



## Reducing Insured Risks in UK Forests and Woodlands

### Guidance for Applicants

This guidance is additional to the General Applicant Guidance issued on the Scottish Forestry Trust (the Trust) website and is specifically related to the Reducing Insured Risks in UK Forests and Woodlands Scheme (“the scheme”) The Scheme is Funded by a partnership between QBE Insurance Group and Tilhill Forestry clients and is delivered by The Scottish Forestry Trust.

#### Purpose

1.0 The purpose of the scheme is to support postgraduate studentships relevant to UK forestry and carried out in the UK. The principal aim of the research fund will be to support investigations targeted at reducing the costs of insured risks in restocked and regenerating woodland sites throughout the UK. Studentships must and be registered at and be carried out UK Universities.

1.1 The scheme is available for new studentships and the scheme commences in October 2016. The closure date for the scheme is provisionally October 2021.

1.2 Funds will support a rolling programme of postgraduate (typically Masters) studies which will cover the following subject areas:-

- Prediction and mitigation of the risk of storm damage and fire in woodlands, including losses due to windthrow, stem snap and degrade of timber.
- Improving the quality and/or reducing the cost of restocking operations. This could include investigations around ground preparation techniques; tree breeding programmes, weevil and other pest control, deer control and weeding regimes.

#### Assistance Levels

2.0 There is a presumption that proposals will be co-funded - for example a combination of industrial sponsorship, research council funding, charitable support or personal funds. Leverage including additional funds or in-kind contributions, will be a factor in project selection.

2.1 Subject to approval by the Trust, and to the provisions of section 2 of the Trust's general applicant guidance, assistance levels will not normally exceed 50% of costs and a maximum of £6,000 to any one project.

2.2 It will be unacceptable for students to rely on the scheme as their sole source of funds. Bursaries will only be available to fund new research and not research which is already in progress at the time of application.

2.3 Where possible, we wish to promote open access to the results of projects that we support. We realise there is often a cost attached to securing open access rights and are willing to consider this as an eligible item of expenditure to which our intervention rates would apply.

## **Selection Process and Academic Support**

3.0 Applications are considered three times a year by the Trust's Projects and Research Committee. Dates for submission and decision are available on the Trust's website [www.scottishforestrytrust.org.uk/application-and-reporting-deadlines.asp](http://www.scottishforestrytrust.org.uk/application-and-reporting-deadlines.asp)

3.1 Periodic progress reports and final reports will be required according to an agreed project schedule and specification. These reports must be approved by the SFT prior to the release of any staged payments due.

3.2 The Trust reserves the right to nominate a non-academic supervisor for each studentship if appropriate. Such matters will be considered at approval stage and on a case-by-case basis to ensure that supervision arrangements comply with University's internal policies and procedures.

3.3 The Trust reserves the right to discuss an application with the primary funders Tilhill Forestry Ltd prior to considering it formally.

## **Outputs and Evaluation**

4.0 The funders of the scheme will expect that in addition to the publication of the academic findings of the work, researchers will submit a summary of the work for publication suitable for an informed lay audience. The funders reserve the right to publish such reports.

4.1 Note that research degrees supported may be subject to a collective evaluation by the SFT following the conclusion of the scheme. This will be carried out using the following criteria:-

- a) Number of completions compared to starts
- b) Successful placement in a relevant profession after the studentship
- c) Timeliness of the project's delivery
- d) Actual leverage achieved, financial and in-kind
- e) The number of citations, presentations and publications made during and up to 18 months of completion of the studentship
- f) The extent to which there has been dissemination of the results of the supported students.

## **Intellectual Property**

5.0 The Trust reserves the right, if appropriate, to retain a share in royalties from products derived from inventions and other forms of intellectual property which arise from the studentship and which are in ownership or under the control of the research institution, subject to entering into a royalty-sharing agreement with the institution.

## **Liabilities**

6.0 All research undertaken during the studentships will comply with an appropriate quality assurance and, if relevant, ethical code to be specified in the research proposal.

6.1 Research institutions participating in the Scheme will be required to indemnify the partnership from claims arising from the activities of the student.

## **Appeals**

7.0 The decision of the Trustees is final and no appeals will be considered under any circumstances.