



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

## **Open Call for Proposals for Forestry Promotion Projects for 2025/2026**

Application Form and Evaluation Plan

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF COMPLETED APPLICATIONS:**

**Monday 28 April 2025  
at 5pm**

in PDF format via email to


[ForestrySupportFunding@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:ForestrySupportFunding@agriculture.gov.ie)

**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
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Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



<i>For Office use</i>
<b>Reference No:</b>

## Forestry Promotion Projects 2025/2026 Application Form

<b>Title of Project:</b>	Forest Learning 2025/2026/ <b>Good Sitka</b>
<b>Name of Organisation:</b>	Forest Industries Ireland (FII)
<b>Address</b>	C/O Wood Marketing Federation, Coillte DAC, Newtownmounkennedy, Co. Wicklow
<b>Contact Name</b>	Des O'Toole
<b>Contact Telephone No</b>	01-2011111
<b>Email Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:des.otoole@coillte.ie">des.otoole@coillte.ie</a>
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date: 29/10/2024</b>	24/4/2025

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### Overview of proposed project

Short description of proposal – (50 words or less for use in reporting)	This CPD module will explore the benefits of commercial forestry plantations, focusing on Sitka spruce. It will address misconceptions about monocultures, highlighting their role in sustainable timber production, habitat conservation, and carbon sequestration. Participants will gain a balanced understanding of commercial forestry's contributions to biodiversity and climate change mitigation.
Theme: 1, 2, or 3	This project spans all three themes i.e. 1+2+3
What is the target audience for this project?	This project is aimed at the Irish general public and those interested or considering investment in private planting.. These will be reached via a CPD module on the Forest Industries Ireland (FII) <a href="#">Timberspec</a> portal and by means of a targeted social media campaign,

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<p>Quality and experience of those involved in the promotion activity (to include CVs of all principals involved in the project)</p>	<p>The applicants for this project have previously delivered online CPD training resources (on behalf of DAFM) at <a href="http://www.timberspec.ie">www.timberspec.ie</a> and have working with training providers like [REDACTED]</p> <p>We have experience working with subject matter experts and professional organisations such as Skillsnet, Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, Engineers Ireland, Society of Irish Foresters, Irish Timber Frame Manufacturers (ITFMA) and Forest Industries Ireland (FII).</p> <p>In addition, we are currently redeveloping the <a href="#">Woodspec</a> timber specifiers guide</p> <p>Our project team includes key public and private forest management companies and industry representative bodies. These are: <a href="#">Coillte</a>, <a href="#">Veon Forestry</a> and <a href="#">Forest Industries Ireland (FII)</a></p>
<p>Set out key performance indicators with dates of delivery for this project and the extent to which the proposal meets DAFM requirements for the theme</p>	<p>These indicators are outlined in the project plan as shown in section on page 7 of this tender reply</p>
<p>Outline how the project will deliver value for money for the Department</p>	<p>It is proposed that (where possible) that this project will use existing video and other materials to reduce the cost to develop an effective Good Sitka promotion campaign with the support of DAFM. This campaign will also be hosted on the FII Timberspec portal, which is already active, thus minimising the development costs for this project. It is proposed that this campaign will be extensively marketed on social media. This has proven to be cost effective in the past.</p>

***The incentive Effect Declaration – please confirm:***

The work described herein, would not have been undertaken if it was not for the financial support provided under State Aid rules. Without this aid, there would be no change to current activities.

x
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### Detailed Funding Proposal Table

*Note: If you would prefer to present this information in your own format, or include additional detail of timelines and deliverables, please do so. This information will be compared against receipts received at payment stage so should correspond as closely to the format of the receipts as possible.*

Action proposed	Funding Year  2025 and/or 2026	Frequency once-off/ number/ ongoing/ other	Expected Delivery Date/s	Cost (Excl. VAT)	VAT Rate	% sought from DAFM	Total € funding sought from DAFM inclusive of VAT
Project oversight and evaluation by Coillte DAC	2025-2026	Ongoing	2025-2026	2,000	23%	0	0
Project oversight and evaluation by Forest Industries Ireland (FII)	2025-2026	Ongoing	2025-2026	6,000	23%	0	0
Project oversight and evaluation by Veon Forestry	2025-2026	Ongoing	2025-2026	6,000	23%	0	0
Development of the course content for the Good Sitka CPD course. Supplier TBD	2025	Once off	Sep-25	5,000	23%	100	6,150
Development of CPD module by [REDACTED]	2025	Once off	Sep-25	10,000	23%	100	12,300
Development of a social media marketing campaign by [REDACTED] Learning for Good Sitka	2025	Ongoing	2025-2026	8,000	23%	60	5,904
Project management of Good Sitka project	2025-2026	Ongoing	2025-2026	12,000	23%	50	7,380
Photography by [REDACTED]	2025-2026	Ongoing	2025-2026	5,000	23%	0	0

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New videography for Good Sitka. Supplier TBD	2025-2026	Ongoing	2025-2026	4,150	23%	100	5,105
Travel and subsistence	2025-2026	Ongoing	2025-2026	2,000	23%	0	0
<b>Total Funding Sought from DAFM</b>							<b>36,839</b>

**Declaration by applicant of consent from Data Subjects (where applicable)**

The applicant as “Data Controller” in respect of any personal data provided by it in its proposal, is required to confirm that all personal data (CV’s for example) relating to “Data Subjects”, (where “Data Controller” and “Data Subject” has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws), as provided to them (the Applicant) in the course of preparing the proposal, has the consent of those “Data Subjects” to the processing of such personal data by the Applicant and DAFM for the purposes of participating in this call for proposals or that the applicant otherwise has a legal basis for providing such personal data to DAFM for the purposes of its participation in this call for proposals.

Name of “Data Controller”	Compliant with requirements under GDPR Yes/No or N/A
Des O’Toole	Yes

Please return completed application form by email to: [ForestrySupportFunding@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:ForestrySupportFunding@agriculture.gov.ie) or by post to Promotions Unit, Forestry Division, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co Wexford by **Monday 28 April 2025.**

## Appendix 1 Evaluation Plan to form part of the application

The Evaluation Plan should be prepared before the project starts. The Plan should detail what will be considered 'success' for the project and how it will be measured. The information supplied on this plan will not be used as part of the assessment of the project during the selection process.

### Evaluation Plan

**Title of project:**

Forestry promotion 2025-2026/Good Sitka

**Author of plan:**

Des O'Toole

**Date plan drawn up:**

24/4/2025

**1. Project Objectives: These should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely)**

The project objective is to deliver a proactive online (i.e. CPD) and social media campaign to highlight and explain the positives behind the importance of Sitka spruce to the Irish forestry and forest products sector.

This campaign is aimed at the public and will be written in a positive, non technical script.

In addition, this campaign aims to counter the negative press which Sitka has received in the past (see Appendix B)

We plan to develop and deliver our Good Sitka CPD module by 9/2025. This will be hosted on the Timberspec portal

It is proposed that our progress towards achieving this goal will be provided to DAFM in the format of a monthly email update of our projects performance

Once the CPD module is live on the Timberspec portal, we will commence an ongoing social media campaign to promote Good Sitka

We will regularly monitor the progress of this campaign and will provide this to DAFM on a regular basis

To ensure that our project remains on budget, we will monitor our project spend. We will provide our monthly budget analysis to DAFM

## 2. Project Plan

Identify and describe the key elements of the project and the information to be collected. The Outcomes and Impacts may be more difficult to identify but should be considered and incorporated into the project planning in so far as is possible.

<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Human, financial, organisational, and community resources.	What the project is going to do. What processes, tools, events, technology and actions form part of the program implementation.	Essential data collected on the activities carried out, to enable assessment of whether the programme delivers to the intended audiences and at the required level.	Results expected with target audience. Short to medium term changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, aspirations and behaviour of individuals.	The fundamental intended or unintended change occurring in organisations, communities or systems (outside the programme participants) as a result of programme activities
	Provide guidance for Good Sitka course	Produce a set of e-course guidance on Good Sitka notes for use by the SME		
Subject matter expert (SME)	Use the guidance in the e-course guide to develop a proactive, positive Good Sitka CPD course for the FII Timberspec portal	Good Sitka CPD module	Easy to follow and video driven proactive and positive Good Sitka CPD module	Help to improve the public perception of Sitka spruce
	Provide feedback on the course content for the Good Sitka CPD module	Produce feedback guidance on Good Sitka CPD content		Review and update draft course on Good Sitka
		Produce a range of video driven case studies for the Good Sitka campaign	Easy to follow and video driven proactive and positive Good Sitka CPD module	Help to improve the public perception of Sitka spruce
	Develop a social media campaign for Good Sitka	Ongoing video driven focused social media campaign	Ongoing campaign across all social media platforms to include X, Instagram and LinkedIn	Help to improve the public perception of Sitka spruce

### 3. Project Evaluation

A project evaluation will be required to be submitted with the final funding claims for all successful projects. The Project Evaluation will take the same form as the Project Plan, with an update to be provided under each of the five headings above.

Consideration should be given at Evaluation Planning stage to the following:

- What will the main areas of focus of the impact evaluation be, how will it be evaluated and who will carry it out?
- Methods used to collect data for the evaluation (KPIs, tools e.g. surveys/questionnaires, who from, is specialist input required?)
- What resources will be needed to carry out the evaluation (finance, people, information)?
- How will the results of the evaluation be reported and disseminated and who will be consulted?
- Learnings, follow-up actions and implementation.
- Where appropriate, the Department will require projects to share an online questionnaire with participants.

This will include:

- Progress towards producing course content for Good Sitka
- Tracking and analysing engagement of our social media campaign
  - We plan to use tools like Google Analytics to track visits to the landing page. These will be used to monitor social media engagement and to adjust our social media strategy as required.

## Appendix A: The need for a Good Sitka campaign

In October 2024, the [Timber in Construction Steering Group](#) published a report on the current state of training for forest products and academia in Ireland. This study found that the demand for low-carbon, sustainable building solutions are on the rise. This presents a significant opportunity to enhance the use of timber in construction in Ireland. To capitalise on this potential, the study found that ‘we must invest in up skilling and training our design practitioners, as well as engaging in broader public outreach to promote the numerous benefits of building with wood’.

However, the Irish forestry sector is facing an increasingly driven and focused environmental lobby. They have a simple message. They have an increasing social media profile. They see Sitka spruce as their No 1 enemy. Some recent examples are shown below:

- ‘Ireland needs more wild native forests – not lifeless Sitka plantations’
  - Eoghan Daltun<sup>1</sup>, Irish Times, 7/9/2023
- ‘Ireland’s forestry policy needs a radical rethink — here’s why and how’
  - Eoghan Daltun, Irish Examiner, 9/8/2023
- ‘Climate activists pull up Leitrim Sitka spruce plantation’
  - Irish Independent, 14/8/2023
- ‘DÚLRA: Giving the suffocating spruce the heave-ho in Leitrim’
  - Belfast Media, 9/8/2023
- ‘Ireland has lost almost all of its native forests, here’s how to bring them back’
  - The Conversation, 24/2/2023
- ‘New €1.3 billion forestry strategy labeled a scandal by Irish Wildlife Trust’
  - The Journal, 14/1/2023

By comparison, the Irish forestry sector tends to be reactive in response to various crisis. The sector does not typically engage in pro-active marketing and as a result a lot of misinformation about commercial forestry tends to get media attention. .Misperception about the Irish forestry sector is rife and often goes unchallenged. The expertise of both Coillte and Forest Industries Ireland (FII) can be leveraged for this project..

As an example, most Irish people have a limited understanding of the benefits of the Irish forestry and forest products sector. Few know that:

- The Irish forestry sector made mistakes in the past, which we are working to improve
- Sitka spruce supports 12,000 jobs in Ireland
- Irish forestry is just over 120 years old
- Ireland’s forests cover 12% vs. a European average of 35%
- Over 18 million visits are made to Irish forests per annum generating an income of over €97 million in rural Ireland

This project aims to develop and promote a positive Sitka spruce promotional campaign. It is proposed that this will be included as a video driven CPD Module on the [Timberspec](#) CPD portal. It will form also the background to an ongoing, proactive social media campaign to promote the benefits and positive story regarding the use of Sitka spruce in Ireland. This will include:

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<sup>1</sup> *Eoghan Daltun is an author and advocate for re-wilding*

- Sitka spruce supports 12,000 jobs in Ireland, generating an estimated annual income of €2.3 billion. These jobs are largely in rural Ireland.
- In 2018, exports of sawn timber and wood based panels from Ireland totalled €389 million.
- Irish forests are the key ingredient in helping us to meet our climate change requirements.
- Hill walkers and bikers jam pack Dublin Mountains forests each weekend. It is estimated that 18 million visits are made to Irish forests per annum. This generates an income of over €97 million in rural Ireland.
- [None-so-Hardy](#), a Wicklow based forest nursery sells 25 million trees per annum
- [Smartply](#), a Waterford based forest products company invests €110 million to secure its future
- In 2019, [Cygnum Building Offsite](#) won the [Stirline Prize](#), a major architectural award in the UK for a passive house development on a brownfield public housing site in Norwich, UK
- Did you know that Masonite, a forest products company who are based in Carrick-on-Shannon exports 15 million doors from County Leitrim per annum to its customers worldwide?
- Using more wood in construction can reduce our output of greenhouse gases (GHG) and can help us to build more, much need homes.

To minimise costs, it is proposed that (where it is possible) that we will use existing video footage. This would include the recent feature on Avondale Forest Park which featured Pat Neville, Communications Manager, Coillte and TV presenter Julia Bradbury. This programme was sponsored by Tourism Ireland.

It is proposed that the Good Sitka message will be promoted via social media and through partner networks. Leverage social media platforms: Use LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. We will aim to create engaging visuals, infographics, and short videos to attract attention.

To enable us to deliver a successful Good Sitka campaign on behalf of DAFM we have joined forces with:

- [Coillte DAC](#)
- [Forest Industries Ireland \(FII\)](#)
- [Veon Forestry](#)

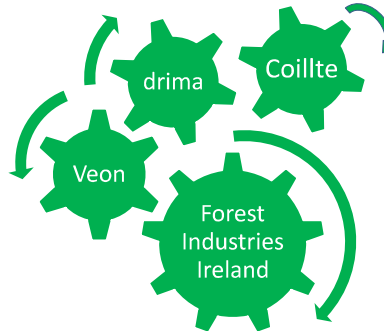
An overview of all the participants in the project is outlined in Appendix B

## **Appendix B: An overview of the Good Sitka team**

We have assembled a strong and capable project team to assist DAFM to promote the benefits of Sitka spruce in Ireland. Our project partners are: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and [Coillte](#), We can assist DAFM to promote the awareness of the economic, environmental, bio-economy and carbon benefits of Sitka spruce to the Irish forestry and Irish forest products sector. We have the capability and proven track record to provide a focused and successful training programme and a focused social media campaign for the Irish forestry and forest products on behalf of DAFM. In 2024, we developed 6 new CPD modules for the Irish forestry and forest products sector. These new CPD modules are now live on the FII [Timberspec](#) portal.

### Our project partners



[Coillte](#) was established in 1989. It operates three high potential businesses: forestry, land solutions and wood based panels (i.e. Medite Smartply). Its mission is to balance and deliver the multiple benefits of our forests to Irish society. Coillte are Ireland’s largest forest owner. In addition, they are Ireland’s largest producer of roundwood, the raw material which it’s sawmill customers process into high quality sawn softwood. Sitka Spruce is its main commercial tree species in Coillte forests.

[Medite Smartply](#) is the market leading manufacturer of environmentally produced, sustainable timber construction panels. Its products are exported to over 30 countries. Its manufacturing sites, based in Clonmel (Medite) and Waterford (Smartply), feature the latest production technology to deliver straighter, flatter and more consistent boards than ever before, in a range of sizes and thicknesses unparalleled within the industry. Constant progression and investment has allowed Medite Smartply to enter new diverse markets and sectors, meaning that there is always a fresh pipeline of new products to address market demands.



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