

Case IESS.24.015

Description: First review of Scottish Government's progress to make forestry EIA documents available for inspection

August 2025

Background

On 5 February 2025, Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) issued a report on the [informal resolution](#) reached with Scottish Forestry on the Scottish Government's compliance with its duty to make forestry Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) documents available for inspection¹. ESS found that there was limited information published on Scottish Forestry's website relating to forestry EIA documentation. This significantly restricted the ability of interested parties to effectively search and request relevant information.

ESS made recommendations for improvement which Scottish Forestry accepted and agreed to implement. The agreed remedial actions included the release of a new public register website, allowing for the direct inspection of forestry EIA documents that are created following the website's launch. Prior to the publication of the new website, interim measures were agreed and implemented to ensure interested parties were able to make informed requests for relevant forestry EIA documents.

ESS committed to monitor and update publicly on Scottish Forestry's performance in implementing the remaining remedial actions. This update sets out the outcome of

¹ Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulations. Copies of forestry EIA documents must be made available for inspection on a website (or by other electronic means) and at an office where they can be inspected at all reasonable hours.

ESS' first review of Scottish Forestry's progress between February and August 2025 and should be read in conjunction with ESS' informal resolution report.

Assessment outcome

ESS can confirm that Scottish Forestry has introduced a new [EIA public register](#) website, where all EIA screening opinions completed after the launch of the website are directly available. The register allows for much greater functionality, enabling users to search information online using case and location details. Information can be further broken down to select project types and sensitivities, for example, locating cases within sites of special scientific interest. Search results are mapped and tabulated, and associated documentation can be viewed alongside further case details.

In ESS' view, Scottish Forestry has made significant progress on how it provides information to the public, who can now search online for current public register information on forestry EIA screening opinions.

The work carried out by Scottish Forestry is in line with the milestones set for the agreed remedial actions. The remaining remedial action from the informal resolution is to incorporate all other forestry EIA documentation types on the newly implemented public register website by the end of 2026. Scottish Forestry has confirmed that it is working towards this. ESS will continue to monitor and publicly report on Scottish Forestry's performance in delivering the remaining remedial action.