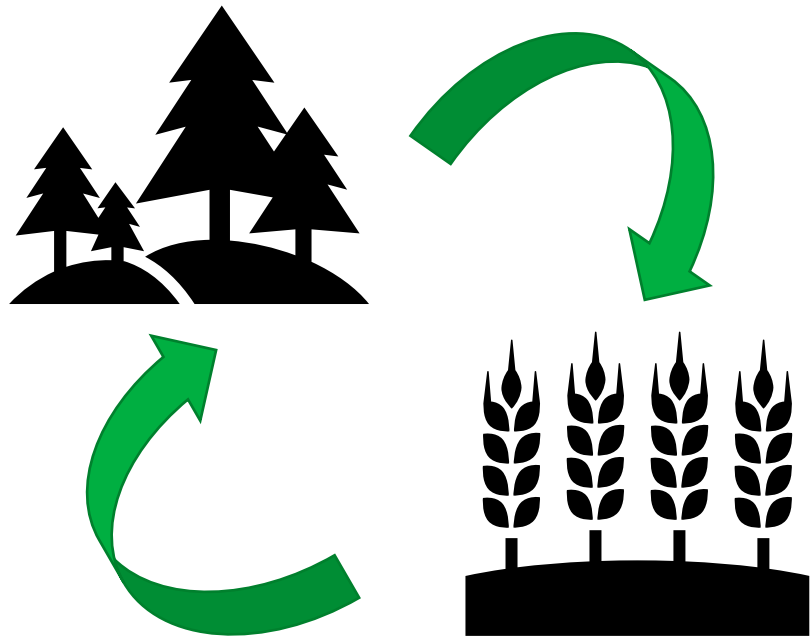
- **No net loss:** Further protections were welcomed with responses noting the importance of the nation's forests in meeting climate and biodiversity objectives. A preference for a metric that easily allows for habitat restoration and/or net gain was highlighted
- **Governance reform:** Many stakeholders were supportive of reform. The proposed greater focus on nature recovery and biodiversity was well met, and a number of responses noted this would increase Forestry England's alignment with Defra's objectives.
- **Skills:** Stakeholders noted that governance reform could create an opportunity to address the skills gap.

Against

- **30x30:** Stakeholders commented on the limited contribution of the Public Forest Estate towards 30X30. Several respondents argued for a focus on privately owned forests as well, drawing on existing regulation, grants and subsidies to influence nature recovery.
- **Timber production:** It was noted that nature led reforms may negatively impact the UK's timber industry and the financial independence of the Forestry Commission. Stakeholders highlighted a balance would be needed to deliver biodiversity and timber green economy/net zero objectives.

Flexible Permanency Requirements





Q 22. What are your views on our proposal to adjust forestry permanency requirements for certain project types?

Permanency: A proposal to remove the woodland permanency requirements for certain kinds of woodland creation project meaning restocking after felling would not be required and land could be reverted to agricultural use.

Summary

Responses to this proposal demonstrated broad support of the introduction of more flexibility into the system, but a significant number of concerns was raised as to the impact on woodland creation targets. Exploration of the topic seemed welcome, but stakeholders expressed a need for more evidence and explanation before their views could be finalised.

For

- **Flexibility:** There was broad agreement from stakeholders that greater flexibility that would encourage landowners to undertake tree planting without being bound by a permanency requirement.
- **Promotion of Innovative practice:** Stakeholders expressed that a change in permanency requirements would support innovative approaches to nature recovery with regard to business and encourage farmers to trial new silvicultural practices such as short rotation forestry, short rotation coppice, or agroforestry.

Against

- **Scepticism surrounding benefits:** Stakeholders were concerned that Impermanent planting whereby trees are removed after a relatively short time would not provide long term and resilient nature recovery and climate mitigation benefits.
- **Cost benefit analysis:** Where stakeholders did see benefit to increased planting caused by this proposal, they were keen that be further evidenced and subject to scientific scrutiny to ensure those nature recovery benefits outweighed any biodiversity damage or soil disruption caused.



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Forestry Proposals: Next Steps



Next Steps

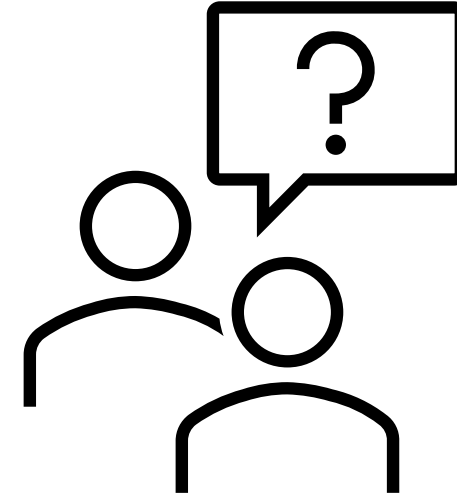
- We will be undertaking further research and stakeholder engagement on our proposals to establish strategic afforestation assessment, change permanency requirements, reform forestry governance and strengthen protections for the nation's forests.
- Wider work in being undertaken within Defra to analyse the responses to the Nature Recovery Green Paper consultation, we will look to publish a response in due course.
- In regard to our Afforestation proposal, We are working with DLUHC to develop an improved system of environmental assessment. As set out in the Planning White Paper and the National Infrastructure Strategy, we intend to deliver a new framework that provides clarity, removes duplication, and ensures environmental considerations are embedded effectively in decision making at an early stage.

Questions

Slido Questions

Slido.com #3451260 at this [link](#).

Reserve Questions



- ***Are the sentiments outlined reflective of your own views? How do they differ? Where are the common areas of agreement?***
- ***Are there any benefits or risks associated with our proposals that you would like to raise? How are they balanced?***



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Environmental Targets: Tree Canopy and Woodland Cover



Early Analysis – Open Question

Q33. Do you agree or disagree with our proposed level of ambition for a tree and woodland cover target?

Summary: Very early analysis has shown stakeholders would like to see a higher ambition level than that proposed.

For

Tree Target: Almost all respondents stated they agree with setting a tree and woodland target.

Coherence: Stakeholders who agreed with the ambition level have stated they feel the ambition level is correct as it is closely aligned the planting ambitions in the Net Zero Strategy and the CCC's balanced pathway.

Against

More ambition needed: Stakeholders stated a preference for a higher ambition level. A regular theme has been a comparison to similar nations who have a much higher woodland cover.

Quality: Many stakeholders stated a greater commitment towards the quality of woodland created is needed. Noting the quality will be an important factor if we are to achieve climate and biodiversity objectives.

Early Analysis – Closed Questions

Q30. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed metric for a tree and woodland cover target?

Summary: Initial analysis has shown stakeholders are in favour of the proposed canopy cover metric. A high number of those who disagreed stated they would like to see a commitment to the quality of woodlands built into the metric.

Q31. Do you agree or disagree that short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry plantations should be initially excluded from a woodland cover target?

Summary: Early analysis shows stakeholders are significantly in favour of the exclusion of short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry plantations.

Q32. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed inclusion of trees in woodlands, as well as trees in hedgerows, orchards, in fields, and in towns and cities?

Summary: Early analysis shows stakeholders are significantly in favour of the inclusion of trees in woodlands, as well as trees in hedgerows, orchards, in fields, and in urban areas.

Next Steps

- We will continue analyzing responses to the consultation and draft a summary of the responses for publication.
- Initial analysis shows there is public support for a higher ambition level. We will analyze responses and assess any new evidence given against the requirements of the Environment Act to see if an increase in ambition level is feasible.
- We are seeking further advice on whether a quality measure can be included within the target's ambition level.

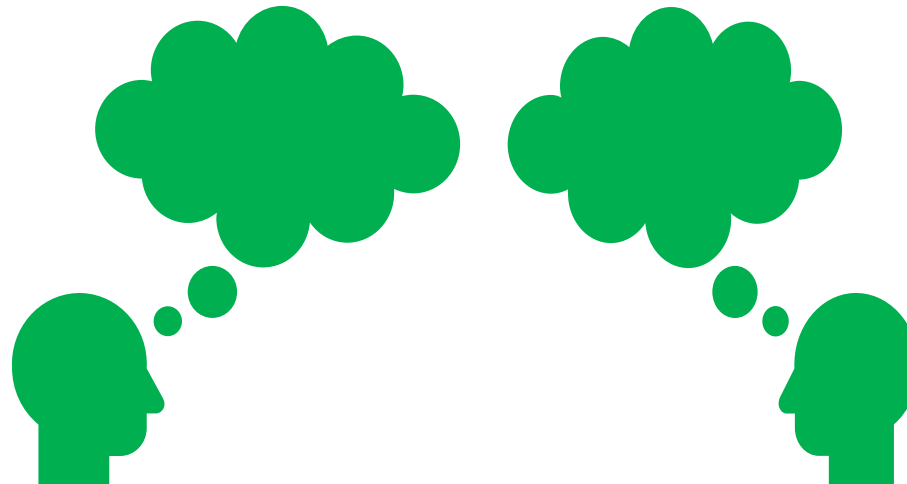


Questions

Slido Questions

Slido.com **3551135**

- Does our initial analysis capture your thoughts on the tree and woodland target?
- Are there any further strengths or concerns about the target you would like to raise?





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England Trees Action Plan (ETAP) Update

Contents

1. Summary of ETAP action status
2. ETAP delivery highlights (since March 2022 stakeholder forum) and future work to look out for
3. Overview of upcoming ETAP action delivery during 2022



Please send any follow up questions to: andrew.crawford@defra.gov.uk

ETAP Action Status

ETAP chapter	No. of actions	Commenced	Completed
Vision (Trebling planting rates)	1	1	
Expanding and connecting our trees and woodlands	30	17	12
Trees and woodlands as part of the green economy	17	14	2
Protecting and improving our trees and woodlands	24	16	6
Connecting people with trees and Woodlands	7	5	2
Knowledge and science for trees and woodlands	12	5	
Total	91	58	22

Across its six chapters, 22 actions have been delivered and 84% of the remaining actions are underway

ETAP Tree Planting Vision

“We aim to at least treble woodland creation rates by the end of this Parliament.”

- On 16 June, the Forestry Commission published its 2021-22 annual statistical report of performance against its key performance indicators. Statistics for the tree planting year 2021-22 (approved by the UK Statistics Authority) show that tree planting and woodland creation increased to c.2,700 hectares – comprising 2,255 hectares of new planting of woodland and an additional c.400 hectares of trees planted outside woodlands

“England will have at least 12% woodland cover by mid-century, contributing to net zero greenhouse gas emissions.”

- On 16 March, we published our consultation on a proposed statutory target for woodland creation under the Environment Act 2021. Our proposed target is to increase woodland and tree canopy cover from 14.5% to 17.5% by 2050. This is equivalent to planting 420,000 hectares of woodland – an area the size of Somerset – while making a net gain in trees outside woodlands

Expanding and Connecting our Trees and Woodlands

What we have been working on:

- Delivery of EWCO grant scheme and Forestry England leasehold scheme
- Published a public consultation on a new statutory tree and woodland cover target
- Launched the ground-breaking Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund
- On-going work to review the legislative and regulatory framework for woodland creation and expansion
- Published new guidance on the (re)establishment of woodland on peatland
- Held a Ministerial Roundtable with Water Companies on their tree planting targets
- Launched a new woodland creation 'Put Down Roots' comms campaign



What to look out for:

- Publication of new guidance to local authorities on creating local tree and woodland strategies



Trees and Woodlands as part of the Green Economy

What we have been working on:

- Held a second meeting of the Timber in Construction Policy Roadmap working group
- Received bids for the Timber in Construction Innovation Fund
- Received strong interest in the new Forestry England Development Woodland Officer Apprenticeship Programme
- Launched the £9.8m Tree Production Capital Grant (TPCG), to improve seed and sapling supply
- Scoping a new forestry learning hub

What to look out for:

- Launch of the Big Nature Impact Fund
- Refreshing the Forestry Skills Action Plan for England



Protecting and Improving our Trees and Woodlands

What we have been working on:

- Published an updated Keepers of Time policy document for ancient and native woodland and ancient and veteran trees
- Formally launched the (virtual) Centre for Forest Protection
- Introduced a new Biosecure Procurement Requirement
- Policy development and stakeholder engagement on a national deer management strategy and grey and red squirrel action plans (ongoing)
- Started work on the Woodland Resilience Implementation Plan

What to look out for:

- Development of new GB Plant Biosecurity Strategy
- Working with DLUHC to review how effectively current planning policy protects ancient woodlands



Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England

Government's statement on England's ancient and native woodland and ancient and veteran trees

May 2022



Connecting People with Trees and Woodlands

What we have been working on:

- Increased the flexibility of applications for the Public Access Voluntary Contribution within EWCO
- Continued support for and engagement with community forests and Woodland Creation Partnerships
- Held a further round of the Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) and Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf)
- Supported the Queen's Green Canopy and 'Tree of Trees' sculpture to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee



What to look out for:

- Publication of our ambitions for public access
- Levelling Up Parks Fund to put trees in parks in deprived areas



ETAP Cross Cutting Work

What we have been working on:

- Further development and finalization of the Monitoring & Evaluation framework for the Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) programme and ETAP
- Supported 13 R&D projects (valued at approx. £1.8m) to help meet our evidence needs
- Produced a Research Strategy for the NCF – which will be used to fill data and evidence gaps around trees and woodlands. This has been shared with ALBs to invite full research proposal applications this summer



Actions due to be completed in 2022

- Note: These aren't the only actions we are working on, just the major ones due for completion this year (many ETAP actions span multiple years)
- We will provide more updates on progress in our monthly stakeholder newsletter and at these forums – *please do let us know what areas you are most interested in hearing more detail about!*

ID	ETAP action (abbreviated)
1.12	Publish guidance for local authority Tree and Woodland Strategies
3.4	Develop a National Deer Management Strategy
3.5	Update Grey Squirrel Action Plan; Publish good practice guidance on forestry operations during Red Squirrel breeding season; support UKSA action on Red Squirrels
3.23	Publish a new GB Plant Biosecurity Strategy by early 2022 and drive higher international standards of biosecurity
4.3	Develop and set out our ambitions for enhanced public access to trees and woodlands

Slido Questions:

1. What specific ETAP actions or forestry policy topics/themes would you most like to cover at future forums?

2. Other topics/themes not listed you would like to cover at future forums, and why?

Participants can join at **slido.com** with **#3863698**

Or access using this QR code





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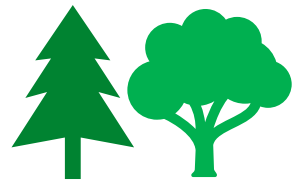
Trees, Woodland and Forestry Research & Development Strategy

Research & Development in Trees, Woodland and Forestry

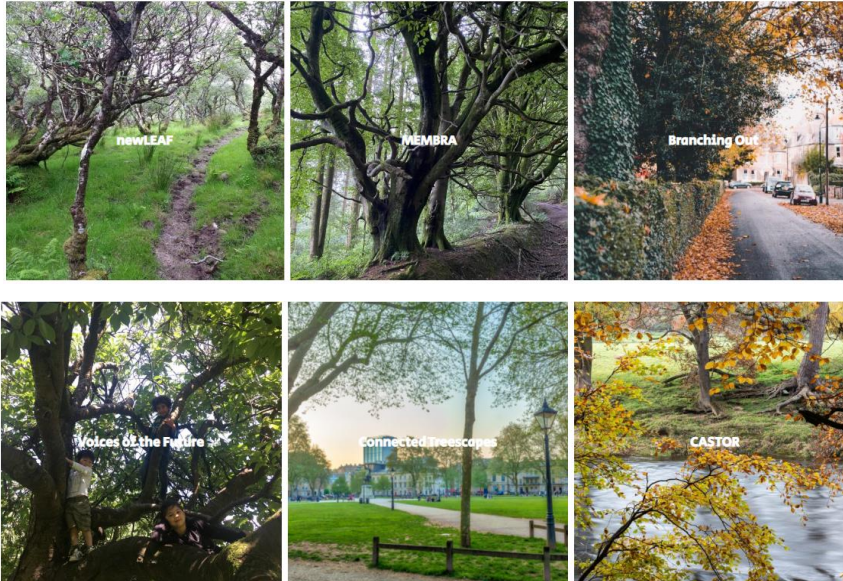
Purpose: Identify the evidence needs for the programme, set direction to our research programme and establish a process for spending our funding.

Our evidence needs:

- ETAP actions with associated R&D
- Objectives of the Nature for Climate fund
- Policy questions



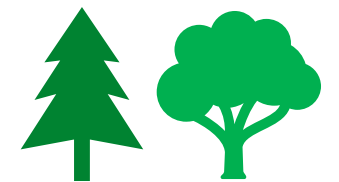
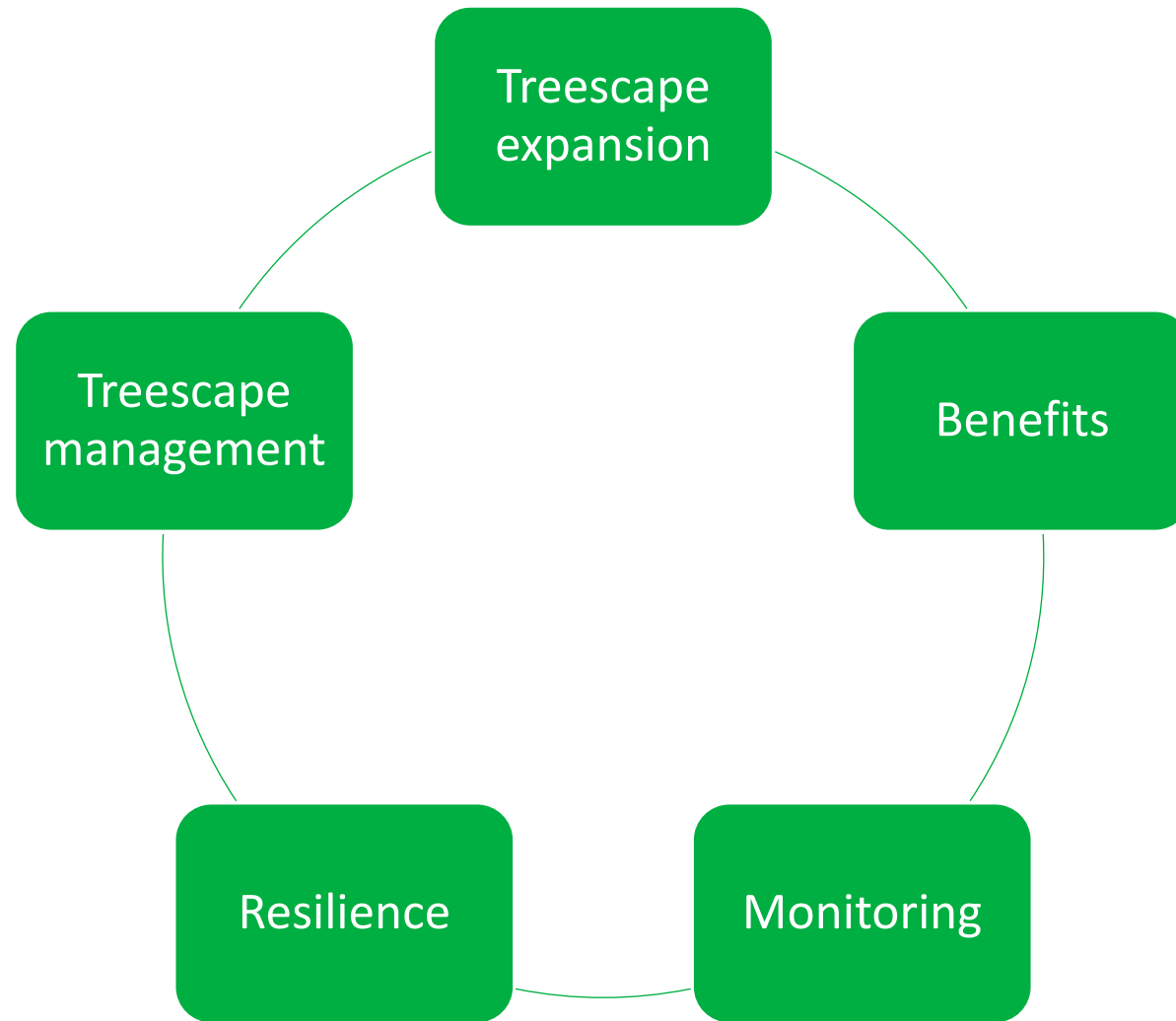
Existing Evidence Programmes



Current Defra R&D projects

Project description	Lead Organisation (on behalf of Defra)	Duration of project (years)
Identifying alternatives to conventional plastic tree shelters.	Forest Research	6
Updating the England ancient woodland inventory.	Natural England	3
Developing an M&E Framework.	External contract	2
Understanding the key socio-cultural barriers and enablers to securing the transition from agricultural land use to woodland, wood pasture or agroforestry systems in situations where this would secure significant environment benefit.	Natural England	2
Farmers Attitudes to Trees: Evidence in Support of Interventions to Expand Woodlands and Treescapes.	Forest Research	2
Tree Planting and Expanding Treescapes: What works? Lessons from the Community Forests.	Forest Research	1
Land manager attitudes to, and acceptability of natural colonisation as a woodland expansion strategy.	Forest Research	2
Carbon projects for trees outside of woodlands and natural colonisation.	Forest Research	1
Understanding the value and function of Trees outside Woodland (ToW) for woodland creation.	Forest Research	4
England Tree Planting Programme (ETPP) experimental plots.	Forest Research	5
Understanding the role of trees in the wider countryside in public goods provision.	Natural England	4
Knowledge Hub for forest and woodland resilience.	Forest Research	6
Peat and trees decision-making framework.	Forest Research	1

Future R&D themes



Example Evidence Questions

Treescape Expansion

- How can we get more trees into the landscape, including trees outside of woodlands, considering the multiple pressures on land use?
- Where to focus our efforts.

Treescape management

- Improving data on the treescape
- Land use pressures including deer, squirrels and other herbivores

Benefits

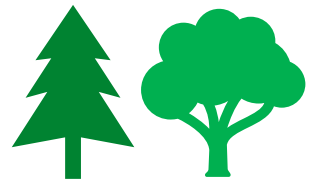
- What risks or trade-offs impact the benefits trees and woodlands bring
- How these benefits are impacted by location, species choice, establishment method etc

Monitoring

- R&D to develop indicators such as Forestry skills workforce data

Resilience

- Climate change resilience of trees, woodland and forestry



Procurement Approach

1. Engage all of Defra ALBs. The ALBs are Forestry Commission, Forest Research, Natural England, Environment Agency, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, APHA and JNCC.
 - a) ALBs are encouraged to collaborate with external providers e.g. through collaboration agreements.
2. Use of Defra's new Research and Evidence Frameworks for our R&D funds.
3. An external bidding and competition for our R&D funds.

Assessment Criteria

Initial sift



- Strategic relevance 30%
- Collaboration, improving knowledge and understanding 30%
- Value for money 20%
- Delivery and implementation 20%

Recommended Reviewers	Indicative Theme	Title	Assessment				
			Reviewer	Strategic Case (30%)	Improving knowledge and understanding (30%)	Value for money (20%)	Delivery and implementation (20%)
Clare Williams	Carbon	CO2 Flux in urban and peri-urban woodland settings with the view to establish carbon benefits		70	20	20	50

Break Outs

Treescape Expansion

Existing Defra research

- Identifying alternatives to conventional plastic tree shelters;
- Understanding the key socio-cultural barriers and enablers to securing the transition from agricultural land use to woodland including farmers attitudes to trees;
- Research into land manager attitudes to, and acceptability of natural colonisation as a woodland expansion strategy; and
- Understanding the value and function of Trees outside Woodland for woodland creation.

Ongoing research areas:

Proposed research questions

- Where to focus our efforts to deliver maximum benefits whilst delivering our challenging target;
- How can we accelerate expanding our tree cover;
- Methods of expanding tree cover including natural colonisation, direct seeding and agroforestry (including shelterbelts, woodland buffers and wood pasture);
- How to support landowners to create new woodlands and plant trees, what their motivations are and any barriers or incentives which impact these;
- How to expand tree cover on different land types including vacant and derelict land and adjacent to watercourses;
- Assess the impact of expanding the treescape on the whole system, for example on wildlife, soil health, water availability, food security or landscape character;
- How to design adaptive, resilient and productive woodlands and what species and/or provenance to plant to maximise the benefits delivered whilst meeting landowner or land manager objectives;
- What impact does tree genetics and provenance have; and
- How can we get more trees into the landscape, including trees outside of woodlands, considering the multiple pressures on land use?

Treescape Management

Existing Defra research

- Updating the England ancient woodland inventory.

Proposed research questions

- Further work is needed to understand the motivations, barriers and incentives to managing woodlands;
- Where woodlands are currently managed and where to target our efforts at getting woods and trees into active management to have the most impact;
- Impact that increasing land use pressure is having on our existing treescape, including ancient woodlands;
- Data on our treescape so we can manage it more effectively including where trees are, the age structure, species and the threats they face; and
- Impact and management of squirrels and deer.

Benefits

Existing Defra research

- Carbon projects for trees outside of woodlands and natural colonisation;
- England Tree Planting Programme experimental plots: contribution of new woodlands and forests to meet climate change and biodiversity targets and develop data for decision making; and
- Understanding the role of trees in the wider countryside in public goods provision.

Proposed research questions

- Understand the full range of economic, environmental and social benefits trees and woodlands provide for people and nature;
- Expand our knowledge of the ecosystem services they provide including protection from flooding, improving water quality, carbon sequestration and improving biodiversity;
- What risks or trade-offs impact the benefits trees and woodlands bring;
- How these benefits are impacted by location, species choice, establishment method etc.
- How natural capital concepts could support payments for the services trees provide and thus drive new green finance routes;
- Economic benefits and dis-benefits of trees and woodland, including markets for small scale forest products;
- How do people value trees and woodlands and how can we use this to achieve the goals of the ETAP and NCF; and
- Can we increase private investment and new finance routes? Including by creating a woodland water code.

Monitoring

The following areas require R&D to develop indicators:-

- Biodiversity;
- Air quality;
- Flooding;
- Public access to woodland;
- Public health and wellbeing benefits from woodland; and
- Forestry skills workforce data.

There are also areas that do have indicators but which could be developed and strengthened so are also of interest:-

- Carbon sequestration; and
- Communications.

Resilience

Existing Defra
research

- Online Knowledge Hub for information on forest and woodland resilience.

Proposed research
questions

- What impact does tree genetics and provenance have.
- Climate change resilience of trees, woodland and forestry.



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AOB and Next Meeting

Thank You for Attending