

4

Fourth Edition
(version 4.0)

UKWAS

UK WOODLAND ASSURANCE STANDARD



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The formal basis for Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) forest management certification in the UK is the national forest stewardship standard FSC-STD-GBR-03-2017, available from the FSC UK website. Certificate holders are free to use this user-friendly UKWAS version in their day-to-day work and in discussions with auditors.



This standard has been endorsed by PEFC International for forest management certification in the UK and should be read in conjunction with the PEFC UK Scheme Document, which can be found on the PEFC UK website.

Contents

Introduction

1	Background and purpose	1
2	Procedures for use of the certification standard	1
3	Interpretation of the certification standard	4

Certification standard

Using the certification standard	6
Key to icons and formatting	6

2.8	Tree species selection	25
2.9	Non-native species	26
2.10	Silvicultural systems	26
2.11	Conservation	27
2.12	Protection	28
2.13	Conversion	29
2.14	Implementation, amendment and revision of the plan	31
2.15	Monitoring	32

1

Legal compliance and UKWAS conformance

1.1	Compliance and conformance	8
1.2	Protection from illegal activities	11
1.3	Genetically modified organisms	11

2

Management planning

2.1	Long-term policy and objectives	14
2.2	Documentation	15
2.3	Consultation and co-operation	18
2.4	Productive potential of the woodland management unit (WMU)	19
2.5	Assessment of environmental impacts	21
2.6	Woodland creation	23
2.7	Woodland restructuring	24

3

Woodland operations

3.1	General	36
3.2	Harvest operations	38
3.3	Forest roads and associated infrastructure	39
3.4	Pesticides, biological control agents and fertilisers	40
3.5	Fencing	45
3.6	Waste	45
3.7	Pollution	46

4

Natural, historical and cultural environment

4.1	Statutory designated sites and protected species	48
4.2	Conservation of ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW)	49

4.3	Management of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)	50
4.4	Protection of conservation values in other woodlands and semi-natural habitats	51
4.5	Watershed management and erosion control	53
4.6	Maintenance of biodiversity and ecological functions	54
4.7	Maintenance of local native seed sources	57
4.8	Cultural and historical features/sites	58
4.9	Game and fisheries management	58

5

People, communities and workers

5.1	Woodland access and recreation including traditional and permissive use rights	60
5.2	Minimising adverse impacts	62
5.3	Rural economy	63
5.4	Health and safety	64
5.5	Training and continuing development	65
5.6	Workers' rights	66
5.7	Insurance	66

Glossary

Glossary of terms	68
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References

Main legislation, regulations, guidelines and codes of practice referred to in the UKWAS	74
Other main reference documents	74
Further information sources	74

UKWAS 4 formats and amendments

Website: the online version provides the user with easy navigation and includes search functionality and glossary term highlighting.

Document: the PDF formatted version is designed for use as a portable paper document that can be downloaded and printed by the user.

MS Word: users requiring a plain text document in MS Word format for their use in preparing bespoke certification documentation can request a copy from the UKWAS Support Unit.

Amendments: any further corrections or revisions necessarily made to the certification standard prior to its next full revision will be incorporated into the electronic versions available on the UKWAS website.

A list of all the changes made since publication of this edition will be maintained on the UKWAS website and users are recommended to check this on a regular basis.

ukwas.org.uk

Introduction

1 Background and purpose

Primarily, the certification standard is designed to reflect the requirements set out in the governmental UK Forestry Standard and thereby the General Guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki in 1993, the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines (PEOLG) subsequently adopted at Lisbon in 1998 and other relevant international agreements.

In response to the demand from the UK forestry and forest products sector, the certification standard is also designed to reflect the requirements of the two leading global forest certification schemes – the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). Products certified through these schemes are in much demand in the UK and global timber market as they provide a widely recognised way to inform customers that timber products come from responsibly managed sources.

The UK arms of FSC and PEFC take responsibility for submitting the UKWAS standard to their international parent bodies for assessment and provided the UKWAS standard is judged to be conformant with each scheme's requirements it will provide a certification standard for certification through each of these schemes. A list of certification schemes that currently use the UK Woodland Assurance Standard as the basis for certification in the UK can be found on ukwas.org.uk.

2 Procedures for use of the certification standard

The woodland management unit

The unit of certification is a woodland management unit (WMU). A WMU is a clearly defined woodland area, or areas, with mapped boundaries, managed to a set of explicit long-term objectives. The WMU is covered by the management planning documentation set out in section 2.2 of the certification standard. Elements of management planning documentation may apply to a specific WMU, or may be set at a higher level (such as group schemes, or state forest services) and apply to multiple WMUs.

For example, a WMU might be a single ownership incorporating several areas of woodland that are managed within a woodland management plan; several separate ownerships managed within a woodland management plan; a community-managed forest; a management subdivision of a national forest service such as a forest district covered by a woodland management plan.

In large and/or widely geographically dispersed WMUs, the spirit of the certification standard and any best practice should be conformed to throughout the WMU.

Note: The terms 'woodland management unit' and 'forest management unit' are synonymous.

Flexibility in meeting requirements

Not all requirements will be applicable to every WMU, for example requirements relating to plantations on ancient woodland sites can only apply if such sites are present.

While all applicable requirements must be met, there may be flexibility in exactly how requirements are fulfilled. Any different approach taken must be an equally or more effective way of achieving the objectives intended by the requirement. The impacts of the approach taken shall be carefully monitored and recorded.

The certification body carrying out the audit shall make a professional judgement as to the acceptability of the flexibility (see Interpretation of the certification standard).

See also 'Using the certification standard' regarding flexibility in verifiers (see definition of example verifiers in that section).

Research

The establishment of research trials or plots may be undertaken only in the context of a research policy and should conform to the spirit of the certification standard.

Third-party rights – leases, burdens in title, ownership rights and legal restrictions on management

In certain situations, pre-existing leases, burdens in title and third-party ownership rights may restrict management actions in such a way that the owner/manager may not be able to fully meet all the requirements of the certification standard. For example:

- Forestry-only or long-term sporting leases where sporting or access rights may be restricted
- Timber leases under which the restocking obligation reverts to the landowner
- Wayleaves, and servitude rights
- Mineral extraction rights held by third parties
- Traditional rights (e.g. peat cutting).

In these circumstances conformance to the certification standard may still be achieved provided the owner/manager is able to demonstrate that:

- The holder of the third-party rights has been made aware of those requirements of the standard which are relevant to the rights they hold and how they can assist with conformance. It is not however necessary for the third-party to agree to conform to the requirements of the standard
- All reasonable measures have been taken to mitigate negative impacts caused by the holders of third-party rights
- The third-party rights have not been created intentionally to avoid conformance.

Certification schemes may have their own requirements which apply when the owner/manager does not have full management control of a woodland management unit.

Timing for full implementation of the requirements relating to woodland structure and layout

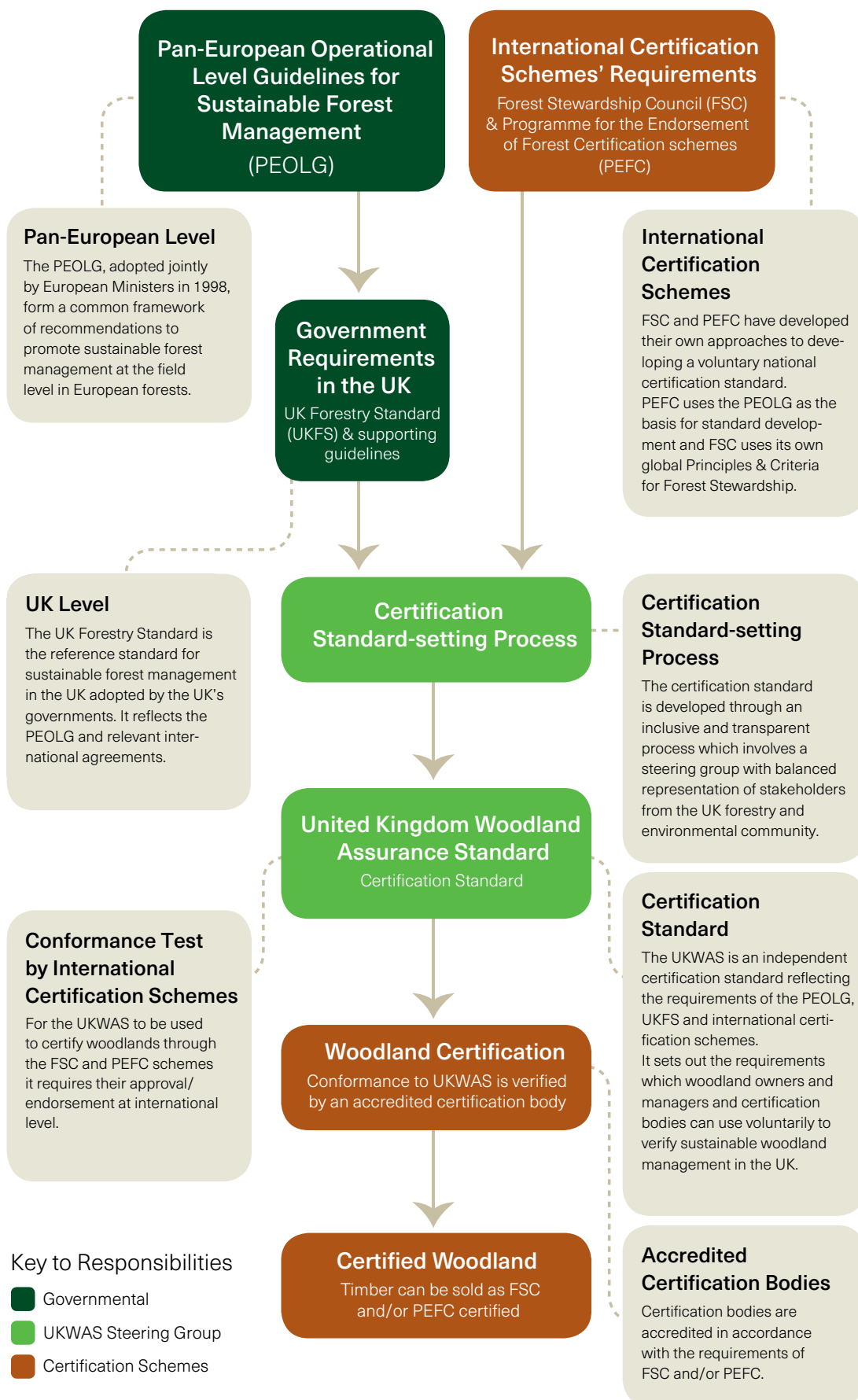
A special feature of woodland management is its long-term nature. Decisions made in the past have a strong influence on the woodlands of today.

Therefore, when assessing conformance with the certification standard, certification bodies will not evaluate woodlands solely on the present structure and layout, but will consider the plans for management in the short, medium and long-term.

Where present structure and layout fail to meet the requirements, woodland owners/managers will need to demonstrate through management planning documentation and ongoing activities in the woodland that they are taking active measures to achieve conformance with the requirements. They will also need to demonstrate that there is a time frame for achieving full conformance based on sound management principles. Further guidance on how non-conformities are dealt with can be obtained from certification bodies or group scheme managers.

Application of the certification standard to different scales of woodland management unit and intensities of operation

Woodland management units vary in terms of the scale and intensity of management and the risk of negative impacts. While the principles remain the same regardless of woodland size and intensity of management, the level and complexity of management needed to meet the requirements of the certification standard, and the nature of the evidence to demonstrate conformance, may vary depending on the size and type of the woodland management unit. Certification schemes have different sampling intensities depending on the scale and intensity of management and operations. In drafting this standard, every effort has been made to ensure that requirements are sufficiently flexible to apply to all scales and intensities of management.



In the UK context, scale has not been found to be closely correlated with intensity or risk of woodland management; for example, many large operations may be in woodlands with relatively low environmental or social values, while the potential impacts of operations in those small woodlands which have higher environmental and social values may be commensurately high. As such, it has not proved possible to define a threshold or specify different requirements for lower potential impact operations, although this will be subject to review in future revisions of the standard. However, it is considered appropriate to specify different requirements for higher potential impact operations, and some of the requirements of this standard apply only where the entity holding or applying for certification, and therefore responsible for demonstrating conformance, is a large enterprise, as defined in the glossary.

Use of the certification standard by certification bodies

Individual certification schemes may have specific requirements regarding the official version of this standard to be used by auditors. Certification bodies should check with the relevant scheme.

3 Interpretation of the certification standard

The UKWAS Interpretation Panel provides the UKWAS Steering Group and users of the certification standard with advice on its interpretation. Further information is available on the UKWAS website including interpretation advice notes relevant to the current edition of the standard and how to submit a request for interpretation to the Interpretation Panel.



Certification standard
Fourth edition (version 4.0)

Using the certification standard

In using the certification standard, owners/managers and certification bodies shall also take full account of the introduction, glossary and appendix of references.

The certification standard is set out as follows:

Requirements

These are the compulsory elements of the certification standard and are stated as 'shall'. Woodland management must meet all relevant requirements and certification bodies will check that each requirement is being met.

Example verifiers

These are examples of objective evidence – documents, actions or discussions – that owners/managers may present to the certification body for their consideration in order to demonstrate that the requirement is being met. Certification bodies are required to undertake audits and owners/managers should be able to present sufficient evidence to allow the auditor to report conformance. It will not always be necessary to use any or all of the verifiers suggested, and conformance to requirements may be demonstrated in other ways. The selected verifiers should be appropriate to the scale and intensity of management of the WMU and the risk of negative impacts.

The three most common example verifiers are:

- Discussion with the owner/manager.
The owner/manager may explain in conversation with the auditor their understanding of the standard, their knowledge of the WMU or the rationale for management decisions, or they may describe actions they have taken to conform to the standard.
- Field observation.
The auditor may look for tangible evidence in the WMU of conformance to the standard.
- Management planning documentation.
The owner/manager may demonstrate through written documents, records or maps their knowledge of the WMU, the rationale for management decisions, or the actions they have taken to conform to the standard. Note that if specific management planning documentation is expected to be produced it will be described in the requirements of the standard. Documentation may include that produced by third parties, for example a felling licence.

Guidance notes

These aim to help both the woodland owner/manager and the certification body to understand how requirements should be applied in practice. More information is provided to elaborate some requirements, the meaning of certain terms or phrases is explained, and examples of appropriate action are given. Where guidance is stated as 'should' it indicates a recommendation. Where it is stated as 'may' it indicates an option or a list of options.

Note: The guidance note can include 'Advice to owners/managers' on related matters which are beyond the direct scope of a forest management certification standard e.g. owners/managers are advised to check the specific requirements of certification schemes in relation to chain-of-custody certification matters. Such information is clearly marked and is provided as an advisory note only: it shall not be considered by certification bodies when assessing conformance with the certification standard.

Key to icons and formatting



References

Check the appendix for references providing further guidance.

Term

Glossary terms

Highlighted terms are explained in the glossary of terms. Generally, a glossary term is only highlighted on its first occurrence in a particular section or sub-division of the text. The following glossary terms which are used frequently throughout the text are not generally highlighted:

- Management planning documentation
- Owner/manager
- Woodland management unit (WMU).

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used frequently in the text:

ASNW	Ancient semi-natural woodland
FISA	Forest Industry Safety Accord
LISS	Lower-impact silvicultural systems
NTWP	Non-timber woodland products
PAWS	Plantation on ancient woodland site
UKFS	UK Forestry Standard
WMU	Woodland management unit

1

Legal compliance and UKWAS conformance

1.1 Compliance and conformance

1.1.1 REQUIREMENT

There shall be compliance with the law.
There shall be no substantiated outstanding claims of non-compliance related to woodland management.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › No evidence of non-compliance from audit
- › Evidence of correction of any previous non-compliance
- › A system to be aware of and implement requirements of new legislation.

GUIDANCE

The certification standard does not go into detail in all areas covered by UK legislation. The appendix of references provides a non-exhaustive list of relevant legislation.

Certification bodies will be checking that there is no evidence of non-compliance with relevant legal requirements including that:

- Management and workers understand and comply with all legal requirements relevant to their roles and responsibilities
- All documentation including procedures, work instructions, contracts and agreements meet legal requirements and are respected
- No issues of legal non-compliance are raised by regulatory authorities or other interested parties.

In the event of a perceived conflict between the requirements of the certification standard and legal requirements, owners/managers should seek guidance from the UKWAS Interpretation Panel.



1.1.2 REQUIREMENT

There shall be conformance to the spirit of any relevant codes of practice or good practice guidelines.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › No evidence of non-conformance from audit
- › Evidence of correction of any previous non-conformance
- › A system to be aware of and conform to new codes of practice and good practice guidelines.

GUIDANCE

The appendix of references provides further information on good practice guidelines and codes of practice.

Conformance to the spirit means that the owner/manager is aiming to achieve the principles set out in relevant codes of practice or good practice guidelines and that:

- Management and workers understand and conform to the spirit of codes and guidelines relevant to their roles and responsibilities
- All documentation including procedures, work instructions and contracts conform to the spirit of relevant codes and guidelines.

In the event of a perceived conflict between the requirements of the certification standard and relevant codes and guidelines, owners/managers should seek guidance from the UKWAS Interpretation Panel.

1.1.3 REQUIREMENT

- a) The legal identity of the owner/manager shall be documented.
- b) The boundaries of the owner's/manager's legal ownership or tenure shall be documented.
- c) The scope of the owner's/manager's legal rights to manage the WMU and to harvest products and/or supply services from within the WMU shall be documented.
- d) Legal authority to carry out specific operations, where required by the relevant authorities, shall be documented.
- e) Payment shall be made in a timely manner of all applicable legally prescribed charges connected with forest management.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Long-term unchallenged use
- › Integrated Agriculture Control System (IACS) registration
- › A signed declaration detailing nature and location of tenure documentation
- › Solicitor's letter
- › Title deeds
- › Land registry records
- › Companies House records
- › Licences
- › Written permissions from competent authorities
- › Records of payments.

GUIDANCE

Long-term unchallenged use might be demonstrated by the existence of previous grant scheme documentation or long-term certification to this standard.

Examples of circumstances which may affect the scope of the owner's/manager's legal rights to manage the WMU and to harvest products and/or supply services from within it include:

- The sporting or mineral rights are held by third parties
- The owner/manager is bound by a restrictive covenant
- The WMU is managed under a forestry-only lease.

See the section on third-party rights in the introduction.

Depending on the nature of woodland operations, the competent authorities providing legal authorisation may include the relevant forestry authorities, statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies, statutory environment protection agencies, statutory historic environment agencies, or local authorities.

Legally prescribed charges connected with forest management may include fees for licences or permissions, or grant repayments where grant conditions have not been fulfilled.

1.1.4 REQUIREMENT

- a) Mechanisms shall be employed to identify, prevent and resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights through appropriate consultation with interested parties.
- b) Where possible, the owner/manager shall seek to resolve disputes out of court and in a timely manner.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Use of dispute resolution mechanism.

GUIDANCE

Unresolved disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an entity from being certified.

Examples of relevant tenure claims and use rights may include:

- Water supplies
- Joint access routes
- Shooting rights.

1.1.5 REQUIREMENT

- a) The owner/manager shall:
- Commit to conformance to this certification standard, and
 - Have declared an intention to protect and maintain the woodland management unit and its ecological integrity in the long-term.
- b) A statement of these commitments shall be made publicly available upon request.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Signed declaration of commitment
- › Dissemination of the requirements of this certification standard to workers, licensees and leaseholders
- › Public statement of policy.

GUIDANCE

Workers, licensees and leaseholders should be informed of the aim of the certification standard and, to the degree that is relevant, of the practical implications for them in carrying out their activities. This might be done through, for example, meetings or briefings and the provision of appropriate written material.

If a substantial failure has led to withdrawal of a woodland certification to this standard in the past, then substantial changes in ownership, policy commitment and management regime should have been implemented or a two-year track record of conformance established.

Advice to owners/managers

Owners/managers may be subject to additional requirements from their certification scheme relating to any adjustment of the area in the woodland management unit. Owners/managers are advised to seek guidance from their certification body or group scheme manager.

1.1.6 REQUIREMENT

- a) There shall be conformance to guidance on anti-corruption legislation.
- b) Large enterprises shall have and implement a publicly available anti-corruption policy which meets or exceeds the requirements of legislation.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Written procedures
- › Public statement of policy.

GUIDANCE

Guidance on procedures to prevent bribery is available from the Ministry of Justice.



1.1.7 REQUIREMENT

There shall be compliance with legislation relating to the transportation and trade of forest products, including, where relevant, the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) and phytosanitary requirements.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Relevant procedures and records.

GUIDANCE

The owner/manager should comply with any relevant phytosanitary movement licences and other statutory plant health requirements.

In rare cases the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) may apply. The import, export and use for commercial gain of certain species requires a CITES permit. CITES species present in the UK include Snowdrops (*Galanthus spp.*) and Monkey-puzzle (*Araucaria araucana*).

1.2 Protection from illegal activities

1.2.1 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager shall take all reasonable measures, including engagement with the police and statutory bodies, to prevent or stop illegal or unauthorised uses of the woodland that could jeopardise fulfilment of the objectives of management.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › The owner/manager is aware of potential and actual problems
- › Evidence of response to actual current problems
- › Evidence of a pro-active approach to potential and actual problems including follow-up action
- › Engagement with statutory bodies.

GUIDANCE

The phrase 'reasonable measures' means measures that are both within the law, within the terms of any forestry tenancy and within the jurisdiction of the owner/manager and that the measures are economically viable and environmentally and socially acceptable.

The scope of illegal activities which the owner/manager may encounter is so diverse that it is not possible to prescribe actions in every case. In specific cases a legal opinion may be required in order to prescribe 'reasonable measures'.

1.3 Genetically modified organisms

1.3.1 REQUIREMENT

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) shall not be used.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Plant supply records
- › Discussion with the owner/manager.

GUIDANCE

GMOs are created through gene transfer under laboratory conditions and are not the product of tree breeding, vegetative propagation, cloning or tissue culture programmes.

2

Management planning

2.1 Long-term policy and objectives

2.1.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) The owner/manager shall have a long-term policy and management objectives which are environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically viable.
- b) The policy and objectives, or summaries thereof, shall be proactively communicated to workers consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager and workers
- › Management planning documentation
- › Toolbox talks.

GUIDANCE

The long-term policy should articulate the overall vision for woodland management. Management objectives should set out tangible, shorter-term steps towards achieving that vision.

The owner/manager should be aware that long-term forest resilience will underpin environmental, social and economic objectives.

Economic viability need not be based on, or solely on, the sale of products from woodland. Income from other sources, such as membership subscriptions, government funding or private investment, may be sufficient to achieve the policy and objectives of management.

The level of detail required in the policy and objectives should be proportionate to the scale and intensity of management. While a formal, written policy and detailed objectives may be appropriate for a large organisation, it may be appropriate for the owner of a small woodland managed at a low-intensity to be able to communicate their vision and some simple objectives verbally.

Workers should be aware of the policy and objectives to the extent necessary for them to contribute to achieving the aims of management; they should understand how their actions might have positive or negative effects on meeting those aims.

Means of communicating the policy and objectives to workers should always be proportionate to the extent of their influence on the outcomes of management, and might range from detailed notes or staff meetings to a simple verbal briefing. Where contractors are used, the emphasis should be on ensuring that those responsible for supervising them are appropriately briefed and can instruct them accordingly.

2.1.2 REQUIREMENT

Woodland management planning shall take fully into account the long-term positive and negative economic, environmental and social impacts of proposed operations, including potential impacts outside the WMU.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Management planning documentation.

GUIDANCE

Management planning should be proportionate to the scale and intensity of woodland management, and to the potential economic, environmental and social impacts of management activities.

2.1.3 REQUIREMENT

- a) Woodland management planning shall demonstrate a commitment to long-term economic viability.
- b) The owner/manager shall aim to secure the necessary investment to implement the management plan in order to meet this standard and to ensure long-term economic viability.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Management planning documentation
- › Financial records relating to the woodland resource
- › Budget forecasting, expenditure and potential sources of funding.

GUIDANCE

Management planning should be proportionate to the scale and intensity of woodland management.

Management planning should show how the stated policy and objectives of management can be achieved and sustained economically in the long-term, for example from future timber production or other sources of income. Detailed projections are not required but there should be evidence that the longer-term resourcing of essential forest operations has been considered. For example, management planning documentation may show how silvicultural systems, species choice and tree densities and other woodland management are designed to achieve long-term economic viability.

2.2 Documentation

2.2.1 REQUIREMENT

All areas in the WMU shall be covered by management planning documentation which shall be retained for at least ten years and shall incorporate:

- a) A long-term policy for the woodland.
- b) Assessment of relevant components of the woodland resource, including potential products and services which are consistent with the management objectives.
- c) Assessment of environmental values, including those outside the WMU potentially affected by management, sufficient to determine appropriate conservation measures and to provide a baseline for detecting possible negative impacts.

GUIDANCE

The subsequent sections of this standard provide additional guidance and information on how to meet this requirement.

There should be a link between features and sensitivities identified in (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) and the setting of management objectives. Equally, monitoring should be linked to potential positive and negative impacts of management on these features and sensitivities and to the delivery of management objectives.

The documentation and level of detail associated with the planning process should be appropriate to scale, intensity and risk.

The documentation might include:

- For low-intensity managed woodlands: a brief statement of intent and an annotated map
- For other woodlands: a plan covering a 20-year period and incorporating an assessment at the landscape level
- For a WMU consisting of multiple areas: an overarching plan.

continues on next page

2.2.1 REQUIREMENT (Continued)

- d) Identification of special characteristics and sensitivities of the woodland and appropriate treatments.
- e) Specific measures to maintain and where possible enhance those areas identified under sections 4.1–4.5 and 4.8, considering areas where either the extent of these areas or their sensitivity to operations may be unknown.
- f) Identification of community and social needs and sensitivities.
- g) Prioritised objectives, with verifiable targets to measure progress.
- h) Rationale for management prescriptions.
- i) Outline planned felling and regeneration over the next 20 years.
- j) Where applicable, annual allowable harvest of non-timber woodland products (NTWPs).
- k) Rationale for the operational techniques to be used.
- l) Plans for implementation, first five years in detail.
- m) Appropriate maps.
- n) Plans to monitor at least those elements identified under section 2.15.1 against the objectives.

GUIDANCE (continued)

The management planning documentation should cover all elements of the requirement but may refer to other documents as appropriate; these may include:

- A fire plan
- A deer management plan
- An integrated pest management strategy
- A research policy
- Project plans
- Necessary permissions from applicable regulatory and licensing authorities.



EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- > Management planning documentation
- > Appropriate maps and records.

2.2.2 REQUIREMENT

While respecting the confidentiality of information, the owner/manager shall, upon request, make publicly available either:

- Management planning documentation, or
- A summary of the management planning documentation.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Evidence of fulfilling requests for management planning documentation or summaries
- › A public contact point
- › Summary management planning documentation.

GUIDANCE

This requirement deliberately gives the owner/manager discretion as to how they make management planning documentation available to allow for situations where they are happy to provide documentation in full and where producing a summary may be an unnecessary administrative burden. This may often be the case for owners/managers of smaller woodlands or woodlands managed at a low-intensity. However, owners/managers of woodlands with lengthy, complex management planning documentation should note that a summary may be more useful for non-specialist stakeholders.

Owners/managers may demonstrate that they are receptive for requests to make documentation available by providing details of a public contact point, for example in the form of a dedicated e-mail address.

Examples of confidential information include data and content:

- Related to investment decisions
- About intellectual property rights
- Which is client-confidential
- Which is, by law, confidential
- Whose dissemination could put at risk the protection of wildlife species and habitats
- About sites which are of special cultural and historical importance to local people, where they have requested confidentiality.

2.2.3 REQUIREMENT

The management planning documentation shall be reviewed periodically (at least every ten years), taking into account:

- Monitoring results
- Results of certification audits
- Results of stakeholder engagement
- New research and technical information, and
- Changed environmental, social, or economic circumstances.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation.

GUIDANCE

Examples of changed circumstances include:

- Major windthrow
- Pest or disease outbreaks
- Changes in markets.

2.3 Consultation and co-operation

2.3.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Local people, relevant organisations and interested parties shall be identified and made aware that:
- New or revised management planning documentation, as specified under section 2.2.1, is being produced
 - High impact operations are planned
 - The woodland is being evaluated for certification.
- b) The owner/manager shall ensure that there is full co-operation with the relevant forestry authority's consultation processes.
- c) The owner/manager shall consult appropriately with local people, relevant organisations and other interested parties, and provide opportunities for their engagement in planning and monitoring processes.
- d) Methods of consultation and engagement shall be designed to ensure that local people, relevant organisations and other interested parties have reasonable opportunities to participate equitably and without discrimination.
- e) The owner/manager shall respond to issues raised or requests for ongoing dialogue and engagement and shall demonstrate how the results of the consultation including community and social impacts have been taken into account in management planning and operations.
- f) At least 30 days shall be allowed for people to respond to notices, letters or meetings before certification.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Consultation with the relevant forestry authority
- › Evidence that users of the WMU are informed about high impact operations (e.g. signs, letters or other appropriate means)
- › A list of interested parties
- › Established means of pro-active communication
- › A public contact point.

GUIDANCE

The owner should be able to justify the frequency and level of consultation and the certification body will look for corroborating evidence. Examples of methods for identifying and making local people and relevant organisations aware include:

- Statutory consultations by the relevant forestry authority or voluntary consultation with statutory bodies
- Letters to individuals or groups
- Temporary or permanent signs in or near the affected woodland
- Information in local newspapers or other publications
- Meetings and dialogue
- Internet
- Consultation with the relevant archaeology service.

Consultation and engagement with local people should be sufficient to identify:

- their permissive or traditional uses of the woodland
- sites or features of special cultural or historical significance.

For social and economic issues, include those who derive their income from the forest or are dependent on the supply of forest products such as forest workers, hauliers and timber processors.

For access issues, owners/managers should seek to identify and consult local representative groups or bodies which can represent users, including the statutory Local Access Forum where relevant.

For biodiversity issues, owners/ managers should seek to identify and consult local representative groups or bodies which can represent biodiversity interests, including the Local Biodiversity Partnership (or equivalent) where relevant.

Consultation and engagement should be appropriate to the scale and intensity of woodland management and to the risk of potential impacts on the interests of stakeholders. For smaller woodlands, engagement may be informal and largely verbal. For larger woodlands with many potentially affected local people, it may be more appropriate to engage with representatives of local communities rather than with individuals.

Whether an operation is high impact depends very much on circumstances and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. A proportionate, risk-based assessment of social impacts might be carried out in a similar way to the assessment of environmental impacts required in section 2.5. The owner/manager should be able to demonstrate that they have considered how many interests will be affected, to what degree and over what timescale.

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2.3.1 REQUIREMENT (Continued)



See also section 4.8.1 which covers sites and features of special cultural or historical significance and section 5.1.1 which covers permissive or traditional uses.

2.3.2 REQUIREMENT

a) Where appropriate, contact shall be made with the owners of adjoining woodlands to try to ensure that restructuring of one woodland complements and does not unreasonably compromise the management of adjoining ones.

GUIDANCE

If management cannot maintain populations of wild mammals at a level that ensures they are not causing ecological damage, then sensitive areas – including regeneration sites, coppice coupes and areas with vulnerable flora – should be protected from browsing and other damage.

b) Management of invasive plants and of wild mammals shall be undertaken where relevant in co-operation with statutory bodies and where possible and practicable in co-ordination with neighbours (see also section 2.12.1 in relation to deer).

An example of a wildlife management group might be a Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) control group, in which landowners and managers co-ordinated their control efforts in the context of a landscape-level plan.



c) Where appropriate and possible, the owner/manager shall consider opportunities for co-operating with neighbours in landscape-scale conservation initiatives.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Awareness of potential problems and verbal description of appropriate action
- › Felling plan
- › Membership of a wildlife management group
- › Where there is a significant problem caused by wildlife, a documented plan (which may take the form of a contract or licence) for control.

2.4 Productive potential of the woodland management unit (WMU)

2.4.1 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager shall plan and implement measures to maintain and/or enhance long-term soil and hydrological functions.

GUIDANCE

Protection of basic ecosystem functions in terms of soils and hydrology is fundamental to sustainable forest management. The owner/manager should refer to relevant guidelines on soils and water.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Field observation.

2.4.2 REQUIREMENT

- a) Timber shall normally be harvested from the WMU at or below a level which can be permanently sustained.
- b) Selective harvesting shall not be to the long-term detriment of the quality and value of stands.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Compartment records
- › Growth and yield estimates
- › Production records or appropriate standing sale volume assessments and reconciliation with estimates
- › Demonstrated control of thinning intensity
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

Timber harvesting in excess of increment may be justified:

- During restructuring of even-aged woodlands
- During habitat management or restoration for biodiversity
- In response to pests, diseases or storm damage.

Examples of growth and yield estimates include:

- Average growth rates or yield class for major species on different site types
- Predictions of thinning and felling yields for different crop types
- Forecasts of areas to be subject to harvesting operations in future years.

Accuracy of growth and yield estimates should be appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operation.

The resilience of the woodland and different species to climate change should be considered.

In low-intensity managed woodlands, or in woodlands being restructured in areas of high windthrow risk, area rather than volume predictions are acceptable in planning and monitoring.

Timber crops should not be creamed or high graded (b). However, selective harvesting of high quality stems may be entirely appropriate in stands which have been managed to promote regeneration from the most promising individuals, for example.

2.4.3 REQUIREMENT

Harvesting of non-timber woodland products (NTWPs) or use of ecosystem services from the WMU shall be at or below a level which can be permanently sustained.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Evidence from records and discussion with the owner/manager that quantities harvested are in line with sustainable growth rates and that there are no significant adverse environmental impacts.

GUIDANCE

Non-timber woodland products include foliage, moss, fungi, berries, seed, venison and other animal products.

It is recognised that objective information on sustainable harvesting levels for NTWPs is limited, and also that in the case of venison it may be desirable to harvest at a level that reduces the deer population in the long-term. However, in all cases the owner/manager should give careful thought to the annual allowable harvest and should be able to justify harvest levels on the basis of their objectives and best practice.

See also section 2.3.2 in relation to protection from wild mammals, and section 4.9 in relation to game management.

2.4.4 REQUIREMENT

Priority species shall not be harvested or controlled without the consent of the relevant statutory nature conservation and countryside agency.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Monitoring records
- › Species inventories.

2.5 Assessment of environmental impacts

2.5.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) The impacts of new planting and other woodland plans on environmental values shall be assessed before operations are implemented, in a manner appropriate to the scale of the operations and the sensitivity of the site.
- b) The results of the environmental assessments shall be incorporated into planning and implementation in order to avoid, minimise or repair adverse environmental impacts of management activities.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Documented environmental impact assessment or Appropriate Assessment where such has been requested by the relevant forestry authority
- › Documented environmental appraisals
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

The owner/manager should be aware of relevant legal requirements for environmental impact assessment.

Depending on scale and sensitivity the assessment of environmental impacts may be:

- Brief environmental appraisals for planting or felling which might affect sites recognised for cultural, landscape, hydrological or ecological value
- Ecological assessments of ancient semi-natural woodland and projections of their response to management and natural processes
- Specific assessments for unusual and/or extensive operations
- Checks against relevant country-level plans for priority habitats and species.

It may be appropriate to seek specialist advice on the potential impacts of operations, for example in relation to:

- Priority habitats and species
- Historic environment sites and landscapes
- Flood risk and mitigation potential in accordance with local flood risk management plans or strategies.



2.5.2 REQUIREMENT

The impacts of woodland plans shall be considered at a landscape level, taking due account of the interaction with adjoining land and other nearby habitats.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Maps
- › Discussion with the owner/manager.

GUIDANCE

In particular, planning including layout and design of woodland should take into account the following factors and action should be taken if required:

- The character of other woodland in the area
- Needs or impacts of animals (both wild and domestic) which use both woodland and surrounding land
- Impacts on flora in the woodland and on surrounding land
- Scale and pattern of open land
- Habitats which are continuous from inside to outside the woodland (e.g. water courses)
- Buffering of water courses and water bodies, and connectivity of riparian habitats
- Woodland margins as transitional habitats
- Linking open space within the woodland with similar habitats outside
- The spread of invasive species into or out of the woodland
- Impacts on natural features (e.g. wetlands, rock exposures, drainage patterns)
- Catchment level impacts on water flows and flood risk
- Nature of historic landscapes and relationships between historic environment sites inside and outside the woodland
- Priority habitats and species.



2.5.3 REQUIREMENT

a) The owner/manager shall assess the potential negative impacts of natural hazards on the WMU, including drought, floods, wind, fire, invasive plant and animal species, and other pests and diseases.

b) Planting and restructuring plans shall be designed to mitigate the risk of damage from natural hazards.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager.

GUIDANCE

Evaluation should consider:

- Robust planting design
- Long-term forest resilience
- Diversity of species, ages and distribution of open ground
- Flood hazard maps.



2.6 Woodland creation

2.6.1 REQUIREMENT

New woodlands shall be located and designed in ways that will:

- Deliver economic goods and/or ecosystem services
- Maintain or enhance the visual, cultural and ecological value and character of the wider landscape, and
- Ensure the creation of a diverse woodland over time.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Field surveys
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Maps
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

Economic goods should be understood in the widest sense and may include:

- Timber
- Non-timber woodland products
- CO₂ sequestration
- Recreation
- Landscape renewal projects.

New woodlands should contribute to the conservation of neighbouring semi-natural woodland and other habitats.

Priority habitats and species should be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

Historic environment features should be identified and protected.

The general aim should be to create a woodland that is sufficiently diverse to ensure long-term forest resilience.

A diverse woodland may be achieved through one or more of the following:

- Use of a diversity of species, clones and provenances
- Planting mixed stands
- Variation in site types and growth rates
- Phased planting
- Retention of open ground
- Design and creation of wind firm edges.



2.7 Woodland restructuring

2.7.1 REQUIREMENT

Even-aged woodlands shall be gradually restructured to achieve an appropriately diverse mosaic of species, sizes, ages, spatial scales, and regeneration cycles. This structural diversity shall be maintained or enhanced.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Maps
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

Restructuring should be planned and implemented in conformance with good forest design practice.

A greater degree of uniformity may be appropriate in very small woodlands.

In larger even-aged plantations, the age structure may be improved through:

- Phased felling
- Prescribing restocking, which will provide options for further diversification and reduction in coupe size at the end of the next rotation
- Designing future coupes with windfirm edges.

Smaller coupe sizes should be favoured for economic, environmental and social reasons.

Site factors favouring larger coupe sizes might include:

- Windthrow risk
- Landscape scale
- Historical plantation design
- Historic environment features
- Wildlife habitats.



2.8 Tree species selection

2.8.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) The range of species selected for new woodlands, and natural or artificial regeneration of existing woodlands shall be suited to the site and shall take into consideration:
- Improvement of long-term forest resilience
 - Management objectives
 - Requirements for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity (see section 4)
 - Requirements for enhancement and restoration of habitats (see section 4)
 - Landscape character.
- b) Regeneration (natural or planted) shall restore stand composition in a timely manner to pre-harvesting or more natural conditions.
- c) Native species shall be preferred to non-native. If non-native species are used it shall be shown that they will clearly outperform native species in meeting the owner's objectives or in achieving long-term forest resilience.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager demonstrates that consideration has been given to a range of species, including native species
- › Evidence of Ecological Site Classification analysis
- › Management planning documentation
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

As a general principle, management should at least maintain and where possible enhance species diversity of the woodland.

Larger WMUs will generally present more opportunities for species diversification.

In semi-natural woodlands, regeneration should restore the pre-harvesting stand composition or should create a greater range of species and structural variation appropriate to the woodland type. In ancient semi-natural woodland, regeneration should be in accordance with section 4.2.1. In other semi-natural woodland, regeneration should be in accordance with section 4.4.1.

In plantations on ancient woodland sites, regeneration should be in accordance with section 4.3.1.

Owners/managers should also be aware of the guidelines on species proportions and open ground in the UK Forestry Standard.

Results of research into site suitability of different species' origins and provenances and their resilience to climate change should be used to assist species choice. Because of the uncertain effects of climate change, selecting a range of genotypes may be prudent.

Soil analyses and use of Forest Research's Ecological Site Classification (ESC) tool may be helpful when considering economic and ecological resilience to climate change. It may also be appropriate to consider specialist advice for semi-natural woodlands, especially ancient semi-natural woodlands.

See also section 2.9.1 in relation to non-native species and section 4.7.1 in relation to natural regeneration and planting stock in semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites.



2.9 Non-native species

2.9.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Non-native tree species shall only be introduced to the WMU when evidence or experience shows that any invasive impacts can be controlled effectively.
- b) Other non-native plant and animal species shall only be introduced if they are non-invasive and bring environmental benefits.
- c) All new introductions shall be carefully monitored, and effective mitigation measures shall be implemented to control negative impacts outside the area in which they are established.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Documented impact assessment of any introductions made after the first certification
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

Introductions refer to species not currently present in WMU.

The requirement includes the re-introduction of once-native animals not currently present within the United Kingdom.

Owners/managers should be aware that introduced species may exhibit differing degrees of invasiveness in different habitats or parts of the country.

Use of non-native biological control agents such as *Rhizophagus grandis* may be desirable to control non-native pests.

Game species may be introduced if managed in accordance with section 4.9.

2.10 Silvicultural systems

2.10.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Appropriate silvicultural systems shall be adopted which are suited to species, sites, wind risk, tree health risks and management objectives and which stipulate soundly-based planting, establishment, thinning, felling and regeneration plans.
- b) Where species, sites, wind risk, tree health risk and management objectives allow, a range of silvicultural approaches, and in particular lower-impact silvicultural systems, shall be adopted with the aim of diversifying ages, species and stand structures.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

The choice of silvicultural system should take into account:

- Long-term forest resilience
- Silvicultural characteristics of the species
- Management objectives
- Site limitations including potential growth rates and wind firmness
- Intended stem size and quality
- Current and future markets for timber products
- Impacts on the landscape and wildlife
- Age-structure and felling plan of nearby woodlands
- Ecological processes and natural disturbance regime for that woodland type
- Historical management practices
- Views of local people.

Use of lower-impact silvicultural systems may not be appropriate where there is evidence that clearfelling is necessary for the conservation of priority habitats or species.



2.10.2 REQUIREMENT

- a) In semi-natural woodland, lower-impact silvicultural systems shall be adopted. All felling shall be in accordance with the specific guidance for that type of woodland in the relevant Forestry Commission Practice Guide.
- b) In semi-natural woodlands over 10 ha, no more than 10% shall be felled in any five-year period unless justified in terms of biodiversity enhancement or lower impact.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

For areas with priority habitats and species, consider consulting with relevant species and habitat experts in statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies or NGOs.

There may be practical or biodiversity enhancement reasons for clearfelling in some semi-natural woodlands, but owners/managers should be aware that best practice guidance for semi-natural woodlands managed as high forest generally advises small coupe fellings which, depending on the type of woodland, may be up to around 2 ha in size.



2.11 Conservation

2.11.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Management planning shall identify a minimum of 15% of the WMU where management for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is the primary objective.
- b) This shall include conservation areas and features identified in the following sections:
 - Statutory designated sites (section 4.1)
 - Ancient semi-natural woodland (section 4.2)
 - Plantations on ancient woodland sites (section 4.3)
 - Other valuable semi-natural habitats (section 4.4)
 - Areas and features of critical importance for watershed management or erosion control (section 4.5)
 - Natural reserves (section 4.6.1)
 - Long-term retentions and/or areas managed under lower-impact silvicultural systems (LISS) (section 4.6.2).

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation including maps
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

Where areas and features identified in (b) comprise less than 15% of the WMU, additional areas should be identified.

The balance of areas managed with conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as a major objective may include:

- Natural reserves
- Long-term retentions
- Riparian zones integral to the WMU
- Lower-impact silvicultural systems
- Existing open habitats integral to the WMU.

In larger and more dispersed woodland management units, this requirement may be fulfilled across the WMU as a whole rather than reserving specified areas in each and every wood.

Aim for a balance between the dispersal of sites across the WMU and a concentration of sites in important locations with benefits for conservation and/or enhancement of biodiversity.

The conservation areas and features identified under (b) may fall into more than one category but can only be counted once towards the 15% of the WMU managed with conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as the major objective.

2.11.2 REQUIREMENT

- a) Management strategies and actions shall be developed to maintain and, where possible, enhance the areas and features of high conservation value identified in the following sections:
- Statutory designated sites (section 4.1)
 - Ancient semi-natural woodland (section 4.2)
 - Plantations on ancient woodland sites (section 4.3)
 - Areas and features of critical importance for watershed management or erosion control (section 4.5).
- b) Management strategies and actions shall be developed in consultation with statutory bodies, interested parties and experts.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Specialist surveys.

GUIDANCE

Areas and features of high conservation value may not always be well mapped. The owner/manager should therefore consider the need for specialist surveys to confirm the presence of areas and features of high conservation value in order to apply the precautionary approach when developing management strategies and actions.

2.12 Protection

2.12.1 REQUIREMENT

Management of wild deer shall be based on a strategy that identifies the management objectives, and aims to regulate the impact of deer.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Awareness of potential problems
- › Awareness of actual damage
- › Description of appropriate action in the management planning documentation
- › Membership of a deer management group
- › Evidence of cull targets and achievements
- › Where there is a significant problem caused by deer, a documented plan for control; this may take the form of a contract or licence.

GUIDANCE

For larger organisations and WMUs, the strategy should be in writing.

This requirement may involve the setting of cull targets and should involve the membership of a Deer Management Group where appropriate.



2.12.2 REQUIREMENT

There shall be an emergency response plan appropriate to the level of risk.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Emergency response plans
- › In sites with high risk of fire, evidence of contact with the fire and rescue service and that their advice has been taken into consideration.

GUIDANCE

Incidents may include:

- Fire
- Extreme weather events
- Outbreaks of pests, diseases or invasive species
- Accidents
- Chemical spills and other pollution.

Where appropriate, plans may be as simple as a reference card, but as a minimum should include:

- Responsibilities for action
- Contact details
- Emergency procedures.

Plans should take into account FISA best practice guidance and issues such as the remoteness of some WMUs, which may affect both communication and the ability of emergency services to reach sites in a timely manner.

2.13 Conversion

2.13.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Woodland identified in sections 4.1–4.3 shall not be converted to plantation or non-forested land.
- b) Areas converted from ancient semi-natural and other semi-natural woodlands after 1994 shall not normally qualify for certification.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › No evidence of conversion
- › Field observation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Management planning documentation.

GUIDANCE

Certification of converted ancient and other semi-natural woodlands may be allowed in circumstances where sufficient evidence is submitted to the certification body that the owner/manager is not responsible directly or indirectly for such conversion.

Woodland removal to facilitate infrastructure or built development which is not integral to the management of the rest of the woodland cannot meet this requirement.

2.13.2 REQUIREMENT

- a) Conversion to non-forested land shall take place only in certain limited circumstances as set out in this requirement.
- b) The new land use shall be more valuable than any type of practicably achievable woodland cover in terms of its biodiversity, landscape or historic environment benefits, and all of the following conditions shall be met:
- The woodland is not identified as of high conservation value in sections 4.1–4.3 and 4.5, nor identified as contributing to the cultural and historical values in section 4.8
 - There is no evidence of unresolved substantial dispute
 - The conversion and subsequent site management protect and substantially enhance at least one of the following:
 - The status and condition of priority habitats and species
 - Important landscape features and character
 - Important historic environment features and character
 - Important carbon stores
 - The subsequent management of the converted area shall be integrated with the rest of the WMU.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Transition plan
- › Management planning documentation for the converted area after felling
- › Records of planning process and discussions
- › Consultation with interested parties
- › Monitoring records
- › Environmental impact assessment process documentation.

GUIDANCE

Conversion to non-forested land should be planned and implemented in accordance with the UKFS guidelines on biodiversity, landscape and historic environment.

A transition plan should set out as a minimum the justification for conversion and a strategy for implementation, subsequent management and monitoring.

Under current regulations an environmental impact assessment may be required before such conversions are implemented.

Planning consent or an approved Environmental Statement can provide sufficient evidence that there is no unresolved substantial dispute.

Deforestation to facilitate infrastructure or built development which is not integral to the management of the rest of the woodland cannot meet this requirement.

See also section 4.4.2 in relation to restoration of small-scale habitats within a woodland matrix.

Advice to owners/managers

Only timber felled in accordance with this requirement can be certified.

Owners/managers are advised to seek guidance from their certification body or group scheme manager.



2.13.3 REQUIREMENT

- a) Woodland areas shall be converted to areas used solely for Christmas tree production only where conversion is consistent with other requirements of this certification standard, including the need to leave open space, and in accordance with any approved management plan from the relevant forestry authority, or when clearance is required for non-forestry reasons such as a wayleave agreement.
- b) Christmas trees shall be grown using traditional, non-intensive techniques.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Management records.

GUIDANCE

The requirement restricting conversion relates to use for growing Christmas trees of less than 4 metres in height.

The chemicals regime for Christmas trees must meet all the requirements of section 3.4.

Examples of Christmas trees which may be covered by a certificate are:

- Trees (<4 m in height) grown on areas within the woodland matrix used solely for Christmas tree production
- Trees (<4 m in height) grown on areas used solely for Christmas tree production which, although out-with the woodland, form part of the woodland management unit
- Thinnings from forest tree crops
- Tops from harvested forest tree crops
- Trees grown by interplanting of forest tree crops
- Mature trees (>4 m height)
- Trees which have regenerated onto, and have been harvested from, adjacent open land in the interest of maintaining its biodiversity or landscape value, and provided that the adjacent area is managed as part of the woodland management unit.

Christmas trees grown as a horticultural or nursery crop are outside the scope of this certification standard.

2.14 Implementation, amendment and revision of the plan

2.14.1 REQUIREMENT

The implementation of the work programme shall be in close agreement with the details included in the management planning documentation. Any deviation from prescription or planned rate of progress shall be justified, overall objectives shall still be achieved and the ecological integrity of the woodland maintained.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Cross-correlation between the management planning documentation, annual work programmes and operations seen on the ground
- › Owner's/manager's familiarity with the management planning documentation and woodland
- › Documentation or owner's/manager's explanation of any deviation.

GUIDANCE

Changes in planned timing of operations should be such that they do not jeopardise the ecological integrity of the woodland in the long-term.

Changes in planned timing may be justified on economic grounds if overall management practices continue to conform to the other requirements of this certification standard.

Catastrophic events such as wind damage or pest and disease outbreaks may necessitate amendment of the work programme and management planning documentation.

See also section 2.10.1 in relation to thinning, felling and regeneration plans.

2.15 Monitoring

2.15.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) The owner/manager shall devise and implement a monitoring programme appropriate to the scale and intensity of management.
- b) The monitoring programme shall be:
 - Part of the management planning documentation
 - Consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change
 - Kept in a form that ensures that results are of use over the long-term.
- c) The owner/manager shall where applicable monitor and record:
 - The implementation of policies and objectives and the achievement of verifiable targets
 - Implementation of woodland operations
 - Harvesting yields
 - Social impacts
 - Environmental impacts
 - Changes in environmental condition
 - Usage of pesticides, biological control agents and fertilisers and any adverse impacts
 - Environmentally appropriate disposal of waste materials.
- d) Monitoring targets shall fully consider any special features of the WMU.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › A monitoring programme as part of management planning documentation
- › Evidence of a consistent approach to recording site visits
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Monitoring records.

GUIDANCE

The primary purpose of monitoring is to help the owner/manager to implement and adapt the management of the WMU to meet the management objectives.

Monitoring should be linked to potential and actual positive and negative impacts of management on the condition of features and sensitivities of the WMU identified in section 2.2.1, and to the delivery of management objectives.

Monitoring may include:

- Supervision during woodland operations
- Regular management visits and systematic collection of information
- Longer-term studies on changes to the woodland ecosystem, particularly for special environmental features.

Examples of appropriate monitoring include:

- Implementation of woodland operations
 - Health and safety
 - Compliance with Forest and Water guidelines
 - Worksite supervision
- Harvesting yields
 - Information from sales invoices or weight tickets compared to predicted yields from production forecasts or timber inventories
- Social impacts
 - Condition and accessibility of public access facilities
 - Impacts of timber haulage
- Environmental impacts
 - Impacts of operations on priority habitats and species, landscape or water and soils
 - Impacts of non-native invasive species
 - Impacts of grazing and browsing
- Changes in environmental condition
 - Tree health
 - Woodland composition and structure
 - Areas and features of conservation value
 - Ancient woodland features and remnants, including responses to management and any threats
 - Condition of cultural heritage features.

When monitoring environmental impacts and changes in environmental condition, particular attention should be paid to the features of high conservation value identified in sections 4.1–4.3 and 4.5 and to the cultural and historical values identified in section 4.8.

Detail of information collected should be appropriate to the:

- Size of the enterprise
- Intensity of operations
- Objectives of management
- Sensitivity of the site.

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2.15.1 REQUIREMENT (Continued)**GUIDANCE (continued)**

The owner/manager may consider:

- Formal written records
- A less formal site diary
- Photographic records
- Verbally communicated records.

Note that there may be legal requirements for record keeping in some cases, for example pesticide usage.

Owners/managers should be aware of the potential usefulness of information gathered for other purposes, for example to fulfil statutory requirements, which may meet or supplement monitoring needs. It may also be possible to make use of freely available information from sources such as statutory bodies or local interest groups.

2.15.2 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager shall take monitoring findings into account, particularly during revision of the management planning documentation, and if necessary shall revise management objectives, verifiable targets and/or management activities.

GUIDANCE

Expert advice should be sought where necessary and taken into account.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Monitoring records
- › Management planning documentation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager.

2.15.3 REQUIREMENT

Monitoring findings, or summaries thereof, shall be made publicly available upon request.

GUIDANCE

The monitoring findings or summaries may exclude confidential information.

The means of sharing monitoring findings should be appropriate to the nature of the records and to the needs of the interested parties.

Owners/managers of smaller management units, relying more on informal monitoring methods and records, may find it more appropriate to communicate results verbally.

Owners/managers of larger management units, relying more on formal surveys and reports, may find it more appropriate to produce a written summary.

See section 2.2.2 for examples of confidential information.

3

Woodland operations

3.1 General

3.1.1 REQUIREMENT

Woodland operations shall conform to forestry best practice guidance.

GUIDANCE



EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager and workers
- › Monitoring and internal audit records.

3.1.2 REQUIREMENT

The planning of woodland operations shall include:

- Obtaining any relevant permission and giving any formal notification required
- Assessing and taking into account on and off-site impacts
- Taking measures to protect water resources and soils, and prevent disturbance of and damage to priority species, habitats, ecosystems and landscape values, including adapting standard prescriptions where required. Any disturbance or damage which does occur shall be mitigated and/or repaired, and steps shall be taken to avoid recurrence
- Measures to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the value of identified services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.

GUIDANCE

Particular attention should be given to ensuring that:

- Local people potentially affected are informed at the onset of operations
- Workers are involved in the planning of operations at the implementation stage.

Checks should be made against relevant country-level plans for priority habitats and species.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Documented permissions
- › Contracts
- › Discussion with the owner/manager and workers
- › Demonstration of awareness of impacts and measures taken
- › Site-specific, documented assessment of impacts
- › Operational site assessments.

3.1.3 REQUIREMENT

Operational plans shall be clearly communicated to all workers so that they understand and implement safety precautions, environmental protection plans, biosecurity protocols, emergency procedures, and prescriptions for the management of features of high conservation value.

GUIDANCE

Contracts can be in writing or workers may be given oral instructions where this is appropriate to the scale and sensitivity of the operation.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with workers
- › Records of pre-commencement meetings
- › Field observation
- › Biosecurity policy
- › Relevant plans and procedures.

3.1.4 REQUIREMENT

Operations shall cease or relocate immediately where:

- They damage sites or features of conservation value or of special cultural and historical significance identified in sections 4.1–4.5 and 4.8. Operations in the vicinity shall recommence only when action has been taken to repair damage and prevent any further damage, including establishing buffer areas where appropriate
- They reveal previously unknown sites or features which may be of conservation value or of special cultural and historical significance. Operations in the vicinity shall recommence only when the sites or features have been investigated and appropriate management agreed, where relevant in discussion with statutory bodies and/or local people.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Site diaries
- › Field observation.

3.2 Harvest operations

3.2.1 REQUIREMENT

a) Timber and non-timber woodland products (NTWPs) shall be harvested efficiently and with minimum loss or damage to environmental values.

b) Timber harvesting shall particularly seek to avoid:

- Damage to soil and water courses during felling, extraction and burning
- Damage to standing trees, especially veteran trees, during felling, extraction and burning
- Degradation in felled timber.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager.

GUIDANCE

Thinning/cutting trees to waste may be appropriate in some circumstances.



3.2.2 REQUIREMENT

Harvesting and sales documentation shall enable all timber and non-timber woodland products (NTWPs) that are to be supplied as certified to be traced back to the woodland of origin.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Harvesting output records
- › Contract documents
- › Sales documentation.

GUIDANCE

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that certified products can be traced back to the point of sale from the woodland (in the case of timber, for example, standing, at roadside or delivered). The responsibility of the owner/manager is limited to ensuring that certified products removed from the woodland can be traced forward along the supply chain from the first point of supply.

Where certified products from other sources are being stored in the same area, appropriate records should be maintained to demonstrate the source and quantity of produce obtained from other woodland areas.

Advice to owners/managers

Certification schemes may require owners/managers to provide additional information on sales documentation relating to:

- chain-of-custody certification, and
- the use of certification scheme trademarks.

Certification schemes may also require documentation to be retained for a specific time.

Owners/managers are advised to seek guidance from their certification body or group scheme manager.

3.2.3 REQUIREMENT

Whole tree harvesting or stump removal shall be practised only where there is demonstrable management benefit, and where a full consideration of impacts shows that there are not likely to be any significant negative effects.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager demonstrates awareness that impacts have been considered
- › Documented appraisal.

GUIDANCE

Significant negative impacts to consider include:

- Leaching
- Soil compaction
- Soil erosion
- Soil carbon loss
- Nutrient loss
- Damage to historical features and archaeological deposits.



3.2.4 REQUIREMENT

Lop and top shall be burnt only where there is demonstrable management benefit, and where a full consideration of impacts shows that there are not likely to be any significant negative effects.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager demonstrates awareness that impacts have been considered
- › Evidence of registration of exempt activity
- › Documented appraisal.

GUIDANCE

If lop and top is burned:

- The location and density of fire sites should be carefully planned
- Some lop and top should be left unburned as habitat except where it will result in pest or disease problems
- The requirements of the relevant statutory environment protection agencies should be met.

The owner/manager should be aware that it may be necessary for burning on site to be registered as an exempt activity with the statutory environment protection agencies.



3.3 Forest roads and associated infrastructure

3.3.1 REQUIREMENT

All necessary consents shall be obtained for construction, extension and upgrades of:

- Forest roads
- Mineral extraction sites
- Other infrastructure.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Records of consents
- › Environmental assessment where required.

GUIDANCE

Consents may relate to planning, environmental impact assessment or construction regulations.

3.3.2 REQUIREMENT

Roads and timber extraction tracks, visitor access infrastructure and associated drainage shall be designed, created, used and maintained in a manner that minimises their environmental impact.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Documented plans for the design and creation of permanent roads and tracks
- › Control systems for the creation and use of temporary tracks and extraction routes
- › Field observation
- › Documented maintenance plans.

GUIDANCE

Where new roads are planned, a documented evaluation should be made to achieve a balance between timber extraction distances and road density, which takes into account the impact on the environment. Non-timber activities also need to be taken into account, e.g. access for sporting.

Particular attention should be paid to:

- Avoiding features of historic environment, biological, geological or cultural value
- Use of bridges, arches or culverts to cross water courses
- Barriers to fish movement caused by water crossing points
- Ensuring that verges and ditches are created and managed to promote their habitat value
- Materials used, especially rock type, are in keeping with the ecology of the woodland
- Avoiding erosion and adverse impacts on water systems and wildlife habitats
- Careful landscaping of roads, both internally and externally
- Use of brush mats.



3.4 Pesticides, biological control agents and fertilisers

3.4.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) The use of pesticides and fertilisers shall be avoided where practicable.
- b) The use of pesticides, biological control agents and fertilisers shall be minimised.
- c) Damage to environmental values from pesticide and biological control agent use shall be avoided, mitigated and/or repaired, and steps shall be taken to avoid recurrence.

GUIDANCE



EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Pesticide policy or position statement.

3.4.2 REQUIREMENT

- a) The owner/manager shall prepare and implement an effective integrated pest management strategy that:
- Is appropriate to the scale of the woodland and the intensity of management
 - Adopts management systems that shall promote the development and application of non-chemical methods of pest and crop management by placing primary reliance on prevention and, where this is not practicable, biological control methods
 - Takes account of the importance of safeguarding the value of sites and features with special biodiversity attributes when considering methods of control, and
 - Demonstrates knowledge of the latest published advice and its appropriate application.
- b) The strategy shall specify aims for the minimisation or elimination of pesticide usage, taking into account considerations of cost (economic, social and environmental), and the cyclical nature of woodland management operations.
- c) Where pesticides and biological control agents are to be used the strategy shall justify their use demonstrating that there is no practicable alternative, in terms of economic, social and environmental costs.
- d) The strategy shall include a description of all known use over the previous five years, or the duration of the current woodland ownership if that is less than five years.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Written policy and strategy or statement.

GUIDANCE

Sites and features with special biodiversity attributes include:

- All ancient woodland sites
- Valuable or diverse wildlife communities
- Priority habitats and species, including breeding sites and feeding areas
- Water courses, ponds and lakes
- Wetland habitats
- Lowland heath
- Peatlands covered by the policies of relevant forestry authorities
- Rides and open ground
- Woodland margins and hedges
- Veteran trees
- Decaying deadwood habitat
- Any other valuable habitats or features.

Identification and mapping of areas and features may be carried out on an ongoing basis, provided that it has been completed for an area prior to operations taking place.

See also section 4 in relation to conservation values.



3.4.3 REQUIREMENT

Where pesticides and biological control agents are to be used:

- The owner/manager and workers shall be aware of and implement legal requirements and non-legislative guidance for use of pesticides and biological control agents in forestry
- The owner/manager shall keep records of pesticide usage and biological control agents as required by current legislation.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › COSHH assessments
- › Risk assessments
- › Record of reason for use and pesticide choice
- › Personal protective equipment
- › FEPA records
- › Waste transfer notes
- › Discussion with the owner/manager and workers
- › Field observation, particularly in respect to storage, application sites, protective clothing, warning signs and availability of lockable boxes for transport of pesticides
- › Operators are trained and competent, and hold pesticide operator certification
- › Adequate written procedures, work instructions, and other documentation
- › Availability of appropriate absorbent materials
- › Emergency plan.

GUIDANCE

Collection of information on pesticide usage should enable trends to be observed and future action to be targeted accordingly, including any necessary revision of the strategy.

Usage should be recorded in such a way that comparisons can be made year on year and fed back into the integrated pest management strategy to demonstrate that pesticide usage is avoided and/or minimised. Therefore, additional to the legal recording requirements (which include product, application rates and area treated), owners and managers may find it useful to sub-divide usage according to operations.



3.4.4 REQUIREMENT

- a) Pesticides and biological control agents shall only be used if:
- They are approved for forest use by the UK regulatory authorities
 - They are not banned by international agreement, and
 - Their use is permitted by the owner's/manager's certification scheme.
- b) Pesticides categorised as Type 1A and 1B by the World Health Organization or any other pesticides whose use is restricted by the owner's/manager's certification scheme shall not be used unless:
- No effective and practicable alternatives are available
 - Their use is sanctioned using a mechanism endorsed by the owner's/manager's certification scheme, and
 - Any such mechanism provides for their use to be justified and on the condition that usage shall be discontinued once effective and practicable alternatives are available.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Records of chemicals purchased and used
- › Field observation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager and workers.

GUIDANCE

Advice to owners/managers

Owners/managers are advised to seek guidance from their certification body or group scheme manager on any additional certification scheme requirements relating to the use of pesticides.

3.4.5 REQUIREMENT

- a) Fertilisers (inorganic and organic) shall only be used where they are necessary to secure establishment or to correct subsequent nutrient deficiencies.
- b) Where fertilisers are to be used the owner/manager and workers shall be aware of and shall be implementing legal requirements and best practice guidance for their use in forestry.
- c) No fertilisers shall be applied:
 - in priority habitats
 - around priority plant species, or
 - around veteran trees.
- d) In addition, bio-solids shall only be used following an assessment of environmental impacts in accordance with section 2.5.
- e) The owner/manager shall keep a record of fertiliser usage, including types, rates, frequencies and sites of application.

GUIDANCE

Unnecessary use of fertilisers may be avoided through the appropriate choice of species.

Where appropriate, hand application should be preferred to aerial application particularly in sensitive catchments.



EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager and workers
- › Field observation, particularly in respect to storage, application sites, protective clothing and warning signs
- › Adequate written procedures, work instructions, and other documentation.

3.5 Fencing

3.5.1 REQUIREMENT

Where appropriate, wildlife management and control shall be used in preference to fencing.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager.

GUIDANCE

This requirement is especially important in areas where Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) and Black Grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) are present.



3.5.2 REQUIREMENT

Where fences are used, alignment shall be designed to minimise impacts on access (particularly public rights of way), landscape, wildlife and historic environment sites.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field visits to verify alignments chosen
- › Discussion with the owner/manager demonstrates an awareness of impacts of fence alignments and of the alternatives
- › Documented policy or guidelines regarding any specific significant impacts
- › Expert advice sought for significant one-off fencing operations.

GUIDANCE

Decisions to erect fences and their alignment should take account of:

- Landscape
- Public rights of way
- Existing users of the woodland
- Wildlife especially woodland grouse
- The historic environment
- The need for badger gates, tunnels and ladders.

Where fence crossings are provided they should be appropriate to the abilities of likely users.



3.6 Waste

3.6.1 REQUIREMENT

Waste disposal shall be in accordance with current waste management legislation and regulations.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › No evidence of significant impacts from waste disposal
- › Documented policy or guidelines on waste disposal including segregation, storage, recycling, return to manufacturer.

GUIDANCE

Waste includes:

- Plastic waste including tree shelters and tree bags
- Surplus chemicals
- Chemical containers
- Fuels and lubricants.



3.6.2 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager shall prepare and implement a prioritised plan to manage and progressively remove redundant materials.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Removal plan
- › Budget.

GUIDANCE

Prioritisation and timescales for removal should take into account social, environmental and economic impacts. Examples of redundant materials include:

- Tree shelters
- Fencing
- Culvert pipes
- High seats.

3.7 Pollution**3.7.1 REQUIREMENT**

The owner/manager shall adopt management practices that minimise diffuse pollution arising from woodland operations.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Records of consultation with statutory environment protection agencies
- › Field observation
- › Operational plans
- › Incident response plans
- › Diffuse pollution risk assessment in high risk situations
- › Use of biodegradable lubricants.

GUIDANCE

Diffuse pollution may arise from:

- Oil spills and leaks
- Cutting-chain lubricants
- Siltation of water courses or drains that connect to watercourses
- Pesticide or fertiliser run-off
- Smoke.

Biodegradable cutting-chain lubricants should be used where practicable. Practicability encompasses operator health and costs of running machinery.

**3.7.2 REQUIREMENT**

Plans and equipment shall be in place to deal with accidental spillages of fuels, oils, fertilisers or other chemicals.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with the owner/manager and relevant workers
- › Appropriate equipment available in the field
- › Written plans.

GUIDANCE

4

Natural, historical and cultural environment

4.1 Statutory designated sites and protected species

4.1.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Areas and features of high conservation value having particular significance for biodiversity shall be identified by reference to statutory designations at national or regional level and/or through assessment on the ground.
- b) Adopting a precautionary approach, the identified areas, species and features of high conservation value shall be maintained and, where possible, enhanced.
- c) There shall be ongoing communication and/or consultation with statutory bodies, local authorities, wildlife trusts and other relevant organisations.
- d) Statutory designated sites shall be managed in accordance with plans agreed with nature conservation agencies, and shall be marked on maps.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › All known areas and features mapped
- › Field observation
- › Approval of forest plan by the relevant forestry authority
- › Workers are aware of such sites and of plans for their management
- › For all potentially damaging operations, awareness is demonstrated of how areas will be protected and/or safeguarded
- › Management plans for statutory conservation areas and monitoring of implementation of those plans
- › Condition statements from statutory bodies
- › Maps
- › Discussion with the owner/manager demonstrates how areas will be safeguarded and/or enhanced
- › Planning documentation shows how areas will be safeguarded and/or enhanced
- › Pro-active approach to the identification of areas and features of significance for biodiversity, appropriate to likely biodiversity value.

GUIDANCE

The system of designated sites in the UK forms a representative sample of existing ecosystems within the landscape.

These areas and features of high conservation value include:

- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Areas of Special Scientific Interest
- Ramsar Sites
- National Nature Reserves

Identification and mapping of these features may be carried out on an ongoing basis, provided that it has been completed for an area prior to significant woodland management operations taking place.

Where the boundaries of a designated site extend beyond the boundary of the WMU, it may not be possible for the owner/manager to significantly influence or change the overall condition of the site.



4.1.2 REQUIREMENT

Appropriate measures shall be taken to protect identified priority habitats and species in accordance with plans agreed with nature conservation agencies. In planning and implementing measures within the WMU, the owner/manager shall take into account the geographic range and ecological requirements of priority species beyond the boundary of the WMU.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Management planning documentation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager.

GUIDANCE

Measures should include steps to protect features such as breeding sites, resting places and display sites of priority species.



4.2 Conservation of ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW)

4.2.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Ancient semi-natural woodland shall be identified by reference to published maps and/or by assessment on the ground.
- b) Adopting a precautionary approach, the high conservation value of ancient semi-natural woodlands shall be maintained and, where possible, enhanced.
- c) Adverse ecological impacts of pests, diseases and non-native species shall be identified and inform management.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Management planning documentation including relevant forestry authority management plan and restocking plans
- › Ancient woodland inventories
- › Other studies
- › Monitoring records.

GUIDANCE

Ancient semi-natural woodlands are the key priority sites for woodland conservation in the UK.

Establishing the validity of the site's status should not solely rely on ancient woodland inventories.

Assessment on the ground should take account of:

- Soils
- Vegetation
- Old trees
- Historical and archaeological features and landscape implications.

Use should be made of natural regeneration or planting stock from parental material growing in the local native seed zone where appropriate and possible. Following outbreaks of pests or diseases, the owner/manager may seek advice from relevant forestry authorities or statutory bodies.

Maintenance of biodiversity values often requires targeted interventions. Management should be in accordance with the relevant FC practice guides for semi-natural woodlands.

Potential adverse impacts may include:

- Browsing by rabbits, deer and other animals
- Grazing by livestock
- Colonisation by invasive non-native species
- Visitor pressure.



4.3 Management of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)

4.3.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) The owner/manager shall maintain and enhance or restore features and areas of high conservation value within plantations on ancient woodland sites.
- b) The owner/manager shall:
- Identify and evaluate remnant features
 - Identify and evaluate threats
 - Adopting a precautionary approach, prioritise actions based on the level of threat and the value of remnants, and
 - Implement targeted actions.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Ancient woodland inventories
- › Other studies
- › Remnant threat analyses
- › Field observation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager.

GUIDANCE

Establishing the validity of the site's status need not solely rely on ancient woodland inventories. In evaluating, prioritising and implementing actions owners/managers should take account of:

- Historical and archaeological features and landscape implications
- Remnant features
- The relationship with other biodiversity features and priorities and management objectives within the WMU and adjacent land use as a whole.

Active management is likely to be required to maintain the biodiversity, environmental and cultural values of these sites, including where continued growth of plantations for timber or woodfuel production is to be undertaken. Restocking and thinning should be carried out in such a way that remnant features are enhanced and buffered.

A precautionary approach is appropriate in most instances even if initially no remnant features may appear to be present. A gradual approach should be the default where remnants are threatened.

Threats may include shading, deer browsing, wind-throw and ground damage from harvesting, and damage to veteran trees from woodland operations.

Where remnants are not threatened or where site characteristics allow a more rapid approach may be adopted. In some situations, such as inaccessible, unthinned stands or where there are heavy shade-casting species present, it may not be possible to apply a gradual approach, even though it would be the preferred option for threatened remnant features. In such circumstances, where possible, remnant features should be bolstered before operations.

Exploratory silvicultural interventions may help inform the choice of management prescriptions. Where complete canopy removal has occurred it will be important to ensure a successor canopy is established as soon as possible to alleviate further threats. The context of the site within the WMU and wider landscape will also inform any prioritised restoration plans. All operations within PAWS need to take account of remnant features, including ground flora, and mitigate against damage to them.



4.4 Protection of conservation values in other woodlands and semi-natural habitats

4.4.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Areas, species and features of conservation value in other woodlands shall be identified.
- b) The identified areas, species and features of conservation value shall be maintained and where possible enhanced.
- c) Adverse ecological impacts shall be identified and inform management.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Discussion with the owner/manager
- › Management planning documentation
- › Historical maps
- › Monitoring records.

GUIDANCE

This requirement relates to woodlands other than ASNW and PAWS (see sections 4.2 and 4.3).

Priority should be given to woodlands or woodland relicts that may have retained/acquired valuable ecological characteristics.

Typically, these values may be found in:

- Semi-natural woodlands
- Long established woodlands of planted origin
- Woodland relicts
- Veteran trees
- New native woodlands.

Potential adverse impacts may include:

- Browsing by rabbits, deer and other animals
- Grazing by livestock
- Colonisation by invasive non-native species
- Visitor pressure.

4.4.2 REQUIREMENT

- a) Valuable small-scale semi-natural habitats that have been colonised, planted, or incorporated into the WMU, but which have retained their ecological characteristics (or have a high potential to be restored), shall be identified and enhanced, restored or treated in a manner that does not lead to further degradation of their potential for restoration.
- b) Adverse ecological impacts shall be identified and inform management.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Workers are aware of such sites and of any plans for their management
- › For all potentially damaging operations, awareness demonstrated of how areas shall be protected and/or safeguarded
- › Discussion with the owner/manager demonstrates how such areas will be managed
- › Planning documentation shows how areas will be managed.

GUIDANCE

This requirement relates to small-scale habitats within the WMU, which may include:

- Moorland
- Peatland
- Heathland
- Wood pasture
- Grassland
- Freshwater habitats such as ponds.

Appropriate management may include:

- Rides and glades containing remnant semi-natural communities are widened and extended
- Areas with a rich ground flora and shrub layer are heavily thinned
- Remnants of wood pasture, veteran trees or other 'open-forest' habitat are gradually opened up
- Heathland, bog and other open habitats are re-created by premature felling without restocking
- Maintenance of open ground around historic environment sites.

Particular attention should be paid to priority habitats and to habitats identified in country-level forest and peatland policies.

Potential adverse impacts may include:

- Browsing by rabbits, deer and other animals
- Grazing by livestock
- Colonisation by invasive non-native species
- Drainage.

Non-native species may be retained where they have a high ecological or cultural value.

Woodland removal to facilitate infrastructure or built development which is not integral to the management of the rest of the woodland cannot meet this requirement.

See also section 2.13.2 which covers larger-scale habitat restoration through conversion to non-forested land.



4.4.3 REQUIREMENT

Areas of semi-natural habitats shall constitute a minimum of 5% of the WMU. Where existing habitats or restored remnant features comprise less than 5% of the WMU, the owner/manager shall take action to convert other areas to more natural conditions.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

Preference should be given to restoring to semi-natural woodland unless there are clear biodiversity gains to be made by restoring to open habitats.

These areas contribute to the minimum of 15% of the WMU where management for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is the primary objective, as identified in section 2.11.1.



4.5 Watershed management and erosion control

4.5.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Areas and features of critical importance for watershed management or erosion control shall be identified in consultation with relevant statutory bodies.
- b) Where critically important areas or features are identified, their management shall be agreed with the relevant statutory bodies.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Records of consultation
- › Management planning documentation
- › Monitoring records
- › Licences or consents.

GUIDANCE

Situations where forest management is critical for watershed management or erosion control are relatively rare, and are likely to be identified during consultation processes.

Further information is available in UKFS guidelines on soils and water.



4.6 Maintenance of biodiversity and ecological functions

4.6.1 REQUIREMENT

Natural reserves shall:

- Be located where they will deliver the greatest biodiversity benefit
- Constitute a proportion of the WMU equivalent to at least 1% of the plantation area and 5% of the semi-natural woodland area.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation including maps
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

Where a WMU is made up of more than one woodland, the owner/manager should locate natural reserves where they will deliver greatest biodiversity benefit, rather than necessarily in every individual woodland.

There should be no loss of existing natural reserves.

Areas managed as natural reserves within the areas identified by sections 4.1-4.5 may fulfil this requirement.

These areas contribute to the minimum of 15% of the WMU where management for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is the primary objective, as identified in section 2.11.1.



4.6.2 REQUIREMENT

Long-term retentions and/or areas managed under lower-impact silvicultural systems (LISS) shall constitute a minimum of 1% of the WMU. Where this is impracticable, an additional minimum 1% of natural reserve shall be identified.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Management planning documentation including maps
- › Field observation.

GUIDANCE

Where a WMU is made up of more than one woodland, the owner/manager should locate long-term retentions or LISS areas where they will deliver greatest biodiversity benefit, rather than necessarily in every individual woodland.

Areas managed as long-term retentions and/or LISS within the areas identified by sections 4.1-4.5 may fulfil this requirement.

These areas contribute to the minimum of 15% of the WMU where management for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is the primary objective, as identified in section 2.11.1.

4.6.3 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager shall plan and take action to maintain continuity of veteran tree habitat by:

- Keeping existing veteran trees, and
- Managing or establishing suitable trees to eventually take the place of existing veterans.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Harvesting contracts
- › Discussion with the owner/manager and workers
- › If there is a conflict with safety, the issues have been documented
- › Management planning documentation.

GUIDANCE

This requirement applies in WMUs where there are existing veteran trees.

Owners/managers of WMUs without veteran trees may choose to promote future veteran trees, as part of their wider management to maintain and/or enhance biodiversity value.

Actions may include:

- Freeing from shading and/or competition
- Pollarding younger trees or lopping older trees to prolong their life.

Veteran tree management should not conflict with safety of the public or workers.



4.6.4 REQUIREMENT

- a) The owner/manager shall plan and take action to accumulate a diversity of both standing and fallen deadwood over time in all wooded parts of the WMU, including felled areas.

- b) The owner/manager shall identify areas where deadwood is likely to be of greatest nature conservation benefit, and shall plan and take action to accumulate large dimension standing and fallen deadwood and deadwood in living trees in those areas.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Harvesting contracts
- › Discussion with the owner/manager and workers
- › If there is a conflict with safety or woodland health, the issues have been documented
- › Management planning documentation.

GUIDANCE

The owner/manager should refer to deadwood guidance produced by relevant statutory conservation agencies, forestry authorities and others when identifying areas of greatest nature conservation benefit and when planning actions to accumulate deadwood.

Current evidence suggests that, over the long-term, deadwood (not including stumps, which are usually retained after felling) should accumulate to roughly 20 m³ per hectare averaged – though not uniformly distributed – across the WMU.

In most hectares there should be a few standing and fallen stems contributing to the overall deadwood provision.

Deadwood management should not conflict with safety of the public or workers or the health of the woodland.

Actions may include:

- Keeping standing dead trees and snags
- Keeping and protecting old and/or previously pollarded trees alive through appropriate management
- Only harvesting windblow when it is of significant value unless more than 3 m³/ha is blown and sufficient deadwood is already accumulating on site
- Keeping naturally fallen trees or major branches
- When thinning or clearfelling, and where safe to do so, creating snags and providing fallen deadwood where insufficient has already accumulated.

The accumulation of deadwood throughout a rotation provides for greater continuity of the full range of deadwood habitat types.

The most valuable areas within which to develop deadwood habitats are where linkages can be made with existing deadwood habitats to develop ecological connectivity over time; these areas include:

- Wood pasture/parklands
- Ancient semi-natural woodland with veteran trees
- Long-term retentions and natural reserves
- Riparian or wet woodland.

Retained deadwood should be matched to the requirements of those species likely to be important on the site. Habitat diversity is improved by having:

- Stems of greater than 20 cm diameter, particularly large dimension timber from native species
- Snags at variable height
- A range of tree/shrub species at varying stages of decay and in a variety of light conditions
- Deadwood in living trees.



See also section 5.2.1 in relation to mitigation of risks to public health and safety.

4.7 Maintenance of local native seed sources

4.7.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) In woodlands identified in sections 4.1–4.4, where appropriate and possible, owners/managers shall use natural regeneration or planting stock from parental material growing in the local native seed zone (native species).
- b) In ancient and other semi-natural woodland, where natural regeneration is insufficient, planting stock from ‘source-identified’ stands in the local native seed zone shall be used if it is available. If timber quality is an objective of the planting, the use of stock deriving from selected stands within the local native seed zone shall be considered appropriate.

GUIDANCE

There should be clear justification where non-local sources are used. This may include reasons of tree vigour, timber quality, and long-term forest resilience.

The identity code used for parental material includes an ‘N’ when it applies to native material from known indigenous sources.



EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Seed and plant supply invoices and other relevant records
- › Evidence of efforts to identify planting stock from source-identified stands in the local native seed zone.

4.8.1 REQUIREMENT

Through engagement with the relevant statutory historic environment agencies, local people and other interested parties, and using other relevant sources of information, the owner/manager shall:

- Identify sites and features of special cultural and historical significance
- Assess their condition, and
- Adopting a precautionary approach, devise and implement measures to maintain and/or enhance them.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Any known features mapped and/or documented
- › Discussion with the owner/manager demonstrates rationale for management of relevant sites
- › Records of consultation with statutory bodies, local authorities and interest groups to identify features
- › Documented plans.

GUIDANCE

Examples of relevant sources of information include:

- Maps
- Databases
- Field observations.

Typical examples include:

- Prominent viewing points
- Landscape features
- Veteran and other notable trees
- Historical features and archaeological sites
- Woodlands which feature in literature or which are of artistic significance
- Historic landscapes and woodlands which are still managed under traditional systems.

Where relevant, a professional archaeological walkover survey may be required to inform decisions and provide baseline evidence.

Sites of potential historical importance discovered during the course of forest management should be reported to the relevant statutory historic environment agencies.

See also section 2.3.1 in relation to consultation.



4.9 Game and fisheries management

4.9.1 REQUIREMENT

Game rearing and release, shooting and fishing shall be carried out in accordance with the spirit of codes of practice produced by relevant organisations.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation
- › Relevant permissions and leases
- › Discussion with the owner/manager/responsible person demonstrates awareness of the law and good practice
- › Discussion with interested parties
- › Permissions from statutory bodies where these are required
- › Membership of sporting and conservation organisation.

GUIDANCE

Consider impacts on priority habitats and species and other native species.

Release and feeding areas should be located in areas where there will be low impact on ground flora.

Predator control should be carried out in line with best practice.

The use of lead shot over wetland is restricted by regulations.



5

People, communities and workers

5.1 Woodland access and recreation including traditional and permissive use rights

5.1.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) Existing permissive or traditional uses of the woodland shall be identified and sustained except when such uses can be shown to threaten the integrity of the woodland or the achievement of the objectives of management.
- b) A precautionary approach shall be adopted in relation to water supplies.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Documentation or maps of all existing permissive and traditional uses of the woodland
- › Discussion with interested parties
- › Field observation of public rights of way
- › Evidence presented to justify any restriction of permissive or traditional uses.

GUIDANCE

Permissive and traditional uses include:

- Permissive access routes
- *De facto* access to well-known landmarks
- Gathering fruit or fungi by the public for their own consumption where this does not jeopardise the achievement of biodiversity objectives (having regard to codes of good practice)
- Water supplies.

Permissive routes can be closed annually to maintain their permissive status.

Traditional uses that exploit the woodland resource (e.g. peat cutting) should be carried out at a traditional scale.

'Integrity' refers principally to the ecological maintenance of the woodland.



5.1.2 REQUIREMENT

- a) There shall be provision for some public access subject only to limited exemptions.
- b) Where there is a special demand for further public access for the purpose of environmental education, the owner/manager shall make reasonable efforts to meet this demand.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation to confirm that access is available
- › Maps show public rights of way and/or core paths through or beside the wood
- › Evidence of publicised annual open days or guided walks
- › Access agreements with local authorities
- › Evidence that account has been taken of local demand
- › Evidence from consultation with interested parties
- › Records of publicised annual open days or guided walks, school visits or research undertaken in the woodland
- › Evidence of access provision, path maintenance, conservation management (particularly in regard to visitor erosion) and interpretation at significant cultural and historic environment assets.

GUIDANCE

Woodlands containing or adjoining notable historic environment or ecological features may attract large numbers of visitors even to small properties. This presents an opportunity to promote public access and/or educate visitors about the multiple benefits of forestry.

Professional associations can advise on necessary safety and insurance provisions, ways of supporting educational visits and studies, and methods for recovering some or all of the extra costs of satisfying public demand.

In Scotland:

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act (2003) provides for responsible access on foot, cycle or horse and also for responsible management of access by land owners and managers.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides guidance on responsible behaviour of those taking and managing access together with circumstances where access may be restricted.

In addition, supplementary guidance is published on specific aspects such as events and core paths.

continues on next page

5.1.2 REQUIREMENT (Continued)

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

There is no statutory right of general access to woodland thus emphasising the value of allowing some public access which may be provided through one or more of:

- A permissive freedom to roam
- Public rights of way through or beside the wood
- Publicised open days or guided walks each year
- Permissive access on specified routes
- Access management agreements with local authorities
- In England and Wales only - by voluntarily dedicating woodland for public access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW).

Public access, other than on public rights of way, and environmental education may be denied in the following example situations:

- Woodlands under 10 ha in size with a high private amenity value
- Areas that adjoin dwellings or private gardens
- Isolated woodlands to which there is no ready access route for the public across adjoining land
- Woodlands where there is current evidence of serious and sustained abuse or damage. Persistent vandalism may force owners/managers to place particular woodland blocks or areas 'out of bounds'. Reasons should be communicated through local schools, libraries, post offices and parish halls to help stimulate community co-operation to combat damage
- Areas of the woodland that contain sites, species or features that would be particularly vulnerable to disturbance
- Periods or days when country sports, outdoor recreation or special events would be jeopardised
- Temporary closures in order to ensure public safety.



5.2 Minimising adverse impacts

5.2.1 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager shall mitigate the risks to public health and safety and other negative impacts of woodland operations on local people.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › No evidence of legal non-compliance
- › Evidence that complaints have been dealt with constructively
- › Documented evidence that owners/managers have considered actual and potential impacts of operations on local people and interest groups and have taken steps to mitigate them
- › Use of risk assessment and site management with safety signs and diversions around active operational sites.

GUIDANCE

Examples of impacts include:

- Public safety and access implications of woodland operations
- Timber traffic, particularly in and around the woodland
- Natural hazards to workers and the public, e.g. hazardous trees
- Smoke
- Management of hazards caused by visitor use.



5.2.2 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager shall respond constructively to complaints, seek to resolve grievances through engagement with complainants in the first instance, and follow established legal process should this become necessary.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Discussion with interested parties
 - › A complaints process
 - › A public contact point.
-

5.3 Rural economy

5.3.1 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager shall promote the integration of woodlands into the local economy by:

- Making the best use of the woodland's potential products and services consistent with other objectives
- Providing local people with equitable opportunities for employment and to supply goods and services.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

Evidence of:

- › Local or specialist market opportunities
- › Promoting and encouraging enterprises to strengthen and diversify the local economy
- › Provision for local employment and suppliers.

GUIDANCE

Promotion of integration into the local economy may be achieved by:

- Allowing local or specialist markets opportunities to purchase small-scale or specialist parcels
- Promoting and encouraging enterprises which will strengthen and diversify the woodland economy and the local economy
- Making equitable provision for local employment for contractors and suppliers to provide services and supplies and making this known.

The woodland's potential products include non-timber woodland products and recreational activities.

An example of how the owner/manager might help to diversify the processing industry is that a proportion of timber parcels are advertised and sold by open tender or auction.

Reference to country forestry strategies and engagement with local woodland and community forest initiatives may highlight opportunities to fulfil this requirement.

5.4 Health and safety

5.4.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) There shall be:
- Compliance with health and safety legislation
 - Conformance with associated codes of practice
 - Conformance with FISA guidance.
- b) There shall be contingency plans for any accidents.
- c) There shall be appropriate competency.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Field observation that health and safety legislation and codes of practice are being implemented
- › Discussion with workers demonstrates that they are aware of relevant requirements and have access to appropriate FISA codes of practice
- › Contracts specifying health and safety requirements
- › Records maintained and up to date (e.g. accident-book, site risk assessments, chemical record book, tree safety reports)
- › System to ensure that anyone working in the woodland has had relevant instruction in safe working practice and that the appropriate number has had training in basic first aid and, where relevant, holds a certificate of competence
- › Procedure for monitoring compliance with safety requirements (written for larger organisations) and for dealing with situations where safety requirements are not met
- › Documented health and safety policy and consideration of issues in all procedures and work instructions
- › Evidence of a systematic approach to accident prevention.

GUIDANCE

This requirement relates to anyone on the work site, including workers and members of the public.

Advice to owners/managers

With respect to health and safety, it is important for owners/managers to be aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to fulfilling one or more of the relevant management roles as described in FISA guidance.

See FISA Guidance listed in the appendix of references.



5.5 Training and continuing development

5.5.1 REQUIREMENT

All workers shall have appropriate qualifications, training and/or experience to carry out their roles in conformance to the requirements of this standard, unless working under proper supervision if they are currently undergoing training.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Copies of appropriate certificates of competence
- › Discussion with workers
- › System to ensure that only workers who are appropriately trained or supervised work in the woodland
- › No evidence of workers without relevant training, experience or qualifications working in the woodland
- › Documented training programme for employees
- › Training records for all employees.

GUIDANCE

Where requirements of the work are likely to change, a programme of ongoing training and development should be undertaken.

5.5.2 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager of large enterprises shall promote training, and encourage and support new recruits to the industry.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- › Documented policy
- › Involvement with industry bodies promoting training, including FISA
- › Records of training sessions, provision of sites for training, subsidies for training courses.

GUIDANCE

Promotion of training may be achieved through:

- Providing sites for training courses
- Offering subsidies for training courses.

5.6 Workers' rights

5.6.1 REQUIREMENT

- a) There shall be compliance with workers' rights legislation, including equality legislation.
- b) Workers shall not be deterred from joining a trade union or employee association.
- c) Direct employees shall be permitted to negotiate terms and conditions, including grievance procedures, collectively should they so wish.
- d) Workers shall have recourse to mechanisms for resolving grievances which meet the requirements of statutory codes of practice.
- e) Wages paid to workers shall meet or exceed the statutory national living wage.

GUIDANCE

The statutory national living wage is defined in national minimum wage regulations. The owner/manager may choose to pay wages that are higher than the statutory national living wage, for example a voluntary living wage such as that calculated by the Living Wage Foundation.



EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- > Discussion with workers
- > Documented policies.

5.7 Insurance

5.7.1 REQUIREMENT

The owner/manager and workers shall be covered by adequate public liability and employer's liability insurance.

EXAMPLE VERIFIERS

- > Insurance documents
- > Self-insurance with a policy statement.



Glossary of terms
References

Glossary of terms

A

Access (for public)

Refers to woodland and its associated land open to the public for recreational or educational use (sometimes subject to charges).

Accreditation service

An authoritative body which evaluates and recognises the competence of bodies to certify that woodland management conforms to the specific requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard. Accreditation Services International (ASI) and the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) both provide an accreditation service in the UK. Those bodies which are accredited are referred to as certification bodies.

Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)

See *Woodland*.

Ancient woodland

See *Woodland*.

Ancient woodland site

See *Woodland*.

Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is the process and documentation associated with the statutory requirement under the EU Habitats and Species Directive.

Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)

A designated site providing statutory protection for the best examples of the flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of Northern Ireland. ASSIs also underpin other national and international nature conservation designations.

B

Biodiversity

The variety of ecosystems and living organisms (species), including genetic variation within species.

Biological control agent

A living organism used to eliminate or regulate the population of another living organism. Their use can play an important role in an integrated pest management strategy.

Brash mats

Cut branches spread along the route where forest machinery will be driving to reduce soil damage.

Broadleaves

Broadleaved trees are characterised by their broad leaves and most are deciduous. They produce 'hardwood' timber.

Also see *Conifers*.

Buffer

An area of non-invasive trees or other land use of sufficient width to protect semi-natural woodland from significant invasion by seed from a nearby non-native source.

C

Certification body

A body which is accredited by an accreditation service to certify (by giving written assurance) that woodland management conforms to the specific requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard. Also sometimes referred to as a conformity assessment body.

Certification scheme

A scheme that establishes a set of standards and processes that govern a system to verify that its standards (e.g. for sustainable forest management and chain-of-custody) are met and thereby provide assurance to customers and stakeholders.

Chain-of-custody certification

Chain-of-custody certification is a traceability system that ensures that certified products come from a well-managed source. The chain starts at the forest and is maintained through every link of the chain through to the end user.

Clearfelling

Cutting down of an area of woodland (if it is within a larger area of woodland it is typically a felling greater than 0.25 ha). Sometimes a scatter or small clumps of trees may be left standing within the felled area.

Compliance

In the context of this certification standard, the term 'compliance' refers to meeting legal requirements.

Conformance

In the context of this certification standard, the term 'conformance' refers to meeting the requirements of the certification standard.

Conifers

Coniferous trees are characterised by their needle or scalelike leaves and most are evergreen.

They produce 'softwood' timber.

Also see *Broadleaves*.

Coppice

Management based on regeneration by regrowth from cut stumps (coppice stools). The same stool is used through several cycles of cutting and re-growth.

Also see *Short rotation coppice*.

Coppice with standards

Coppice with a scatter of trees of seedling or coppice origin, grown on a long rotation to produce larger-sized timber and to regenerate new seedlings to replace worn out stools.

COSHH

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations.

Coupe

An area of woodland that has been or is planned for clearfelling.

Cultural features

Historic environment sites, historic buildings and heritage landscapes including ancient woodlands.

D

Deadwood

All types of wood that are dead including whole or wind-snapped standing trees, fallen branch wood and stumps, decaying wood habitats on living trees such as rot holes, dead limbs, decay columns in trunks and limbs, and wood below the ground as roots or stumps.

Diffuse pollution

Diffuse pollution comes from non-point source, widespread activities in the forest environment. Of particular relevance to woodland operations are oil spills and leaks, cutting-chain lubricants, siltation of water-courses, pesticide or fertiliser run-off and smoke.

Drainage

An operation to remove excess water from an area in a controlled way. In woodlands, drains are usually open, unlined channels.

E

Ecological integrity

The health and vitality of the woodland's physical and biological components.

Ecosystem

A community of plants and animals (including humans) interacting with each other and the forces of nature.

Ecosystem services

The benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include:

- provisioning services such as food, forest products and water
- regulating services such as regulation of floods, drought, land degradation, air quality, climate and disease
- supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling; and
- cultural services and cultural values such as recreational, spiritual, religious and other non-material benefits.

Environmental appraisal

Generic term for the process of assessing the impact of plans or operations on the environment.

Environmental impact assessment

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is the process and documentation associated with the statutory requirement under the EU Environmental Assessment Directive.

Environmental values

The following set of elements of the biophysical and human environment:

- ecosystem functions (including carbon sequestration and storage)
- biological diversity
- water resources
- soils
- atmosphere
- landscape values (including cultural and spiritual values).

The actual worth attributed to these elements depends on human and societal perceptions.

F

Felling licence

Licence issued by the relevant forestry authority to permit trees to be felled. With certain exceptions it is illegal to fell trees without prior approval.

FEPA

Food and Environment Protection Act 1985.

FISA

Forest Industry Safety Accord.

Forest

Synonymous with woodland.
See Woodland.

Forest management unit (FMU)

Synonymous with woodland management unit.

See Woodland management unit (WMU).

Forest resilience

The ability of a forest system to recover from short-term disturbances or to adapt to long-term changes, such as climate change, pests or diseases, while retaining or recovering the same basic structure and ways of functioning. Resilience should be considered in both ecological and economic terms.

Forestry

The science and art of managing woodlands.

Forestry authority(ies)

The competent body with responsibility for the regulation of forestry in each country of the United Kingdom: Forestry Commission England, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/Northern Ireland Forest Service, Forestry Commission Scotland and Welsh Government/Natural Resources Wales or their successor bodies.

Forestry leaseholder

The holder of a forest lease that grants control over the management of forestry operations.

G

Game

Animals, either wild or reared, managed for hunting or shot for food.

Genotype

The genetic constitution of an organism, as contrasted with its expressed characteristics which are known as the phenotype.

Glade

Small area of open ground which forms an integral part of the woodland.

Group selection

A method of managing irregular stands in which regeneration is achieved by felling trees in small groups.

H

High conservation value

Areas and features of ecological and biodiversity interest identified in sections 4.1-4.3 and 4.5.

Historic environment

Several thousand years of human activity has contributed to the landscape of the UK that we experience today. The surviving elements of the past take many forms, including ancient woods and forests, veteran trees, earthworks, ruined structures and features buried below ground. Together these elements provide a rich source of information about past societies and how they used and managed the land including their woods and forests.

Horticultural

In relation to section 2.13.3 on Christmas trees: intensive production on a small or large scale in a setting that cannot reasonably be considered to be a forest or woodland.

I

Interested parties

People directly affected by or who have a significant interest in the woodland being managed.

International agreement

An agreement under international law entered into by sovereign states and international organisations which may also be known as a treaty, protocol, covenant, convention, exchange of letters, etc. It provides a means for willing parties to assume obligations among themselves, and a party that fails to live up to their obligations can be held liable under international law. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office's 'UK Treaties Online' database on fco.gov.uk lists those involving the UK.

Glossary of terms

Invasive (species)

Introduced non-native species which spread readily and dominate native species.

IUCN Red List

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is widely recognised as the most comprehensive, objective global approach for evaluating the conservation status of plant and animal species. It provides a global context for the establishment of conservation priorities at the local level.

L

Landscape level

The level of the landscape unit.

Landscape unit

An area of broadly homogeneous landscape character.

Large enterprise

An organisation with at least 250 employees.

Local Authority

See *Statutory body*.

Local people

Anyone living or working in the vicinity who has an interest in the woodland. It is intentional that this term is not more closely defined, and the wider public is not excluded. It is particularly difficult to be precise about how local people are to be contacted or consulted. In some situations, it would be appropriate for this simply to mean those living beside the woodland (e.g. concerning noise disturbance). In other cases (such as using local services), a much wider geographical area will be appropriate. If there is difficulty in identifying local contacts, then the elected representatives should be the first choice.

Long-term retention

Individual, stable stands and clumps of trees retained for environmental benefit significantly beyond the age or size generally adopted by the woodland enterprise.

Lop and top

Woody debris from cutting operations, sometimes converted into chippings.

Low-intensity managed woodland

Woodland management units are classed as being managed in a low-intensity manner when:

a) the rate of timber harvesting is less than 20% of the mean annual increment (MAI) within the total production woodland area of the unit

AND

either

b) the annual harvest from the total production woodland area is less than 5,000 cubic metres

or

c) the average annual timber harvest from the total production woodland is less than 5,000 m³/year during the period of validity of the certificate as verified by harvest reports and surveillance audits.

Note: where Woodland Management Unit-specific estimates of mean annual increment are unavailable or impracticable, regional estimates of growth rates for specific woodland types may be used.

Lower-impact silvicultural systems (LISS)

Silvicultural systems including group selection, shelterwood or under-planting, small coupe felling, coppice or coppice with standards, minimum intervention and single tree selection systems which are suitable for wind-firm conifer woodlands and most broadleaved woodlands.

M

Management planning documentation

See *Woodland management plan*.

Minimum intervention

Management with no systematic felling or planting of trees. Operations normally permitted are fencing, control of exotic plant species and vertebrate pests, maintenance of paths and rides and safety work.

N

National Nature Reserve (NNR)

A designated site containing examples of some of the most important natural and semi-natural terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, managed to conserve their habitats or to provide special opportunities for scientific study of the habitats, communities and species represented within them. In addition, they may be managed to provide public recreation that is compatible with their natural heritage interests.

Native (species)

A species that has arrived and inhabited an area naturally, without deliberate assistance by man, or would occur had it not been removed through past management. For trees and shrubs in the UK this is usually taken to mean those species present after post-glacial recolonisation and before historical times. Some species are only native in particular regions. Differences in characteristics and adaptation to conditions occur more locally hence the term 'locally native'.

Natural conditions

Native species, associations of native species and other environmental values that are typical of the locality.

Natural reserve

Natural reserves are predominantly wooded, usually mature and intended to reach biological maturity. They are permanently identified and in locations which are of particularly high wild-life interest or potential. They are managed by minimum intervention unless alternative interventions have higher conservation or biodiversity value.

Non-timber woodland products (NTWP)

Non-timber woodland products include foliage, moss, fungi, berries, seed, venison and other animal products. Also known as non-timber forest products (NTFP).

O

Open space

In a woodland this includes streams, ponds and well laid-out roads and rides.

Origin (of seed)

The original natural genetic source of those trees which are native to the site.

Owner/manager

The person or entity holding or applying for certification and therefore responsible for demonstrating conformance to this standard. This may be a forestry leaseholder.

P**PAWS**

Plantation on ancient woodland site.

See Woodland.

Permissive (access/use)

Use is by permission whether written or implied, rather than by right.

Pesticide

Any substance, preparation or organism prepared or used, among other uses, to protect plants or wood or other plant products from harmful organisms, to regulate the growth of plants, to give protection against harmful creatures or to render such creatures harmless.

Plantation

See Woodland.

Plantation on ancient woodland site (PAWS)

See Woodland.

Precautionary approach

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental damage. (Based on Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development)

Priority habitats

Habitats identified by statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies under Section 41 (England) and Section 42 (Wales) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, Section 2(4) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, and Section 3(1) of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Also see Statutory body.

Priority habitats and/or species

See Priority habitats and Priority species

Priority species

Protected, rare and endangered species which are:

- Identified by statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies under Section 41 (England) and Section 42 (Wales) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, Section 2(4) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, and Section 3(1) of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011,
- Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981,
- Protected under European law (European Protected Species), and/or
- Categorised as Near Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List.

Also see Statutory body and IUCN Red List.

Provenance

Location of trees from which seed or cuttings are collected. Designation of Regions of Provenance under the Forest Reproductive Materials regulations is used to help nurseries and growers select suitable material. The term is often confused with 'origin' which is the original natural genetic source.

Publicly available

Accessible to local people or other interested parties. For example, placing material on a website or on signage, providing electronic or hard copies of documents, or making documents available for inspection at a local office. In most cases, a charge may not be made for making material publicly available. However, where a summary of material has been made publicly available free of charge, a charge to cover costs of reproduction and handling may be made if any additional material is requested.

Public Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way are statutory rights of way in England and Wales and are recorded on Definitive Maps held by local authorities showing whether the right of way is by foot, horse or vehicle.

In Northern Ireland, records of public rights of way are held by district councils.

R**Ramsar sites**

Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Recreation

Activity or experience of the visitor's own choice within a woodland setting. (Facilities may sometimes be provided and charges levied for their use.)

Also see Access.

Regeneration

Renewal of woodland through sowing, planting, or natural regeneration.

Relict

A remnant of a formally widespread species or habitat that persists in an isolated area from a previous land-use or vegetation cover.

Remnant

The baseline of surviving ancient woodland features found in PAWS, for which there is physical or documentary evidence.

These include:

- Woodland specialist flora. These are species with a strong affinity for ancient woodland but may vary in relation to geographic region
- Trees originating from the pre-plantation stand. They can be maidens, standards, coppice stools or pollards and may include ancient or veteran trees
- Deadwood originating from the pre-plantation stand, coarse woody debris and associated decomposer communities
- Undisturbed woodland soil profile.

These features provide the continuity of habitat with the preplantation phase.

Restocking

Replacing felled areas by sowing seed, planting or natural regeneration.

Retentions

Trees retained, usually for environmental benefit, significantly beyond the age or size generally adopted by the owner for felling.

Ride

Permanent unsurfaced access route through woodland.

Glossary of terms

S

Semi-natural woodland

See *Woodland*.

Shelterwood

The shelterwood system involves the felling of a proportion of the mature trees within an area whilst leaving some trees as a seed source and shelter for natural regeneration. The seed trees are subsequently removed. Note that the term 'seed tree system' is often used to describe 'shelterwoods' with densities of <50 retained mature trees per hectare.

Short rotation coppice (SRC)

Short rotation coppice (usually willow or poplar) typically grown as an energy crop and harvested every 3 years.

Also see *Coppice*.

Short rotation forestry (SRF)

Short rotation forestry crops are typically harvested at between 8 and 20 years.

Silviculture (silvicultural)

The techniques of tending and regenerating woodlands, and harvesting their physical products.

Single tree selection

A method of managing irregular stands in which individual trees of any size are removed more or less uniformly throughout the stand.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A designated site providing statutory protection for the best examples of the flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of England, Scotland and Wales. SSSIs also underpin other national and international nature conservation designations.

Small coupe felling

A small scale clearfelling system. The system is imprecisely defined but coupes are typically between 0.5 ha and 2.0 ha in extent, with the larger coupes elongated in shape so the edge effect is still high.

Snag

A standing dead tree that has lost its top.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Area designated under the EU Habitats Directive.

Special Protection Area (SPA)

Area designated under the EU Birds Directive.

Spirit, conformance to

Conformance to the spirit means that the owner/manager is aiming to achieve the principles set out in the certification standard.

Statutory body(ies)

There are four categories:

- The statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies: Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency or their successor bodies
- The statutory environment protection agencies: Environment Agency (in England), Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency or their successor bodies
- The statutory historic environment agencies: Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, Cadw (in Wales) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency or their successor bodies
- Local authorities responsible for a wide range of functions including highways and planning.

T

Thinning

Tree removal, which results in a temporary reduction in basal area, made after canopy closure to promote growth and greater value in the remaining trees.

Timely manner

As promptly as circumstances reasonably allow; not intentionally postponed by the owner/manager.

Trademarks

'UKWAS' and 'United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard' are registered trademarks

Traditional

In relation to section 2.13.3 on Christmas trees: production on a small scale in a setting that can reasonably be considered to be a woodland.

Traditional rights

Rights which result from a long series of habitual or customary actions, which have, by uninterrupted acquiescence, acquired the force of a law within a geographical or sociological unit.

U

Under-planting

The planting of young trees under the canopy of an existing stand – often combined with a shelterwood or group selection system.

United Kingdom (UK)

References to the 'United Kingdom' or 'UK' refer to the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' which comprises England, Scotland and Wales (collectively referred to as 'Great Britain') and Northern Ireland.

V

Value(s)

The weights given to economic, biodiversity, recreational, environmental, social and cultural impacts when considering management options.

Veteran tree

A tree that is of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its age, size or condition, including the presence of deadwood micro-habitats.

W

Water course

Streams and rivers. References to forestry practice on adjacent land should be taken as applying also to adjacent water e.g. ponds and lakes.

Whole tree harvesting

The removal from the harvesting site of every part of the tree above ground or above and below ground.

Windthrow

Uprooting of trees by the wind.

Windthrow risk

A technical assessment of risk based on local climate, topography, site conditions and tree height.

Wood pasture

Areas of historical, cultural and ecological interest, where grazing is managed in combination with a proportion of open tree canopy cover.

Woodland

Predominantly tree-covered land whether in large tracts (generally called forests) or smaller units (known by a variety of terms such as woodlands, woods, copses and shelterbelts).

Those woodlands which are comprised mainly of locally native trees and shrubs, and have some structural characteristics of natural woodland are referred to as **semi-natural woodland**.

Those woodlands which are derived principally from the human activity of planting, sowing or intensive silvi-cultural treatment but lack most of the principal characteristics and key elements of semi-natural woodland are generally referred to as **plantations** or **woodlands of planted origin**. They often include a proportion of naturally regenerated trees and are often managed to become more like natural woodlands over time.

Woodland is referred to as **ancient woodland** when it has been in continuous existence since before AD 1600 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland or since before AD 1750 in Scotland.

The term **ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)** is used to describe those semi-natural stands on ancient woodland sites. The precise definition varies according to the local circumstances in each country within the United Kingdom and guidance should be sought from the relevant forestry authority.

The term **ancient woodland site** refers to the site of an ancient woodland irrespective of its current tree cover. Where the native tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting of tree species not native to the site it is referred to as a **plantation on ancient woodland site (PAWS)**.

Woodland management plan

The collection of documents, reports, records and maps that describe, justify and regulate the activities carried out by any manager, staff or organisation in a management unit, including statements of objectives and policies.

Woodland management unit (WMU)

The woodland management unit (WMU) is the area to which the management planning documentation relates. A WMU is a clearly defined woodland area, or areas, with mapped boundaries, managed to a set of explicit long-term objectives.

Workers

All employed persons including public employees as well as self-employed persons and volunteers. This includes part-time and seasonal employees, of all ranks and categories, including labourers, administrators, supervisors, executives, contractor employees, self-employed contractors and subcontractors and other licensed operators.

References

Main legislation, regulations, guidelines and codes of practice referred to in the UKWAS

The main legislation, guidelines and codes of practice relevant to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard are shown here. These are correct and as complete as possible as at August 2017 but should not be treated as an exhaustive list.

It is important at all times to refer to the most recent and/or new documents and relevant websites should be checked frequently.

The key main documents are listed below and the other main documents are available in a separate UKWAS appendix document under the five section headings of the certification standard.

Key Legislation

1967: Forestry Act 1967 (as amended)
1967: Plant Health Act 1967
1982: Forestry Commission Bye-laws
1953: Forestry Act (Northern Ireland) 1953
2010: Forestry Act (Northern Ireland) 2010

Key Publications

2017: The UK Forestry Standard (fourth edition) which incorporates previously separate guidelines on seven themes:
Forests and Biodiversity
Forests and Climate Change
Forests and Historic Environment
Forests and Landscape
Forests and People
Forests and Soil
Forests and Water

Other main reference documents

Other main reference documents are provided in a separate UKWAS appendix document available on ukwas.org.uk.

For easy reference, the documents are assigned to the appropriate section headings of the certification standard.

Further information sources

Information on the UK Forestry Standard and to download a copy – forestry.gov.uk/ukfs

Information on forestry grant schemes and regulations may be obtained from the relevant [forestry authorities](#).

Guidance on environmental regulations is provided on the following websites:

England

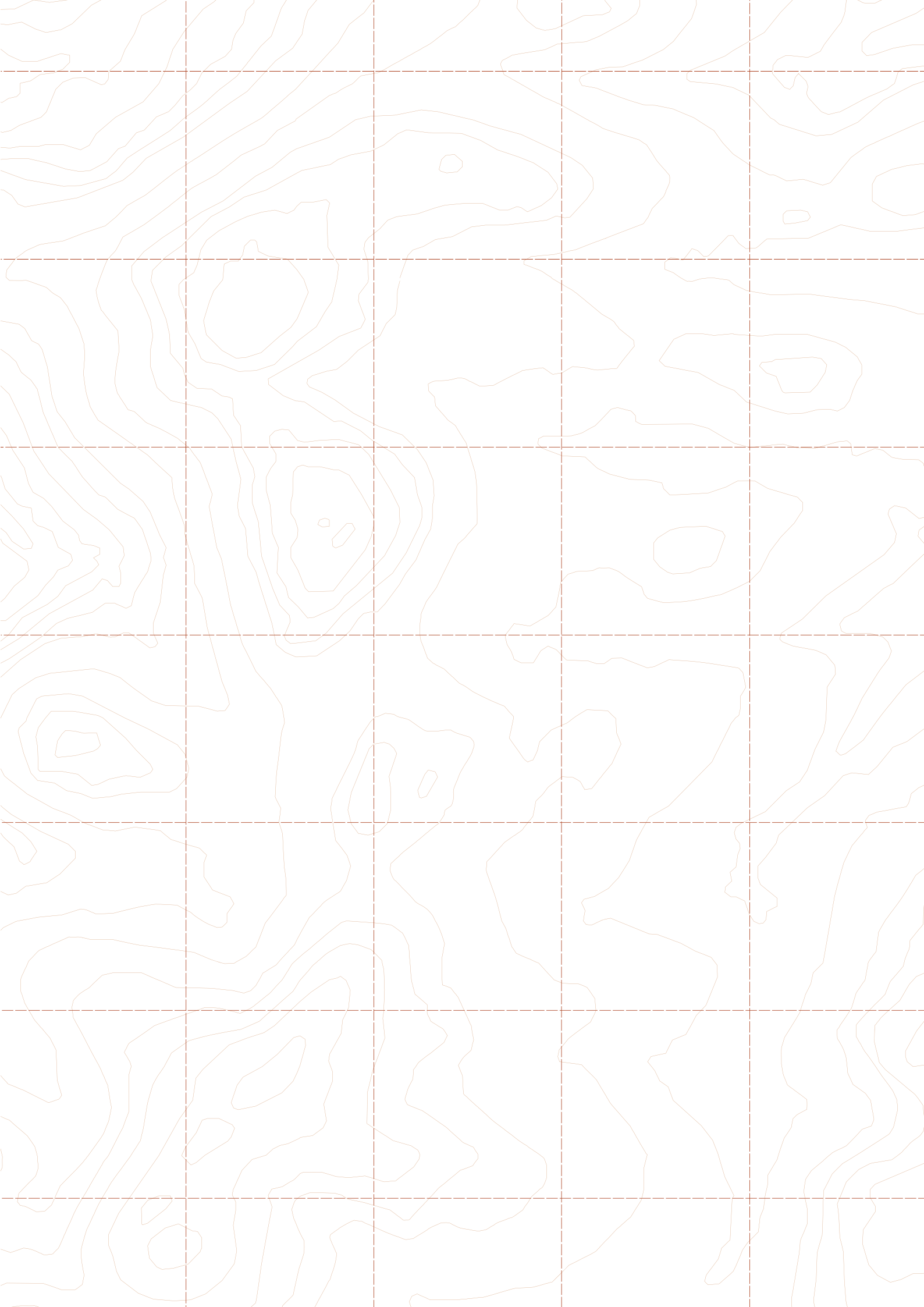
gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

Scotland & Northern Ireland

netregs.gov.uk

Wales

naturalresources.wales



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