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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**MCENTEE ANNOUNCES IMMEDIATE OPENING OF  
FOREST ROADS (GRANT) SCHEME**

The Minister of State with responsibility for forestry at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Shane McEntee TD, today announced the immediate opening of a new Forest Roads (Grant) Scheme.

The previous Scheme was closed in mid-December 2011 and a consultative process was immediately commenced with industry stakeholders on proposals put forward by the Department for a new Scheme. These consultations are now complete and a new Scheme with revised provisions is being introduced. Minister McEntee explained *“Our priority is to achieve the best value from the funding available. The new Scheme incorporates a number of changes to help us achieve this objective and to ensure the continuation of what is one of our most important support measures under the Forestry Programme. I would like to thank the industry representatives for their very useful inputs to the consultative process and assure them of the Government’s continued commitment to forestry”*.

Minister McEntee added: *“There were over 200 applicants at the time of closure of the old Roads Scheme whose applications had yet to be determined or approved. The Department will shortly be writing to these applicants offering them the opportunity to switch to the new Scheme subject to their acceptance of the new terms and conditions”*.

**Note for Editors:**

The primary aim of the Scheme is to provide funding for the construction of management and harvesting roads and other infrastructural works to facilitate timber harvesting.

The main provisions of the new Scheme are outlined below:

- Maximum rate per linear metre to reduce from €45 to €35.
- Payments will be made net of VAT, regardless of applicants VAT status.
- Road density to be reduced from 25 linear metres per hectare to 20 linear metres per hectare.
- The construction of a “Standard back in type loading bay” or a “Standard loading bay with internal turning area” may be grant aided where the area allows. Pull in lay bays (longitudinal loading bays) along public roads may be considered on a case by case basis at an equivalent roading of 60m where the area allows. Apart from a loading bay, only the minimum amount of roadway required will be grant aided to ensure forwarding distances do not exceed a maximum of 500 metres.
- The forest road grant scheme will be limited to farmers and private forest owners and companies. Public authorities and state owned companies will not be eligible to receive grant aid for forest road development.

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