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Dear forestry stakeholder,

Scotland's Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan 2022-2025

Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 sets out the 50-year vision and 10-year framework for action for our forests and woodlands and forestry sector. The Strategy clearly articulates Scotland's ambition to have more forests and woodlands and for them to deliver more benefits to the people of Scotland, including carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation, enhancing and protecting Scotland's rich biodiversity, growing an inclusive and sustainable rural economy, and helping Scotland's people adapt to the changing climate and improve their health and well-being.

The Strategy also underpins Scottish Ministers' duty to promote sustainable forest management and exercising their forestry functions as set out under the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018.

Actions to deliver the Strategy are set out in shorter-lived Implementation Plans, structured according to the Strategy's six priorities. The current Implementation Plan for 2022-2025 is a shining example of successful collaboration across all aspects of the forestry sector, bringing together 71 partners to work collaboratively on a wider range of new and on-going activity including 29 significant actions.

Partnership working has been key to delivering the 2022-2025 Implementation Plan and between us we have an impressive range of actions underway, with a third of the significant actions already completed. These include expanding Scotland's forests, including our native woodlands, engaging more farmers and crofters to realise the benefits of trees on their land, publishing an updated UK Forestry Standard (delivered on behalf of the four nations), increasing responsible private investment in natural capital through growing the woodland carbon market, establish a trial of electric timber lorries to help inform our path to Net Zero, work with the forestry sector to improve the opportunities for communities to engage with forestry plans and proposals, and launching the Scottish Junior Forester Award to engage the next generation with forestry.

This is a remarkable achievement, especially in the challenging context of recent years – the devastation of Storm Arwen, the increased prevalence of pests and diseases, the shortage of skilled forestry workers and difficult financial conditions set by the UK Government and cost of living increases.

To maintain the focus of our resources on delivery in the face of these challenges, rather than diverting them onto producing a new plan, I have decided to extend the current plan period by one year until 31 March 2026.

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Extending the current Implementation Plan to 2026 creates more time for dialogue with delivery partners and stakeholders over how best to build on successes to date in developing the priorities for action during the remaining period of the Forestry Strategy. To this end, I intend to hold an event with delivery partners and key stakeholders in Spring 2025. This forum will provide the opportunity for dialogue on the opportunities and challenges we still need to address to meet the Strategy's 10-year objectives. The event will also enable us to demonstrate our shared successes in delivering the benefits highlighted in the Strategy and to underline the multi-purpose nature of forestry in Scotland. Further notice of this event will be given nearer the time.

Scottish Government remains committed to working with partners and stakeholders on delivering the priority actions in the Forestry Strategy so that forestry continues to deliver a broad range of benefits for Scotland's economy, environment and communities.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON

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