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

Forestry Licensing Plan 2022

Quarter 3 Update

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) committed to issue a quarterly update indicating progress to provide ongoing clarity on the licensing plan and to allow monitoring on the delivery of the various key performance indicators (KPIs). This is the update for Q3 (1st July – 30th Sept 2022).

SUMMARY OF QUARTER 3 2022 OUTPUT AND KPIS

1. Licencing output YTD at 3,629 is 92% of the targets set in the Plan.
2. The number of applications received YTD is 2,658.
3. **1,180** new forestry licences issued in Q3. This is 90% of the target set in the plan for Q3 (1,313 licences).
4. The number of applications on hand for processing has dropped from 4,801 at the end of 2021 to **3,133** in Q3 which is a net reduction of 1,668.
5. This inclusive of the **1,580** new applications received in Q3, comprising 117 afforestation, 1,334 felling and 39 roads.
6. In relation to afforestation, the quarterly licensing output for the third quarter of 2022 is **238** licences, which is well ahead of the output for Quarter 2 of 131.
7. There are now 933 approved afforestation contracts with **6,882 ha** ready for planting
8. In relation to felling, overall felling licence output YTD is on target (2,512 licences issued vs. 2,535 target). Private felling significantly exceeded Coillte felling in Q3. **472** vs 294.
9. Output of road licences YTD is at **93%** of the output target.

Figure 1: Total applications to be processed greater than 120 days

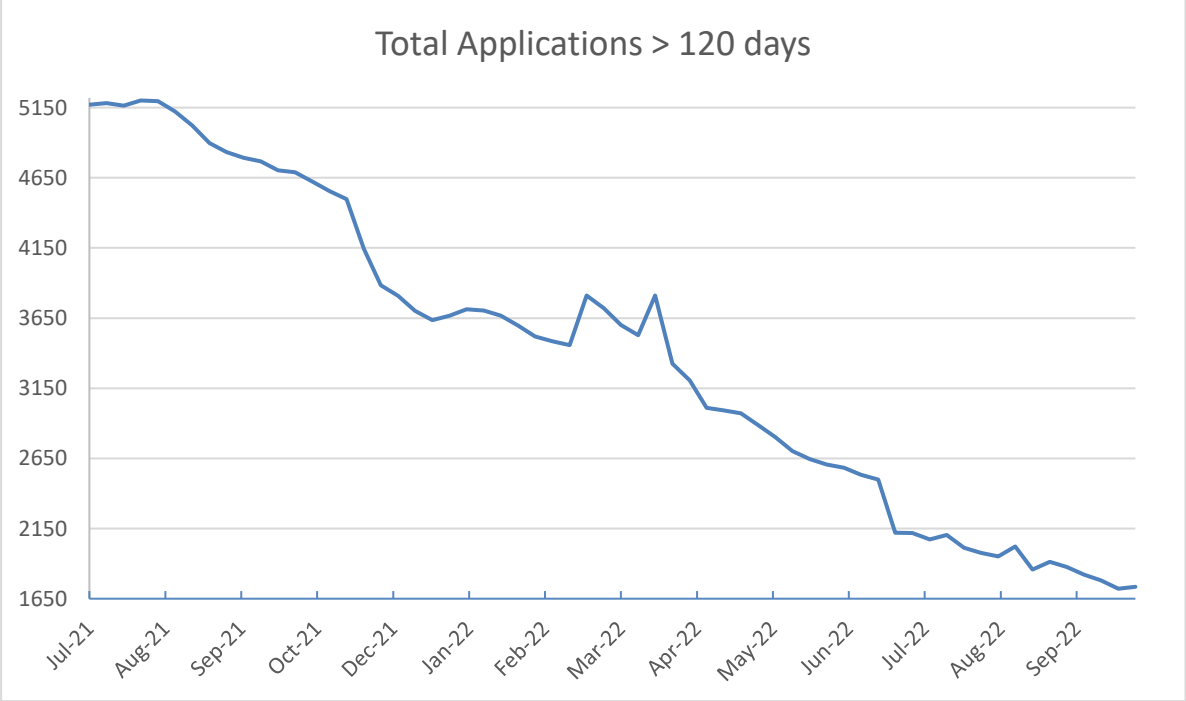


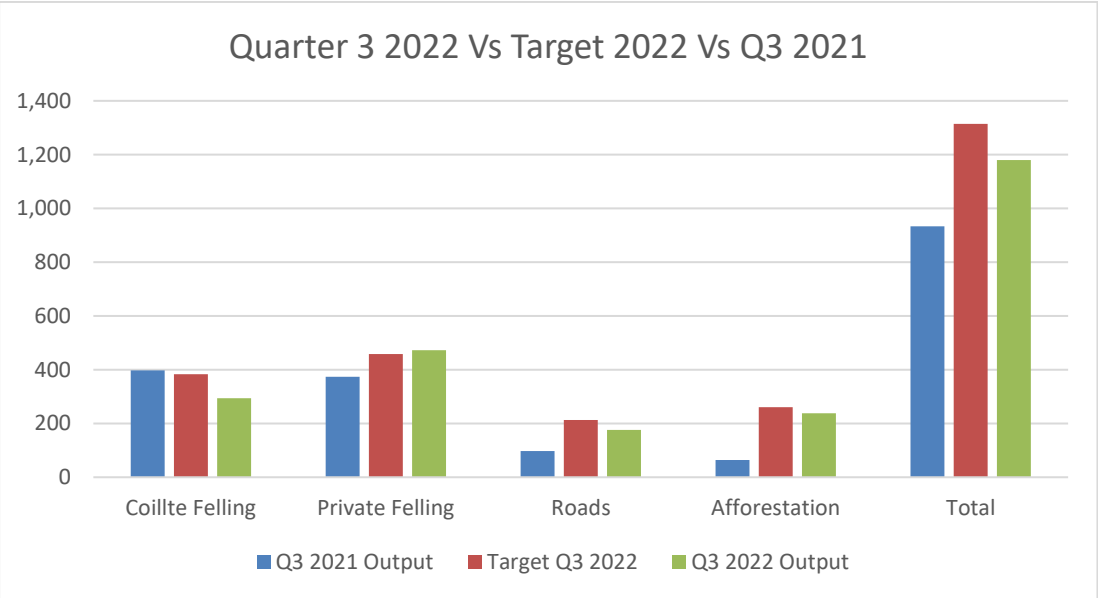
TABLE 1: QUARTER 3 2022 LICENCE OUTPUT

Licence area	Q3 2021 Output	Target Q3 2022	Q3 2022 Output
Coillte felling	398	383	294
Private felling	374	458	472
Roads	97	213	176
Afforestation	64	260	238
Total	**933**	**1,314**	**1,180**

TABLE 2: YEAR TO DATE 2022 LICENCE OUTPUT

Licence area	Q1 – Q3 2021 Output	Q1 – Q3 Target 2022	Q1 – Q3 Total 2022 Output to date
Coillte felling	935	1,148	1,295
Private felling	942	1,373	1,217
Roads	458	638	583
Afforestation	364	780	534
Total	**2,699**	**3,939**	**3,629**

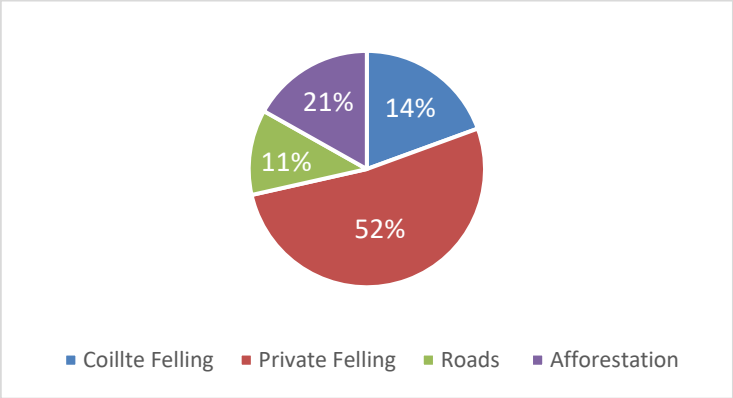
Figure 2: Quarter 3 2022 Licence output



The number of applications with the Department over 120 days - can be seen in **Figure 1** above has decreased to **1,734** applications by the end of September from **3,713** at the start of the year. In line with other planning authorities to ensure efficient use of resources, the Department has brought in a policy on time-bound further information requests (FIRs). Files with outstanding FIRs over a set time are removed from the licensing worklist. In relation to this policy reminders continue be sent to applicants to make them aware of the situation with their file.

TABLE 3: BREAKDOWN OF TOTAL LICENCES WITH THE DEPARTMENT ON 1ST OCTOBER 2022

Type of Licence	Number
Felling Coillte	822
Felling Private	1,094
Roads	335
Afforestation	483
Total	**3,133**



At the end of Quarter 3 2022, the Department had **3,133** licence applications on hand. This is inclusive of new applications in the same period. Since 1st January, this figure has reduced from 4,803 and from 6,100 in August 2021. This represents significant progress and indicates that output is exceeding input.

Delivery of Licensing Priorities in Quarter 3 2022

Licensing priority 1: Increase output of licences

Target	Output Q3 2022
Continue to reduce the figure of licences on hand by issuing significantly more licences on average each week than received	**1,180** licences were issued and there were 1,580 new applications received in Q3, comprising 117 afforestation, 1,334 felling and 39 roads. Felling applications includes a large batch of 974 Coillte Felling licences received in July. The number of licences on hand continues to fall.
Issue on average more than 100 licences per week for 2022	**90** licences issued on average every week in Quarter 3, compared to 78 per week in Q3 2021.
Remove all felling licences predating 2021 by end of the second quarter	Processing of pre 2021 files is dependent on further Information requests (FIRs)returned form applicants. DAFM has **189** private felling files pre 2021 that are at different stages of processing. In addition, there are 72 outstanding FIRs.

Reduce the average Turnaround Times (TATs) for licencing applications. The TAT is calculated as the number of days it takes from the date the application is first advertised to date of decision issued.	For licences issued in 2022 TAT: 17.7 *months for afforestation, 15.5 months for felling and 9.8 months for roads.* *Almost half of all files are issued within 12 months.* Note: Many older files are currently screened in and referred to Ecology. With increased ecology resources working on these older files, proportionately more files will be processed from this cohort than screen out files that have a short TAT. Therefore, the TAT will increase in the medium term before it reduces.

Licensing Priority 2: Greater focus on Afforestation

Target	Output Q3 2022
Ensure a different balance of licences to afford **higher priority to afforestation**.	There were 18 afforestation files issued per week in Quarter 3 2022 compared to 10/week Q3 2021.
Maintain the ongoing approach to screening of files, appropriate reallocation and the recruitment of administrative, forestry inspector and ecology resources to focus on afforestation, while also applying the systems used elsewhere to streamline the process.	The additional resources secured for Ecology; engineer; inspector and admin grades continue to deliver on output.

Licensing Priority 3: Improving quality of forestry applications

Target	Output Q3 2022
Deliver ecology-led training for professional foresters to facilitate the submission of habitat maps to accompany applications in agreed circumstances	DAFM delivered two targeted training events for registered foresters on habitat maps to help improve the quality of forestry applications. (Carried out in Q2)

Deliver a wider communication strategy beyond foresters, ecologists and applicants to increase awareness of, and confidence in, the processes and systems used by the Department.	Communications plan agreed in Project Woodland.
Implement a pilot pre-application discussion (PAD) and an updated grant for applicants.	PAD pilot successfully demonstrated the concept, and an implementation plan is being prepared by DAFM.

Licensing Priority 4: Delivery on other scheme approvals

Target	Output Q3 2022
Reconstitution and Underplanting Scheme (Ash Dieback) (RUS)	Ongoing, **156** approvals have issued for this Scheme in 2022 for a total of **540** ha. There are currently 520 applications on hand for a total of 2,093ha. The number approved in Q3 was 68 for 241ha.
Reconstitution of Woodland Scheme (Frost)	**390** applications received, processing underway with approvals expected to commence in Quarter 4.
The Native Woodland Conservation Scheme	An additional 6 NWS Conservation applications totalling 47ha approved in Quarter 3. The Scheme added to dashboard and additional Ecology Resource allocated.
Small-Scale tree planting	A scheme to give effect to the Fur Farming and Forestry Provisions Act is currently under preparation for Public consultation.

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