

United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard

UKWAS Revision 2013-2016: Issues Paper

September 2014

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Background

The UKWAS revision process is set out in the *UKWAS Revision Process 2013-2016* document approved by the UKWAS Steering Group on September 19th 2013 - <http://ukwas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/UKWAS-Revision-Timetable-2013-16.pdf> . The revision process conforms to the *UKWAS Standard-Setting Process (Version 2.0)* document which is aligned with the FSC and PEFC requirements - <http://ukwas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/UKWAS-Standard-Setting-Process-Version-2.0-12.03.13.pdf> .

FSC UK and PEFC UK were invited to participate in the review process and were provided with the *UKWAS Revision Process 2013-2016* document which includes a projected time line. Both confirmed their participation in accordance with the process and timetable.

The revision and consultation processes are being taken forward in three main phases:

- **Phase 1(Dec 2013-Sept 2014):** an **evidence gathering** phase including initial stakeholder consultation (60 days) in Feb-March 2014
- **Phase 2 (Oct 2014-Oct 2015):** a **main revision drafting** phase leading to a revision draft consultation (60 days) in Sept/Oct 2015
- **Phase 3 (Nov 2015-Nov 2016):** a **conclusion phase** including a further revision and pre-approval draft consultation (30 days) to conclude early February 2016 prior to any further amendment and final submission to FSC UK and PEFC UK by the end of April 2016.

In Phase 1 the Steering Group identified the key issues to be considered during the main revision drafting phase and involved the following elements:

- Certification Schemes' Requirements Review
- International Benchmarking Review
- Interpretation Review
- Small and Low Intensity Managed Woodlands Review
- Technical Review
- Standard Users' Feedback Review
- Review of the Initial Stakeholders' Consultation.

This Issues Paper is a working document setting out the results of Phase 1 identifying the information to be taken into consideration during the Phase 2 main revision drafting phase.

UKWAS Steering Group

September 2014

Section 1:

Certification Schemes' Requirements Review

Purpose

A consideration of advice (to be provided by the certification schemes) on any new or revised policies, procedures or guidance that is relevant to the revision. National certification schemes should seek advice and guidance from their international body when compiling their advice.

PEFC UK Requirements Review

The suite of PEFC standards highlighted below were last updated in November 2010, except for PEFC ST 2002: 2013 which was revised and completed in May 2013. The chain of custody standard was revised to meet the added requirements of the European Union Timber Regulations (EUTR). This standard now includes a due diligence section and a new definition of 'PEFC controlled sources' which was also introduced. It is thought that the new requirements of the chain of custody will have little impact on the UKWAS review, therefore the focus in this report has been on the other standards and the non-conformances highlighted during the last PEFC UK Scheme re-endorsement process. These non-conformances were highlighted after the endorsement and some have already been included in the last UKWAS update (3.1) or in the revised Standard Setting document. However, there may still be a few points that could be included within UKWAS 4.

PEFC ST 1003:2010 – Sustainable Forest Management - Requirement

PEFC ST 1001: 2010 – Standard Setting requirements

PEFC ST 1002: 2010 - Group Forest Management Certification

PEFC Standard and System Requirement Checklist

PEFC ST 2002:2013 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements

It should be noted that the PEFC ST 1003: 2010 is expected to be reviewed in 2015 and any changes may have an impact on the UKWAS.

Standard setting

PEFC UK is very different in its standard setting procedures than most other European schemes. The PEFC UK scheme essentially endorses UKWAS and its standard setting processes (also endorsed by FSC), whilst most other schemes in the PEFC family work

directly with its stakeholders to establish their own standard setting mechanisms and to maintain their own endorsed schemes and SFM standards. They are also directly responsible for the development of the standard, rather than being one step removed and in most cases, will have greater control over the standard setting procedures.

PEFC UK Scheme was re-endorsed in July 2013 after several non-conformances were noted by the independent consultant (Form International). Several of these non-conformances were related to the standard setting process. (Although it should be noted that the last UKWAS review started prior to the introduction of PEFC ST 1001:2010). However, some of these non-conformances were required to be addressed by UKWAS and some by PEFC UK. The UKWAS changes were considered and included in the revised Standard Setting Process version 2 document (12/03/2013).

These changes included the extra text, stating *'The Steering Group may also invite additional persons to provide technical expertise or to represent stakeholder groups not otherwise represented'* (this was deemed sufficient to address the need for including any disadvantaged stakeholders and that a balanced representation of stakeholders are included). Further additional text included: *All decisions are made on the basis of consensus so that all stakeholder views will be considered fully and no single interest group can dominate proceedings.*

Due to UKWAS being a membership scheme it is not easy to ensure a fully balanced representation, as participants generally have to be nominated by a member. In other European schemes it would appear that a greater number of small woodland owners actively participate in the working groups without necessarily having any affiliation to the scheme itself. For instance PEFC Denmark clearly state that it is not a requirement that stakeholders on working groups are members of PEFC Denmark and that at least 50% of the working groups represent materially affected stakeholders.

Although other schemes appear to have a good balance in their working groups and plenty of volunteer members, UKWAS, especially during its recent revision, has had difficulty in engaging with stakeholders and encouraging participation. This is likely to be because most stakeholders feel that the standard is already appropriate for the UK woodlands and don't feel the necessity to drive improvement any further. This was evident by the fact that a greater number of stakeholders were present in the steering group meetings, during the early years of the UKWAS development. By contrast, other countries, particularly the Nordics, have forestry more integrated into their way of life and therefore certification standards appear intrinsically more important.

It was noted by the Independent Consultants that representation from education, research and training on the steering group was unfilled during the last revision and due to the non-conformity, PEFC UK received for this, both PEFC UK and UKWAS, should pro-actively seek

representatives to fill the empty seats along with potential new steering group members, for the forthcoming revision.

Perhaps the question should be asked whether UKWAS or PEFC UK needs to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise to define relevant sectors, key stakeholders in each sector (including disadvantaged), key issues and the favoured form of communication to best reach them. UKWAS will then know precisely who the key stakeholders are and could proactively seek their assistance and participation in the standard setting and revision process. This is something that has been undertaken by other PEFC schemes.

It was also asked, that at the start of the review process, information on the objectives, scope and development should be communicated publicly and that stakeholder representatives shall be notified directly through the website, certification schemes' websites and trade media in a timely manner. This has already been added to the Standard Setting Process version 2.

One of the other main issues to arise out of the last endorsement process was the need for both PEFC UK and UKWAS to keep clearer records of 'invitations for stakeholders to participate in consultations', including the names of those who wish to engage and also how any comments received were considered within the review. All comments and dates received, including replies given and the key comments from working groups are to be posted on the UKWAS web site within given timescales. All announcements are to be recorded.

The final comment on the consultant's report regarding standard setting was to do with complaints. The Steering group will now initially acknowledge receipt of any complaints, then gather sufficient evidence to validate the complaint and objectively make a decision. On reaching a decision, the Steering Group will formally communicate the decision to the complainant. Text within the new standard setting document has been revised to meet this requirement

Forest Management

Prior to looking at some other PEFC schemes to see if there are any fundamental differences that may assist UKWAS in improving its current scheme, PEFC UK firstly looked at those areas where the recent assessment by an independent consultant highlighted non-conformances. The italic text are references from the PEFC ST 1003: 2010 SFM standard and the three issues below are those raised in the endorsement process.

- 1 The annual allowable exploitation of non-timber forest products should be part of the management plan.*

UKWAS 2.1.1 and 2.2.2 refer to the management plan and the 'harvesting and restocking plans' but do not refer specifically to NTFPs. UKWAS 2.2.3 does refer to

NFTPs but this is a reference to harvesting only and does not refer to a management plan.

The point was made by the consultant that NFTPs should be an integral part of the management plan and mentioned within UKWAS 2.1.1.

- 2 *Conversion of forests to other types of land use shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion entails amongst others, a small portion of forest type.*

Although UKWAS 3.5 explains that conversion shall not happen unless under limited circumstances, no definition of exceeding a small woodland size is given. The argument was raised that UKWAS has stricter control as conversion will only happen under certain limited circumstances and does not therefore have any allowance on size.

- 3 *Protected and endangered plant and animal species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures shall be taken for their protection and, where relevant, to increase their population.*

Although UKWAS 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 cover most of the requirements, it was deemed insufficient as no specific requirement was found that prohibits the exploitation of endangered plants and animal species for commercial purposes. In addition the reference to BAP in the guidance and the terminology 'Protection and enhancement 'may be' through....' was deemed to be insufficient and not strong enough.

FSC UK Requirements Review

Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship

Version 5-0 Draft 2-0 of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship is now applicable. In addition, the FSC International Generic Indicators (IGIs) will need to be applied although work on finalizing these is ongoing.

FSC UK has presented suggested textual amendments which are shown in full in Annex 1 to this paper.

Additional feedback on FSC UK's workers' rights proposals is included as Appendix 6.

Section 2:

International Benchmarking Review

Purpose

A comparison with any equivalent accredited standards of a similar geographical or ecological scope of application, and an evaluation of whether there are any substantial differences in the overall cost/benefit balance of compliance for similar types of enterprise with similar forest conditions.

(To be provided by the certification schemes.)

FSC UK International Benchmarking Review

Submission from FSC UK:

International Benchmarking Review

Dr Owen Davies, Forest Standards Manager, FSC UK

March 2014

1. Executive summary

The requirements of five FSC national forest stewardship standards, from Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden, were compared with those of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, with a particular emphasis on requirements for small or low intensity managed forests (SLIMF). Amongst the expected differences in detail and emphasis related to different national circumstances, the five standards were found to differ from UKWAS in some notable ways, including a greater emphasis on forest productivity, differing approaches to high conservation values, and tighter controls on plantations and exotic species. Those standards which explicitly addressed SLIMF tended to offer far more concessions to smaller woodlands, particularly in terms of administrative requirements and consultation. Some recognised a third, larger category of forests in addition to SLIMF and non-SLIMF, with some requirements considered reasonable only for these largest holdings. In two countries, the smaller subsets of SLIMF requirements were available in separate, shorter and less daunting standard documents.

2. Brief and approach

The UKWAS brief for this review was: "A comparison with any equivalent accredited standards of a similar geographical or ecological scope of application, and an evaluation of whether there are any substantial differences in the overall cost/benefit balance of compliance for similar types of enterprise with similar forest conditions."

Five FSC national forest stewardship standards have been considered, from Denmark (FSC-STD-DNK-01-2004), Germany (FSC-STD-DEU-02-2012), the Republic of Ireland (FSC-STD-IRL-

01-2012), the Netherlands (FSC-STD-NLD-01-2004) and Sweden (FSC-STD-SWE-02-2010); with the exception of the relatively recent Irish standard, the same countries were included in the 2009 benchmarking review. (Other neighbouring countries with an FSC presence, France and Belgium, do not have national forest stewardship standards.) All of these national standards follow version 4 of the FSC Principles and Criteria (as does UKWAS version 3.1) and will in due course be revised during the transfer to version 5; the references to Principles and Criteria below follow the version 4 numbering except where indicated otherwise. The standards apply to both natural and plantation forests.

Irish conditions, in terms of physical environment and woodland history, most closely match those in the UK. Conditions in the other countries differ from those in the UK to some degree; in Germany and Sweden in particular there is a stronger forest culture and tradition and a range of native species better suited to productive conifer forestry. Sweden differs from all of the other countries in that it has a recognised group of indigenous people, the Sami.

All five standards have been scrutinised with a particular emphasis on their treatment of small or low intensity managed forests (SLIMF), but a number of other significant differences from UKWAS have also been highlighted below. It should be noted that this review can only present the text of the standards as developed nationally and approved by FSC International; it is not possible without further investigation to state how successful these standards have been in meeting their aims.

3. General observations on the standards

There follow some notable observations on the five standards considered, related where applicable to the relevant FSC criterion (in brackets). These are followed by a comparison with UKWAS, including brief considerations of the consequences of adopting features of the other standards.

3.1 Denmark

The management plan, policies and “certification assessment contract” are considered adequate demonstration of long-term commitment to the Principles and Criteria (1.6). Several employment law requirements are explicitly included in the standard text (4.2), and the annexes to the standard include the text of the Danish Forest Act.

Similar to the German standard, the Danish standard emphasises quality timber production and a range of species and products (5.1); further, the “harvest and use of forest products are continually evaluated in order to ensure optimal use” (5.2).

Similar to the Irish standard, there are relatively loose requirements for variation in age classes, species and rotations in plantations (10.3), but there is a requirement for the proportion of native species in exotic plantations to increase continuously, aiming for 20 % native species at stand level (10.4).

3.2 Germany

The silvicultural emphasis of the German standard is on close-to-nature forestry: “The goal of silviculture management and harvesting strategies is the existence of forest stands

appropriate to the region approximating the tree species composition, dynamics and structure of natural forest plant association” (6.3). Clearfelling is avoided on principle (6.3) and the standard is prescriptive in terms of e.g. natural and artificial regeneration (6.3), extraction routes (6.5) and cultivation (6.5). There is an explicit requirement for larger woods to use representative samples of existing ecosystems to inform the management of other forest areas (6.4). Plantations are restricted to Christmas trees and decorative foliage only (10.1).

Similar to the Danish standard, the “widest possible range of forest products and the production of high quality timber are strived for” and sales figures must be taken into account in preparing the next felling plan (5.2). There should be “development of markets for lesser known timber species and products” (5.2).

Appropriate use of biological control agents is ensured through reference to those approved for use by a single authority (6.8).

Management plans are revised on a ten year cycle (7.2).

The standard appendices include comprehensive addenda to the criteria and indicators, including, for example, recommendations for determining sustainable harvesting levels (5.6).

3.3 Republic of Ireland

The introductory sections of the standard qualify requirements for “minimum areas where ecological and social objectives are to be prioritized”, noting that “It is the intention of the standard to promote good forestry practice throughout the FMU [forest management unit] and to ensure that the different functions are managed sustainably and collectively in time and space and not compartmentalized to different areas of the FMU.”

There is a simple approach to local communities’ rights, with requirements that there be no infringement of established rights, and protection of recognised accesses to cultural sites (2.2).

There is a similarly simple approach to local “opportunities for employment, training, and other services”, including making efforts to provide access “for training and educational purposes, and amenity and community initiatives when requested”, and informing third parties accessing the wood of its certification status (4.1).

There is a requirement to diversify forest products, and to encourage niche markets (5.4). There is a requirement to map the location of the FMU in the water catchment, and to record water quality and “other catchment and landscape level environmental information” (6.1).

The standard explicitly requires that the positive impacts of site-disturbing operations be enhanced (6.1).

There is a requirement where third parties hold hunting or fishing rights to seek their co-operation in meeting protected area requirements (6.2).

Management must “aim to reflect natural patterns of regeneration and succession to enhance, maintain or restore the ecological functions and values of the FMU” (6.3). The ecological functions of catchments are explicitly mentioned (6.3).

Monitoring requirements include water quality in and leaving the FMU (8.2).

Some high conservation values (HCVs) are not recognised as being present in Ireland; HCV2 – landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics, HCV4 – critical ecosystem services, HCV5 – community needs, and HCV6 – cultural values (Principle 9).

Similar to the Danish standard, there are relatively loose requirements for the diversification of plantation structure (10.3). There is, however, a requirement to use native species where these meet management objectives to the same extent as exotics; the best native species for a site must be identified and the use of exotics justified where they are used instead (10.4).

3.4 The Netherlands

There is an explicit requirement for cost-benefit analysis in the context of economic viability (5.1).

The standard stipulates, in the context of strengthening and diversifying the local economy and not relying on a single product, that “Income is generated from more than a single forest product or service” (5.4).

There are particularly interesting restrictions on plantations; forest stands are limited to 2 ha to promote diversity in composition (10.3), and permissible plantations species are listed (10.4).

3.5 Sweden

Many of the interesting features of the Swedish standard relate to the treatment of different sizes of forest holding and are covered in the section of this review on that subject.

In the context of community opportunities for employment etc., there is a requirement for major holdings (see SLIMF notes below) to foster “long-term, stable and beneficial relationships with contracting businesses” (4.1).

There are very detailed requirements and guidance for consultation, particularly for non-SLIMF (4.4).

All managers, SLIMF and non-SLIMF, are explicitly required to “utilize a substantial part of the available forest production” (5.1).

There is a requirement to seek agreements with other parties on joint management of natural resources where appropriate (non-SLIMF) (5.5); compare the requirement in the Irish standard for co-operation with holders of hunting and fishing rights (6.2).

Managers of major holdings are required to take a “landscape ecology perspective” (6.1).

There is a percentage limit to the establishment of new areas of exotic species, and a requirement to control natural regeneration of those species (6.9).

3.6 Comparison with UKWAS

A detailed comparison of all the requirements of these standards with UKWAS would be extremely lengthy and probably rather unenlightening. Unsurprisingly, there is a great deal of variation related to different national circumstances in, for example, deadwood prescriptions and targets for steering forest composition. The standards are explicit on some subjects, such as forest edge management (Denmark, Germany, Ireland and Sweden), where UKWAS would rely on references to the UK Forestry Standard and related guidance. Rather than picking through all of these minutiae, the emphasis of this comparison is primarily on areas where there is potential for positive changes to UKWAS, in other words where other standards point to potentially achieving more rather than imposing more restrictions on forest management.

A general positive point to note is the Irish response to the risk of succumbing to forestry by numbers; the explicit recognition that while area targets are necessary to ensure that some considerations are not neglected, the true aim is integrated multi-functional forestry. A statement to this effect might usefully be added to the note in UKWAS on area based requirements and could encourage owners and managers to take a more positive approach to some requirements which might otherwise seem burdensome or contrary to their own objectives.

Other points to consider which are not currently reflected in UKWAS are the explicit recognition and enhancement of potential positive impacts of operations; emphasising co-operation in resource and habitat management to the potential benefit of all parties; and actively using areas set aside as representative of native ecosystems to guide woodland management (admittedly mostly relevant to those pursuing relatively close-to-nature forestry, as in Germany). Given the increasing interest in the hydrological effects of land management, there could be greater emphasis on understanding the place of the forest in a catchment and its effects on water quality (as in Ireland) or, more generally, on “landscape ecology” (as in Sweden); while this might impose some restrictions or costs on owners or managers, it might alleviate downstream concerns or criticisms and even provide some positive publicity.

3.6.1 Forest productivity

One area in which other standards are notably positive is forest productivity, which may be seen as recognition of the importance of the economic element of multi-purpose forestry. There is emphasis on producing quality timber (Denmark and Germany) and a wide range of products (Denmark, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands). There is recognition of the need for sales information to feed back into forest management (Denmark and Germany) and of the potential role of new or niche markets (Germany and Ireland). There is recognition of the potential benefits of “long-term, stable and beneficial relationships with contracting businesses” (Sweden). Most notably of all, perhaps, there is in one case a requirement to use a “substantial part of the available forest production” (Sweden) rather than allow a woodland to be unproductive; while this latter requirement may be unpalatable for some who do not have an economic motivation for forest stewardship, it is consistent with the threefold approach of FSC – economic, environmental and social – and the demands of a

resource hungry world, particularly in an island nation still heavily dependent on timber imports.

3.6.2 High conservation values

In addition to the possible positive developments outlined above, there is potential to avoid unnecessary complication in UKWAS by following the Irish example on high conservation values. Arguments could perhaps be made that HCV2 (landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics) and HCV5 (community needs) as defined by FSC are not present in the UK either. If these arguments were accepted, wording required to address them explicitly could be omitted from UKWAS. It seems surprising, however, that HCV4 (critical ecosystem services) and HCV6 (cultural values) are not considered to be present in Ireland, particularly given emphasis elsewhere in the Irish standard on hydrological ecosystem services (6.3), and arguments against them being recognised in the UK seem unlikely to be accepted.

3.6.3 Plantations and exotic species

More contentiously in a UK context, some standards (Germany and the Netherlands) have strict controls on plantations, while others perhaps have stricter controls on the use of exotic species (Sweden) or greater emphasis on the preferential use of native species (Ireland) than UKWAS. While version 5 of the FSC Principles and Criteria remains more favourable to native species (10.2) than to alien species (10.3), it is hard to imagine a wholesale shift towards native (almost entirely broadleaved) species by an industry heavily dependent on introduced (almost entirely coniferous) species; nevertheless it is not unreasonable to ask whether the predominant approach to forestry in the UK is consistent with the Principles and Criteria, and whether more emphasis ought not to be put on encouraging native broadleaf silviculture, with all the attendant issues of squirrel control, growth rates and markets.

4. The treatment of forest scale, including small or low intensity managed forests (SLIMF)

4.1 The Netherlands

The Dutch standard does not include any explicit concessions for SLIMF, although there are a few references to requirements “appropriate to the scale of the forest property”, notably in the context of the relatively high costs and low financial returns associated with management planning (Principle 7) and monitoring (Principle 8) for “small and very small” properties.

4.2 Republic of Ireland

The Irish standard, rather than identifying indicators specific to SLIMF, identifies indicators specific to large forests (> 200 ha), and states that “These indicators for large forests primarily relate to additional administrative requirements associated with forest management”. For example, only large forest owners and managers are required to “take proactive steps to inform staff and interested stakeholders about FSC certification and the long-term management implications of adherence” (1.6) and to “have a formal system to identify and review new scientific and technical information that is relevant to... forest management” (7.2).

4.3 Germany

The German standard has indicators specific to SLIMF (< 100 ha). In the official standard document these are shown side by side with the non-SLIMF indicators and are in many cases reduced or simplified, and some non-SLIMF indicators have no SLIMF equivalent. The rationalisation of SLIMF indicators is such that the requirements of more than one criterion may be addressed by a single indicator. Verifiers are only given for SLIMF indicators (although some non-SLIMF indicators have “sub-indicators”). On the FSC Deutschland website, two standard documents are available for download; the *Waldstandard*, which presents all of the non-SLIMF indicators in the order of the FSC Principles and Criteria, and the *Kleinwaldstandard*, which presents all of the SLIMF indicators and verifiers and does not follow the order of the Principles and Criteria.

4.4 Sweden

The Swedish standard not only recognises SLIMF (< 1,000 ha) but also “major holdings” (> 5,000 ha). Some indicators apply only to non-SLIMF, some apply only to SLIMF, and some apply to both. There are far fewer SLIMF indicators than non-SLIMF, and the level of verifiers is also often lower. Some indicators only apply to major holdings. The requirements for major holdings seem generally to be for more proactive publicity and outreach (e.g. a publicly available statement of commitment under criterion 1.6) and for more formal procedures (e.g. procedures for use rights disputes under criterion 2.3). Two versions of the standard are available on the FSC Sweden website, one which includes all indicators (*Svensk skogsbruksstandard*) and one which includes only SLIMF indicators (*Svensk skogsbruksstandard SLIMF*), both in the normal Principles and Criteria format.

4.5 Denmark

The Danish standard also recognises three different size categories of forest holding; small (< 50 ha), medium (50-250 ha) and large (> 250 ha). There are “exceptions” for small and medium holdings in some cases in terms of indicators and verifiers. Generally, there are more stringent requirements for large holdings in terms of formal mapping, planning, guidelines, records, consultation and machine use; for example, there are lower habitat mapping requirements for small forest holdings under criterion 6.2, and small and medium holdings are not expected to have a training plan or records under criterion 7.3. Despite the different treatment of small, medium and large forest holdings, and unlike FSC Deutschland and FSC Sweden, there is no separate SLIMF standard available on the FSC Danmark website.

4.6 Comparison with UKWAS

4.6.1 Presenting SLIMF requirements

The German approach to presenting SLIMF requirements in a separate document which does not follow the FSC Principles and Criteria structure perhaps has a parallel in the structure of UKWAS; the format is intended “to facilitate ease of operation within the forest enterprise”. The separate SLIMF documents for both Germany and Sweden seem like a good approach to presenting a less daunting standard to small woodland owners and managers.

4.6.2 The nature of SLIMF requirements

It is important to note that, whereas UKWAS only makes concessions to SLIMF in terms of means of verification, the Danish, German, Irish and Swedish standards all have lower

requirements at the indicator level as well as at the verifier level. Also, with the exception of Sweden where forest management is on a far greater scale, in all of these countries “small” woods are considerably smaller than in the UK, where the SLIMF threshold is 500 ha. There is evidently less of an emphasis on a high threshold for SLIMF, and more on providing genuine concessions in terms of certification requirements.

The following SLIMF concessions in Denmark and Sweden are presented as examples of what might be considered in the UK.

In Denmark, only large forest holdings are expected to have legislation available in the office (1.1); to have an employee training plan (4.1); to have written guidelines for preventing erosion and protecting water quality (6.5); and to monitor soil and water quality, and the impacts of the forest drainage system (10.6). Only managers of medium and large FMUs have to map forest habitats; managers of small FMUs only have to map natural forests and “other biologically valuable old forests” (6.2).

In Sweden, only major forest holdings are required to have publicly available documents stating their commitment to the FSC standard (1.6); to have procedures for resolving disputes over use rights (2.3); to foster “long-term, stable and beneficial” relationships with contractors (4.1); and to consider various landscape level forest planning issues (6.1). SLIMF managers have lower requirements to actively seek information, instead relying on publicly available sources (3.3). They may consult on operations only when they have received comments, rather than proactively informing stakeholders of operations and seeking views (4.4), and may likewise accept comments on managing high conservation values rather than actively consulting (9.2). They have lower monitoring requirements (8.2).

5. Conclusion

There are, unsurprisingly, many differences in the detail of the five standards considered in this review which reflect the particular circumstances prevailing in their respective countries. It is not to be expected that UKWAS should exactly match the requirements of any or all of these standards. There are, however, areas of commonality and particular features which might be considered during the UKWAS revision process. The positive impacts of certification in particular could be emphasised over restrictions on forest management or requirements which are seen as burdensome and contrary to the objectives of owners or managers. A greater emphasis on forest productivity and economic viability might be welcomed by many, though this would have to be balanced against the reservations of others.

Many smaller woodland owners in the United Kingdom are reluctant to embrace certification because of the perceived management burden and costs. The approach to SLIMF varies widely between countries, but many go further than UKWAS in offering concessions and making their standards accessible. Points to consider in the UKWAS revision process could include:

1. Introducing genuine concessions to SLIMF in terms of requirements (indicators) rather than just means of verification (verifiers) in areas such as data collection, planning, procedures, consultation, publicity and outreach.

2. Recognising three size classes of forests, with concessions for the smallest category and some requirements, particularly in terms of social responsibility, restricted to the largest category.
3. Presenting SLIMF requirements in a separate, smaller standard document. This might share most of the features of the main standard, and simply omit the requirements which only apply to larger forests.

Some or all of these options, if considered, might face significant opposition from stakeholders in the UK, but they appear to be the most widely accepted approaches to SLIMF in neighbouring countries and may hold the key to greater uptake of certification by smaller woodland owners.

PEFC UK International Benchmarking Review

Submission from PEFC UK

This review was undertaken to establish if there are any lessons to be learnt from other European PEFC Schemes who may have approached sustainable forest management differently. Although they may have different approaches all schemes are reviewed and re-endorsed every five years and have to comply with the criteria of the standards listed at the beginning of section A.

Each individual scheme may have differences due to the unique bottom up approach advocated by PEFC, where the scheme is developed to suit the forest management processes of that country. This section hopes to highlight some of those differences that may offer UKWAS some thoughts or ideas to be considered during the next review.

The three PEFC schemes reviewed and benchmarked were those from Denmark, Poland and Spain. The following comments are not exhaustive, but are those that may offer some contrasts and considerations.

PEFC Denmark

The Danish forest area comprises about 534,500 hectares (ha) making up approximately 12.4% of the land area (252,955 are PEFC certified). The total numbers of forests is 26,500, with around 25,000 owned by private forest holdings.

- 68% of the area is privately owned
- 30% is state owned or owned by other public institutions.

Denmark has a very large number of small woods: properties less than 20 ha in size make up about 91% of properties, but cover only 21% of the entire forest area.

The Danish scheme in many ways is very similar to the UK scheme, it was developed about the same time and has also been recently re-endorsed. Some of the details which may be worth comparing are set out below.

PEFC Denmark only allows use of 10 % of the forested area to intensive management uses (e.g. Christmas trees). The standard outlines requirements for establishment of new intensively managed areas and for the use of fertilizers and pesticides within those areas.

The standard also ensures biodiversity areas are incorporated within the woodland. At least 7.5 % of the certified area shall be designated as biodiversity areas. The areas shall be found in locations with special biological values or with the potential to develop such values. (UKWAS 15%).

At least 5 trees or approximately 10 m³ wood on the stump per ha, shall be retained in the production forest for natural decay (nesting trees, hollow trees and dead wood). More specific than UKWAS or UKFS.

Annex 2 of the Danish scheme gives comprehensive requirements for competences of machine operators operating in PEFC certified forests in Denmark. For example: 'The operators of big specialized machines used for operations concerning cutting, chipping and extraction of wood, soil preparation, spraying, fertilizing and maintenance of drainage in a PEFC certified forest, must have the competences outlined in the appendix'.

In addition, all appropriate legislation is also listed within the document included references to the specific ILO conventions.

PEFC Poland

Forests coverage in Poland is about 29% of the total area, which is about 9.2 million ha. Of this area about 7.2 million ha is managed by the state forest organization and 7.3 million ha is PEFC certified.

The Polish scheme also appears to be not too dissimilar to the UK scheme although, like the Danish scheme, they do issue a comprehensive list of legislation that the forest industry is required to comply with, along with a full list of ILO conventions endorsed by Poland. This may be something to add within the PEFC UK scheme, if not UKWAS.

The Polish scheme itself appears to be very prescriptive and encourages the use of quantitative indicators wherever possible. Tables such as the ones below are shown throughout the document as a guide to what the forest owner should be recording and making available.

Wood production.

| No. | Indicator Description | Measurement unit |
|-----|---|-------------------------|
| 23 | Average gross growth rate (term – 10 years) | [m ³ / ha] |
| | Average growth rate by species | [m ³ / ha] |
| 24 | Annual rate of wood harvesting | [m ³ / year] |
| | Final harvest by species | [m ³ / year] |
| | Pre-final harvest by species | [m ³ / year] |
| | Sanitary cutting | [m ³ / year] |
| 25 | Relation between general wood harvest and increase in wood volume | [%] |
| 26 | Average age of stands | [years] |
| 27 | Quantity and value of marketed roundwood | [m ³ , PLN] |

Non-wood products.

| | | |
|----|---|----------------------------------|
| 28 | Quantity of non-wood products (e.g. game, Christmas trees, branches to decorative purposes) | [kg / item year] |
| 29 | Percentage share of revenues from sale of services in total revenues. | [%] |
| 30 | Forest roads ratio | [m ² / ha or km / ha] |

Economic functions.

| No. | Indicator Description | Measurement unit |
|-----|---|------------------|
| 44 | Profitability: ratio of average price of 1 m ³ of wood (P) to total production cost per 1 m ³ (C) | [P / C] |

Social functions.

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------------------|
| 45 | Number of persons employed in forest administration in total and per 1 thousand hectares | [persons] [persons/1000 ha] |
| 46 | Employment in private sector working for the benefit of forest management: number of enterprises/employment | [items] / persons] |
| 47 | Number of occupational diseases | [cases/ year] |
| 48 | Frequency of occupational accidents in forestry | [items] / year] |
| 49 | Number of education chambers, natural history museums and teaching paths in forests | [items] |
| 50 | Total number of persons visiting educational and recreational sites in forests (tracks, museums, chambers, etc.) or other indicator of intensity of use of such sites | [persons / year] |

Recreational functions of forests.

| | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 51 | Number of campsites and other fixed recreation sites | [items] |
| 52 | Total length of tourist trails in forests | [kms] |

It should be considered whether the collection of figures, such as these, on a regional or national basis would be beneficial, or if this is more likely to be the work of another body. PEFC Poland appears to work very closely with Forestry departments in their Universities, where the amalgamation of such statistics may prove more useful.

PEFC Spain

At present, Spain's forestlands cover a surface area of 27.5 million hectares, of which 65% are considered timberlands. Currently 1,690,000 ha are PEFC certified.

The size of woodlands, depending on their ownership, does not reflect the differences between those that belong to the state and those that belong to other public entities, with an average of 500 and 600 ha respectively. However, there is a significant difference with privately owned woodlands, whose mean surface area scarcely covers 3 ha, which indicates the large extent of smallholdings that still exist in the private forest sector (Spanish Forest Strategy).

The extraction of non-wood products is very significant for the Spanish scheme. Despite the population exodus from the countryside that has taken place in recent years, these resources that represent integral usage of the forest, have never ceased to be harvested. The most significant products in economic terms are mainly cork, fruit, biomass production for energy purposes, resins, mushrooms, hunting and different plants. More recently PEFC certified ham, from pigs and boars grazing in the forests, has entered the market place.

Partly due to the abundance of very small privately owned woodlands, PEFC Spain has adopted a Regional approach to sustainable forest management. Regional Forest Certification requires the existence of a legal entity to act as the regional applicant and to group together, either directly or through representatives, forest managers in the region interested in the certification process. The Regional Entity must accredit the regional nature of its representation before being approved by PEFC Spain and the Governing Board. It is a PEFC requirement that if a regional approach is adopted, it shall represent more than 50% of the forestland in the region.

A regional approach has also been adopted in other European countries including Belgium and Slovakia and was again reported on in the 2009 report. The report considered whether this form of certification would be appropriate for the UK and concluded that one of the disadvantages is that it would require a re-structuring of the UKWAS standard into both regional and property level requirements. Nevertheless the report also concluded that this

approach has some attractive benefits including the setting of standards and reporting of achievement at regional level, which more effectively deals with issues such as deer management, recreation provision and training.

Below is an extract from the Spanish scheme with its reference to carbon, which is unusual and exceptional in the schemes reviewed. Carbon may be one of the issues that UKWAS may need to consider in the future.

Again various indicators are required in the standard to assist with the on—going goal of proving that the management units are sustainable. The indicators for carbon and revenue and their objectives are shown below as an example.

Indicator: carbon stock

Justification: Forest stands and their products are characterised by their ability to sequester carbon. Any forest management that tends to generate long, life-cycle products or substitutes of other more polluting products multiplies this effect.

Objective/aim:

1. To estimate or monitor sequestered carbon in forest stands and their wood products
- 2 To strengthen and maintain the long-term carbon stock of forest stands

Parameters:

- Woody biomass and extractions (tons of carbon equivalent per hectare or cubic metre per hectare of wood)

Sources of information: the management plan itself and its corresponding indicators.

National Forest Inventory, Forestry Statistics, research, specialised literature

Indicator: Net revenue

Justification: the net revenue derived from managing the forest is an important indicator of its degree of economic sustainability, although in many cases the most important benefits are not quantifiable from the monetary point of view. This includes all pre-tax sources of income and expense directly related to the forest, including government subsidies.

Objective/aim: to improve the economic sustainability of the forest management

Parameter: net revenues derived from the forest management expressed in Euros per hectare

Sources of information: the forest unit's own financial statements, National Forest Inventory

Conclusions

One of the conclusions to be drawn from this exercise is how consistent the various PEFC schemes are, which should be expected as they are assessed against the same criteria. However, due to PEFC's unique 'bottom up' approach which ensures that each country's scheme is developed to be tailored to local priorities and conditions there are subtle differences. This is especially obvious in the Spanish scheme which is not only built on regional certification but is also developed to integrate cork and other non-timber forests products.

One of the main areas of difference with UKWAS is in standard setting process. It would appear important for UKWAS to ensure comprehensive stakeholder input and where possible, that all seats on the steering group are filled and represented at each meeting. As stated already, the non-conformances received during the last PEFC UK endorsement have now been actioned within the revised Standard Setting Document.

There would appear to be a couple of forest management issues to be considered during the upcoming revision and these include the recognition of non-timber forest products (NTFP) within the management plans and section 2.1.1 of UKWAS and the possible slight rewording of section 6.1.2 on the exploitation of endangered species.

There appears to be an on-going debate on how to encourage small woodland owners into certification. The main barrier appears to be cost, followed closely by the administration burden. As discussed in the report there are one or two initiatives currently underway which may assist in breaking down these barriers in the near future. Any debate and potential resolution will however, have to include the certification bodies and possibly the accreditation bodies, to find a way to have less intensive audit schedules for group schemes.

PEFC UK is acutely aware that access to the UK market for PEFC certified home grown timber products is crucial and will be working closely with various sectors, including the primary processors, to try and offer an alternative.

Only a few ideas emerged from the benchmarking exercise of other PEFC schemes and these included the potential for a more comprehensive list of legislation applicable to the forestry sector. In addition there is also the potential to request more prescriptive and quantitative data from certified entities, although this kind of information gathering may be more appropriate for the Forestry Commission rather than UKWAS.

Section 3:

Interpretation Review

Purpose

A consideration of any advice developed by the Interpretation Panel.

An Interpretation Panel is appointed by the Steering Group to provide advice on interpretation of the standard for standard users.

One Interpretation Note has been issued for the third edition:

- Interpretation Note 8 - Wind farm development on certified forest land – March 2013 (see Appendix 2).

Section 4:

Small and Low Intensity Managed (SLIM) Woodlands Review

Purpose

A consideration of the impact and applicability of the standard for small and low intensity managed (SLIM) operations.

FSC UK input

Executive Summary of a Discussion Paper

The Development for SLIMF in UKWAS4

Dr Owen Davies & Charles Thwaites, FSC UK

For UKWAS SG: 5 June 2014

1. Executive summary

Taking account of the provisions in FSC normative documents and the precedents in neighbouring national forest stewardship standards, this discussion paper proposes a possible route for developing the UK Woodland Assurance Standard to make certification more accessible for owners/managers of small or low intensity managed forests (SLIMF).

The paper focuses on three areas:

- consideration of appropriate forest size categories for different standard requirements, not necessarily linked to SLIMF eligibility criteria for streamlined certification processes;
- consideration of addressing differences in forest scale at the indicator/requirement level, rather than solely at the level of means of verification as at present, with suggestions for areas of the standard to consider in the first instance; and,
- consideration of presenting SLIMF requirements separately in a smaller, more user-friendly form, potentially as a checklist for self-evaluation prior to approaching certification bodies.

Its chief conclusions are:

- depending on scale, intensity and risk, FSC allows SLIMF to be exempt from some indicators (or be subject to different indicators) which are applicable to other forests, and that these may be captured in a separate standard laid out in a user-friendly format, including checklist style document;
- size remains the most straightforward and readily measurable attribute for categorising forests and applying different requirements, and that both Denmark and Sweden recognise three size-categories of forest; those which are small, those which are large or 'major', and those in between;

- in the UK context there is merit in considering three size-categories: small woodlands (for example, but definitely for discussion, less than 100 ha), intermediate-sized woodlands (between 100 – 500 ha) and larger forests of above 500 ha;
- that consideration should be given to presenting requirements for small woodlands in a smaller, simpler and less daunting standard document, similar to the German *Kleinwaldstandard*. This document could be presented as a checklist;
- it may be possible to mirror the current UKWAS format in terms of layout and the wording of transposed requirements.

PEFC UK input

PEFC UK commissioned a report back in 2009 which was written by Sandy Greig for use by the UKWAS steering group. It would appear that not much has changed within the industry since that report and little progress has been made in attracting small woodland owners into certification. The reason for the lack of progress appears to be the same primary issues, which are cost and the administrative burden.

The 2009 report stated that there is good evidence that the costs, to the forest owner, of certification in the UK is considerably higher than in other European countries and that this is in part, due to the intensity of audit. Of course a balance must be struck between the frequency and comprehensiveness of audit and the need for a credible level of scrutiny, but there is a case for reviewing the requirements of the certification schemes in the UK context. It was recommended that a report was commissioned to look at:

- Requirements relating to audit processes under both FSC and PEFC schemes in the UK context.
- Opportunities (if any) for reducing the costs of certification under current FSC and PEFC requirements in the UK through lower audit intensity.
- Opportunities for reducing the costs of certification in the UK which would necessitate a change to FSC and PEFC audit requirements.
- Recommendations for a risk based forest management audit protocol for the UK taking into account factors such as intensity of management, environmental sensitivity, Forestry Authority presence and the track record of the owner/manager.

It would appear that this type of report is still necessary.

Another option which is characteristic of other countries is regional certification and this was also explored in Sandy Greig's report. This may be achieved when forest management

standards and requirements are established for both the regional level and the level of the individual owner. It is a PEFC requirement that a minimum of 50% of the forest area in a region must be included for regional certification to operate and it was thought doubtful in most areas, that this threshold would be reached.

However, PEFC UK has recognised the small woodland problem and has undertaken to develop an on-line group certification system that should make sustainable forest management certification easier to obtain for small woodland owners. This has been developed in conjunction with a consultant in The Netherlands who has set up a similar system there. The system will be launched in the Summer of 2014. The success of the scheme will undoubtedly be dependent on being able to reduce the cost of certification along with the acceptance of Group managers to embrace the system. More details will be made available to UKWAS in due course.

Section 5:

Technical Review

Purpose

A consideration of any new scientific or technical knowledge.

Forestry Commission

FC Publications

Forest Research has provided a list of new or revised publications containing information that might be incorporated into UKWAS 4. These are listed in Appendix 3.

FC Safety, Health & Environment

The FC has prepared a note on Topping Trees with Harvesters - Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (Note from Forestry Commission) in relation to deadwood.

This is set out in Appendix 4.

Section 6

Standard Users' Feedback Review

Purpose

A consideration of feedback from certificate holders and accredited certification authorities.

(To be provided by the certification schemes.)

PEFC UK input

The capacity to engage with standard users and gain feedback was very restricted in the case of PEFC UK as all the PEFC certified woodland in the UK, is dual certified with FSC. As FSC has been the dominant scheme in the UK since the turn of the century and PEFC has only gained certified woodland in the UK since 2010, most of the owners see the certification process for PEFC as an 'add on' and therefore relatively easy to achieve.

One of the barriers expressed for future PEFC forest certification growth, was lack of demand from the primary processors. Again as FSC has enjoyed ten years of virtually no competition, the UK primary processors are set up commercially and practically, to buy and sell FSC timber. At present there is no justification to double stock material as the cost and space required would be prohibitive. It was mentioned however, in one of the discussions that it would be easier to switch completely to PEFC rather than try to run both schemes side by side.

PEFC UK therefore needs to work closely with the primary processors and retailers to find a way to allow PEFC certified material into the market place, ensuring a readily accessible end use for material from PEFC certified woodland. PEFC UK will be endeavouring to do this over the next 12 months and this will be helped by the introduction of an on-line certification system already mentioned in section B.

Another issue raised was the complication of FSC not recognising PEFC as a 'controlled wood' source (even though in the UK, effectively the woodlands meet the same standard). It was discussed whether FSC UK could make any concessions (within the UK) as this would undoubtedly help those operating a percentage or volume credit system. This would also allow for growth of PEFC certified area in the UK, which realistically may not be in FSC's interest.

One final comment was on the issue of Warfarin. This is a WHO type 1B pesticide and therefore should be restricted under UKWAS and PEFC unless it meets certain criteria. However, the pesticide has a derogation under FSC for use in Squirrel control and is

therefore being used in dual certified forests where there is no current mechanism under PEFC to sanction its use. This kind of anomaly should therefore be investigated.

FSC UK Standard Users' Feedback Review

Standard Users' Feedback Review

Dr Owen Davies, Forest Standards Manager, FSC UK

March 2014

1. Executive summary

Open feedback on the UK Woodland Assurance Standard was sought from a small sample of state and industry bodies, NGOs, certification bodies, forest management companies and group scheme managers. Of the eleven contacts approached, seven provided feedback to be included in this review and one provided informal feedback which is not included. Their responses were categorised as positive feedback; development of the standard; overall nature of the standard; application of the standard; clarification; small and low intensity managed (SLIM) woodlands; and specific issues including historic and natural environment, climate change and ecosystem services, pests and diseases, and windfarms. Unsurprisingly, given the range of respondents, varying and occasionally conflicting views were expressed. Some of the main points are briefly discussed in the light of wider FSC and UKWAS issues.

2. Brief and approach

The UKWAS brief for this review was: "A consideration of feedback from certificate holders and accredited certification authorities." To reach as many certificate holders as possible within the limited resources available for this review, their representatives, such as industry bodies, management companies and group scheme managers, were approached rather than individual certificate holders.

A small sample of state and industry bodies, NGOs, certification bodies, forest management companies and group scheme managers was contacted, initially by e-mail, and invited to provide entirely open feedback on the UK Woodland Assurance Standard either verbally or in writing: "There is no set format or list of questions for this review; it is an open request for your opinions on UKWAS as a standard and on its workability and outcomes, positive and negative, in practice. Suggestions for change are also welcome." Respondents were given the option of having their feedback reported anonymously, in the hope of overcoming any potential reluctance to comment.

The eleven contacts are summarised in the table on the following page; those who responded are indicated, and named where they explicitly agreed to be identified in this review.

3. Feedback received

The comments received are grouped below into similar themes. Many are reproduced verbatim, while others have been abridged or summarised for brevity. **The superscript numbers following comments are used to identify sources, and correspond with those in the table of respondents on the following page.**

| No. | Description | Contacts providing feedback |
|-----|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | State forest service | Forestry Commission and Natural Resources Wales ^a |
| 2 | Industry body | |
| 3 | Environmental NGO | Woodland Trust |
| 4 | Environmental NGO | RSPB |
| 5 | Certification body | Anonymous |
| 6 | Certification body | Soil Association Woodmark ^b |
| 7 | Certification body | |
| 8 | Forest management company | Scottish Woodlands |
| 9 | Forest management company | |
| 10 | Group scheme manager | Andrew Bronwin |
| 11 | Group scheme manager | Exmoor Woodcert |

a Feedback described as “interim comments from the State Forest Sector”, with final comments to be provided directly to UKWAS.

b Informal comments were received which were not intended for publication; Soil Association Woodmark will provide formal comments directly to UKWAS later in the revision process.

3.1 Positive feedback

The following comments were received in support of certification in general and UKWAS in particular, including the process of standard development and its integration in the wider context of UK regulation:

“UKWAS is a good standard, generally well applied, which serves us well.”³

“RSPB values independent third party forest management certification against robust environmental standards that include biodiversity protection and enhancement for priority habitats, priority species and designated wildlife sites. We also value associated chain of custody to aid transparency and certainty in the specification and procurement of forest products.”⁴

“We fully support the concept of UKWAS as the single certification standard for the UK and would wish it to continue as such. We believe that UKWAS has been prepared to a very high standard and the current co-operation and consensus which largely exists amongst stakeholders has been a very positive feature of UKWAS. These factors have been instrumental in helping to expand forest certification as a concept and FSC accreditation in particular in the UK.”⁸

“The UK is a highly regulated and compliant country with many environmental, health and safety, and business regulations. In addition, the existence of the UK Forestry Standard already sets a high bar for sustainable forest management in the country. UKWAS has served the UK forest industry well over the years as it is concise, relevant and tailored to UK circumstances. It is able to weigh issues (such a land tenure which is not a contentious issue) in a UK context and set appropriate requirements for UK conditions.”⁸

3.2 Development of the standard

Importance was explicitly attached to the place of FSC’s principles and criteria in UKWAS, as well as on its processes for standard setting including the three chamber approach to representing environmental, social and economic interests. The respondent “would welcome better representation from [the] social sector, but it is difficult to locate suitable bodies who are able and wish to participate in voluntary forest management standard setting.”⁴

However, the same respondent voiced concerns about the challenges arising from “uncertainty and lack of clarity of FSC International policy processes and what UKWAS needs to do and when. This makes project planning for a revision that is to FSC’s timetable very difficult. UKWAS Steering Group relies on FSC UK to deal with and negotiate with FSC International which we recognise can be a difficult and challenging task in often changing circumstances due to the nature and phasing of FSC policy development. We welcome the continued professional advisory and advocacy role that FSC UK provides to the UKWAS Steering Group when standard setting - including giving interim advice during evolving external policy contexts - as well as FSC UK’s role as a full UKWAS member with voting rights for approval, abstention and veto.”⁴

Another respondent cautioned against radical change to the structure and content of the standard: “As forest managers we have become accustomed to working with UKWAS and our staff are familiar with the structure and requirements in UKWAS and would not wish to see wholesale changes to the current 8 part standard. We see the process going forward as one of evolution and see no value in large scale redrafting. In this context we would view with some alarm the rigid imposition of [International Generic Indicators] by FSC on the UK if this was to happen.”⁸

3.3 Overall nature of the standard

Concern was expressed that the standard was imbalanced, with too much emphasis on environmental sustainability and too little on economic sustainability: “Auditors don’t care if the woods make a profit or a loss and they should.”¹⁰ However, feedback was also received calling for further environmental emphasis: “We are concerned that each subsequent revision of UKWAS has not really embodied the idea of continual environmental improvement.”⁴

The growing size of the standard was also raised as a potential issue: “With every new edition of UKWAS, the number of requirements is likely to increase which means more management considerations and record-keeping by woodland owners and agents, plus longer audits especially at 5-year re-assessments.” Assigning different priorities or weighting to different UKWAS requirements was suggested as a possible aid to management.¹¹

3.4 Application of the standard

Opposition was raised to the potential growth of requirements which could vary between woodlands: “For the first time there has been divergence between the requirements of FSC and PEFC in UKWAS 5.2.4 (highly hazardous pesticides), which means that UKWAS could be applied differently in different woodlands; we would be opposed to any further divergence.”³

Interpretation of the standard in the field was a cause for concern among some respondents. In general, “Whilst there is scope for flexibility in interpretation of UKWAS by the [certification body], some sort of appeal or informal second opinion might be useful to instigate. There is the interpretation panel but sometimes the nature of the issue could perhaps be resolved more expediently.”¹

A specific example of interpretation in relation to plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) was raised: “Pressure to restore PAWS sites is unreasonable and not in the standard. This year I had an observation that we hadn’t planted a PAWS site with broadleaves. We had completely complied with the standard and enhanced the site so why should I be subject to the personal whims of the auditor? We have either complied with the standard or we haven’t.”¹⁰

The issue of the spatial scale at which some requirements are applied was also raised by one respondent, “where the [forest management unit] is the forest district -- but the requirements seem to be applied by the [certification body] at a management plan level. Clearly there is a need to balance the need to manage all areas of a district responsibly on one hand with the flexibility to spread requirements across a district (and maximise their benefits) on the other.”¹

3.5 Clarification

One respondent indicated broad contentment with the content of the standard, but highlighted a need for further clarification and guidance: “We have ourselves been reviewing the standard and our detailed comments are about providing more clarity and guidance or taking account of changes to the background in which the industry operates (such as pests and diseases) rather than substantial changes to the standard itself.”⁸

The potential for more guidance to be provided on documentation was raised, inadequate documentation having been given as a frequent cause for CARs. “An example is in 7.1, where the results of consultation are required to be demonstrated.”¹

Another specific example was clarification on issues relating to leasehold land, including whether there should be requirements for signage to indicate who is responsible for woodland management, and what steps should be taken to ensure that, for example, game management by the landlord is consistent with the requirements of UKWAS.⁵ Leasehold issues were seen as particularly relevant for state forest services, which “have particular restrictions on their ability to comply with the letter of UKWAS requirements where game management, access and other legal rights are held by a third party; usually this arises where the forestry land is leased. These restrictions should be recognised as compromising the forest manager’s ability to comply namely under section 6.4, Game Management, and under 7.2.1, Woodland Access etc.”¹

3.6 Small and low intensity managed (SLIM) woodlands

The main comments received relating to SLIM woodlands are reproduced here in full given the degree of interest in this subject at present:

“We... have concerns about the uptake of UKWAS, particularly by owners/managers of small and or low intensity managed native woodlands - we recognise the limitations of the role of UKWAS Steering Group which is standard setting, [as] well as the limits of what can be approved by FSC; we recognise the Steering Group wants to increase SLIM uptake as well as FSC requirement to tweak the standard to assist this at last revision. We remain concerned that the 'small' category was set at 500ha, not 100ha, ignoring the sensible recommendations of the small woodland working group to UKWAS.”⁴

“For a small woodland owner with limited resources, there is a lot to undertake in order to conform to UKWAS. With our group scheme, we have been able to help them through this process by designing pro-formas they can fill in for annual records and discuss areas where they need to do extra work to meet the Requirements, but I would say that for a small woodland owner there are quite a lot of Requirements to take on in UKWAS (although the SLIM category helps with this) and this could be off-putting to some.

“For a low-intensity managed, small woodland where the owner is not especially interested in using the FSC logo, it could be argued that there is less need for certification. Having said that, there are key elements of UKWAS which would help with the owner’s woodland management such as compliance with the law and management planning. Perhaps a slimmed-down (if that’s the right expression) UKWAS for small woodland owners would encourage them to join a certification scheme (if the FSC and PEFC were happy with this) and there could also be the full UKWAS for other members - a bit like Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship?”¹¹

A need for a critical review of the SLIM category was implied: “It will be interesting to see what the effects of this are and whether the lower audit requirement lessens costs in practice and results in more certificates. It will also be interesting to see whether more CARs arise where the audit intensity is lower.”¹

3.7 Specific issues

3.7.1 Historic environment

The absence of clear requirements for historic environment conservation was noted, despite explicit inclusion in the UK Forestry Standard and some references to designations in UKWAS.⁴

3.7.2 Natural environment

Requests were received for greater emphasis on biodiversity enhancement and for explicit mention of ancient and veteran trees in all contexts, not just in plantations on ancient woodland sites:

“We do have some concerns that the content and approach of the UKWAS standard does not sufficiently drive biodiversity enhancement (for example restoration of peatland and lowland heathland habitats from inappropriately located forestry plantations, as well as driving rather than just allowing native woodland restoration and open habitat restoration).

We are looking for the next revision to address this, while recognising that UKWAS is not the complete delivery plan for country biodiversity strategies, but should encourage owners/managers to go further than the UK Forestry Standard minima for biodiversity enhancement, as well as protection.”⁴

“Ancient/veteran trees are not specifically mentioned, other than in section 6.3.2 regarding PAWS restoration. But not all Ancient/veteran trees exist in PAWS woodlands so there is a risk that these features are being overlooked or may suffer from unsympathetic management. Many of these trees are habitats in their own right with many associated species living on them, e.g. bats, mosses, invertebrates etc., which may themselves be vulnerable to changes. There is probably the need for some new requirements in chapter 6 relating to mapping, assessing and managing ancient/veteran trees.”¹¹

Conversely, existing deadwood requirements were criticised as being without a clear basis and inappropriate for conifer forests:

“20m³ per ha is a silly figure and again I don’t think FSC etc. has any idea what this looks like on a conifer site. It looks ridiculous and I suspect has been plucked out of the air at some meeting. Needs reducing especially on conifer sites.”¹⁰

Specific concerns were also raised about deadwood creation:

“The principal development is that the creation of snags at anything above normal harvesting height using harvesters has been deemed in the UK as un-approved by the machine manufacturers and therefore potentially un-safe. In the UKWAS standard, there is an action under requirements (6.2.2) for “creating snags” and snags are also mentioned in the guidance, however this is mitigated by considerations of safety.

“Although it does not appear in the UKFS Biodiversity Guidelines, the term “creation” is introduced in the deadwood practice guide. It appears on p4 and in table 2 and specifically on p13 “Creating and Expanding Deadwood Habitat” where the creation of snags with a harvester is specifically referred to and illustrated. This needs to be revised and possibly the use of the term “creation” in the UKWAS needs to be qualified.”¹

3.7.3 Climate change and ecosystem services

It was felt that more could be done, above and beyond the existing resilience requirements and guidance in UKWAS 3.1 to 3.3, to secure the future sustainability of UK woodlands in the light of increasing threats. “The UKFS climate change Guidelines have a lot to say about adaptive management and species selection on pages 27 – 28 and native woodland is discussed on p18 of the Biodiversity Guidelines.”¹

Additional guidance on using Ecological Site Classification to inform long term decisions on climate change resilience was suggested: “Undertaking some soil analyses on site and applying the ESC Tool would be a very useful step for owners/agents to consider.”¹¹

As a general point, in the light of country level policy emphasis on integrated land use and ecosystem services it was felt that these should receive greater attention in UKWAS.¹

The failure to highlight the role of woodlands in carbon sequestration and storage was noted: “If that was taken into account conifers would rank much better, especially if substitution was taken into account.”¹⁰

The role of woodlands in regulating water flows was also noted: "...there could... be a greater emphasis on considering flood alleviation through appropriately-sited new woodland planting, perhaps as part of Requirement 3.1.2... The ninth Guidance point in 3.1.2 mentions considering drainage patterns but not specifically helping with reducing flooding with the landscape. So the Guidance could also look at resource processes and systems as well as the environmental features in the landscape."¹¹ A specific point on taking account of river basin management plans, as per UKFS good forestry practice requirements for water, was raised: "This could be reflected in UKWAS 2.1."¹

3.7.4 Pests and diseases

It was suggested that plant health and biosecurity requirements and guidelines, as relatively late additions to UKFS, were not fully reflected in UKWAS 5.1.1 and 5.1.2., and that particular consideration needed to be given in the standard to "the sometimes dramatic changes to forest plans that are required due to the current pest outbreaks".¹

3.7.5 Windfarms

"Wind-farms and turbines are a particularly contentious and pressing issue, especially in Scotland. As an interpretation note (No. 8) has been issued, the import of this should be considered as part of the UKWAS revision.

"There still seems to be uncertainty on the issue of "wind efficiency felling" and where "low risk" or "controlled wood" applies. There is perhaps a case for re-visiting the UKWAS standard to ensure it is clear and reflects these judgements."¹

3.8 Feedback not directly related to the UKWAS revision process

The following feedback relating to wider certification issues was also received during the exercise; while it is not considered immediately relevant to the UKWAS revision process, it is included here so that it may be formally recorded.

An interesting point was raised regarding regulatory authorities and certification: "Some route to report regulatory infringements to [certification bodies] might help to avoid the potentially embarrassing situation of having forests certified whilst the owners were in breach of regulations. [Certification bodies] do collect stakeholder feedback but this is only at the time of audit and not all forest regulators are content to contribute to this."¹

"Outside UKWAS, we do have concerns about the use of Controlled Wood and Mixed Sources for FSC in terms of environmental risk related to biodiversity, as well as credibility. We also have concerns about the auditing requirements for PEFC and may have concerns about biodiversity content for PEFC standards, as well PEFC stakeholder input to all governance, standard setting and forest management processes."⁴

One comment was received which was relevant to the current pesticide derogation extension requests to FSC: "To have to apply separately for permission to use permethrin and warfarin is daft especially the latter. If FSC is so keen on growing broadleaves how do they propose we get the trees past the squirrels? I'm guessing complete lack of understanding about the situation in the UK. They should be making life easier not harder."¹⁰

Very serious concerns were raised over the use of the FSC trademark, which was seen as unnecessarily restricted by FSC and poorly understood by certification bodies and certificate

holders. “FSC... take a restrictive... view which no-one understands so the chances are members are failing to comply all over the place. We certainly are and you risk going from minor to major to out because no-one understands the rules and something different crops up each time.”¹⁰

4. Discussion

It is gratifying that formal responses were received from seven of the eleven bodies contacted, and that these represent a range of viewpoints. No apology is made for reproducing in full many of the comments received for this review, given the eloquence of the respondents. There follows a brief discussion of some of the issues raised, connecting these with other FSC or UKWAS considerations where appropriate.

Some strong support for UKWAS was voiced, recognising the quality of the standard and the value of the underlying FSC principles and criteria and the inclusive standard development procedures. The tailoring of the standard to UK conditions was noted by one respondent who also expressed concern over the potential imposition of the International Generic Indicators (IGIs) currently being developed by FSC. This is a concrete example of the concerns raised by another respondent regarding the uncertainties arising from FSC International’s policy developments.

Conflicting views were expressed regarding the balance of the standard, with one respondent feeling that there was too much emphasis on environmental sustainability at the expense of economic sustainability and another feeling that there was insufficient emphasis on “continual environmental improvement”. Further negotiation is evidently necessary to strike the appropriate balance of what is environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable, as per the FSC vision of responsible forest management. One respondent asked whether a hierarchy of requirements might be established to help managers to cope with a growing standard, but this would seem to be in conflict with FSC’s position that there is no hierarchy of principles and criteria and all carry equal weight. However, there is scope for concessions for SLIM woodlands, as discussed briefly below.

A number of observations were made on the application of the standard and its interpretation in the field, with a number of specific suggestions for areas requiring clarification. As an example, the issue of the spatial scale at which requirements are applied is addressed in the introductory sections of UKWAS, but there is perhaps scope for further clarification on striking an appropriate balance between managing all areas responsibly and targeting some requirements in areas where benefits can be maximised.

The concern expressed about the SLIM threshold and the suggestions for a “slimmed-down” standard may be considered in the light of the approach to small and low intensity managed woodlands in other countries reported in the FSC UK International Benchmarking Review, where it may be seen that they are consistent with SLIM standards in some countries.

Among the specific issues raised, two respondents highlighted issues with deadwood requirements and there were several comments on what could be considered ecosystem services. Watershed management arose as an area for particular attention. Consideration of the role of woodlands in carbon sequestration and storage, as suggested by one respondent, may be consistent with moves within FSC to recognise significant carbon stocks as a high conservation value.

Feedback received which goes beyond the scope of the UKWAS revision process is not discussed further here, but is for internal consideration by FSC UK.

5. Conclusion

Representatives of a range of bodies have been good enough to give up considerable amounts of time to provide thoughtful and eloquent feedback on UKWAS and its application. While the extent of the relatively unabridged feedback presented here may be daunting it is hoped that this gives a true reflection of the efforts of the respondents, and that the full range and depth of the comments will be of value to the UKWAS steering group in their deliberations.

Section 7

Initial Stakeholders' Consultation

Purpose

A consideration of consultees' comments and responses.

A consultation paper was issued on 3rd February 2014 and comments were requested by 31st March 2014. Ten responses were received from individuals and organisations and these are provided in full in Appendix 5.

Appendices

- 1. Certification Scheme Requirements Review: text proposals (FSC UK) (*See separate document.*)**
- 2. UKWAS Interpretation Note 8 - Wind farm development on certified forest land (March 2013)**
- 3. UKWAS Technical Review – Publications list compiled by Forest Research**
- 4. UKWAS Technical Review – Topping Trees with Harvesters - Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (Note from Forestry Commission)**
- 5. UKWAS Initial Stakeholder Consultation (3rd February – 31st March 2014) – Responses**
- 6. UPM Tilhill comments**
- 7. Feedback on FSC UK workers’ rights proposals**
- 8. An Analysis of Corrective Action Requests (CARs) from Forest Management Certification Audits in the UK**

Certification Scheme Requirements Review: text proposals (submitted by FSC UK)

See separate document.

UKWAS Interpretation Note 8 – Wind farm development on certified forest land (March 2013)

PLEASE NOTE: THIS INFORMATION NOTE RELATES TO THE THIRD EDITION OF THE UK WOODLAND ASSURANCE STANDARD (Versions 3.0 & 3.1)

Key words: Wind farms, development, conversion to non-forest land

Relevant requirement references: 3.5.1 Conversion to non-forested land, 6.1.3 Protection of rare species, habitats and natural resources. 1.1.5 Commitment by owner, tenant, manager to conformance with the Standard.

Date: This Information Note was discussed by the Panel in e mail correspondence between February and November 2012

Questions and summary of answers:

The following questions were posed by a certifying body in 2012.

1. Can the IP confirm that their conclusions reached within UKWAS Interpretation note 7 from 2008 still apply under the UKWAS 3rd Edition?

Conclusions in IN 7 were taken into account during the UKWAS revision process and any necessary amendments have been incorporated in the third edition.

2. Who should certificate holders or certification bodies refer to for guidance in determining whether the biodiversity value of the new land use is more than any type of practicably achievable woodland cover?

Certification Bodies will need to assess whether the justification and strategies set out in the transition plan fully meet the criteria set out in UKWAS 3.5.1 and may wish to consult the relevant Statutory Bodies, independent experts or stakeholders to provide any necessary confirmation.

3. UKWAS 3rd Edition guidance states that 'A transition plan should set out as a minimum the justification for conversion and a strategy for implementation, subsequent management and monitoring.'

Provided the conversion does result in new land use being of more value for biodiversity, regardless of new habitat type, can the IP confirm there is no conflict regarding justification within the context of wind farm development?

Provided the conversion to non-forested land fully meets the requirements of 3.5.1 the timber produced from the converted area may be sold as certified and the area may retain certified status.

Discussion:

1. Certification of timber felled from sites for wind turbines and associated infrastructure.

Requirement 3.5.1 Guidance Note states: *Deforestation to facilitate infrastructure or built development which is not integral to the management of the rest of the woodland cannot meet this requirement.*

Advice to Managers states: *Only timber felled in accordance with this requirement can be certified.*

Requirement 6.1.3 Guidance Note states: *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.*

Advice to Owners states: *Only timber felled in accordance with this requirement can be certified.*

In the context of wind farm development these requirements apply to timber felled on land which will be occupied by wind turbines and associated infrastructure. The restriction does not apply to timber felled in the course of wind farm development where the harvested areas will be restocked or will meet the criteria for conversion to non-forest land specified in Requirement 3.5.1 (in terms of enhanced biodiversity value, improved landscape, historic environment benefits).

2. Certification of the residual part of the WMU

Requirement 1.1.5 states:

The owner, manager or tenant 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.*

The certifying body must first be satisfied that a wind farm development does not infringe this Requirement.

Requirement 3.5.1 states:

Conversion to non-forested land shall take place only in certain limited circumstances as set out in this requirement.

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 conditions a, b, c and d shall be met:

- a. The woodland is not identified as of high conservation value in section 6.1.1.*
- b. There is no evidence of unresolved substantial dispute.*

- c. *Conversion and subsequent site management protect and substantially enhance at least one of the following:*
 - i. *The status and condition of UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats.*
 - ii. *Important landscape features and character.*
 - iii. *Important historic environment features and character.*
- d. *The subsequent management of the converted area shall be integrated with the rest of the woodland management.*

It follows that forest areas which will be occupied by wind turbines and their associated infrastructure may not retain certified status.

Advice to forest owners in Requirement 1.1.5 advises that: *Certificate holders 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.*

Certification schemes may require WMU boundaries to be redefined to excise the affected areas in order for the residual part of the WMU to retain certified status and may limit the proportion of the WMU area that can be excised.

Woodland management plans may need to be revised following any excision.

Details of wind farm developments will vary from case to case and it is the duty of the certifying body in each case to take full account of the terms of all UKWAS Requirements and in particular 1.1.5, 3.5.1 and 6.1.3.

3. Determining the biodiversity, landscape and historic environment benefits of the proposed new land use.

Requirement 3.5.1 states that:

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...

In determining whether the biodiversity of the new land use is greater than any type of practicably achievable woodland cover, it is necessary for owners/managers to establish that conversion and subsequent site management shall protect and substantially enhance the status and condition of UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species.

Consideration will therefore need to be given to a full range of factors including scientific evidence, the findings of any Environmental Impact assessment (EIA), any policies or views expressed by statutory agencies or by other stakeholders.

The justification for the conversion should be set out in an evidence-based transition plan alongside a strategy for the implementation of the conversion and its subsequent management and monitoring. In preparing a transition plan, owners/managers should seek any necessary advice and guidance from appropriate independent experts and the relevant Statutory Bodies as listed in the UKWAS glossary.

Conclusions:

1. Timber felled from areas upon which wind turbines and their associated infrastructure will be located may not be sold as certified timber.
2. Timber harvested from areas which are felled as part of e.g. wind farm development but which will subsequently be restocked or will otherwise meet the provisions of Requirement 3.5.1 (in terms of enhanced biodiversity value; improved landscape; improved historic environment features and character) may be sold as certified timber.
3. Areas of woodland cleared for occupation by wind turbines and their associated infrastructure may not retain certified status.
4. Areas of forest cleared during e.g. wind farm development but which will be restocked or will otherwise meet the provisions of Requirement 3.5.1 (in terms of enhanced biodiversity value; improved landscape; improved historic environment features and character) may retain certified status. The subsequent management of any area converted to non-forested land shall be integrated with the rest of the woodland management unit.
5. The continued certification of all areas of the WMU affected by e.g. wind farm development (including non-forested land) will be determined by the certifying body taking full account of all UKWAS Requirements and in particular 1.1.5, 3.5.1 and 6.1.3.
6. Planning consent and a favourable EIA for e.g. wind farm development would normally be considered sufficient evidence of lack of substantial dispute about the development.
7. Certificate holders or certifying bodies may seek guidance from the following statutory bodies (or any new or equivalent bodies) in determining whether the biodiversity, landscape or historic environment benefits of the new land use are greater than any type of practicably achievable woodland cover:
 - The statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies: Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency
 - The statutory environment protection agencies: Environment Agency in England, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency
 - The statutory historic environment agencies: English Heritage, Historic Scotland, Cadw (in Wales) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency
 - Local authorities responsible for a wide range of functions including highways and planning.
8. If Requirements 1.1.5, 3.5.1 and 6.1.3 on a site are satisfied, wind farm development on that site would not conflict with UKWAS.

UKWAS Technical Review – Publications list compiled by Forest Research

Field Guide

| | | |
|--|-----------|------------------------------|
| | TBC(2014) | Forest Seedlings (App) |
| | TBC(2014) | Using pesticides in forestry |

Miscellaneous

| | | |
|---------|------|--|
| FCMS024 | 2011 | Common sense risk management of trees (for the National Tree Safety Group) |
| FCMS025 | 2011 | Common sense risk management of trees - landowner summary (for the National Tree Safety Group) |
| FCMS026 | 2011 | Managing trees for safety (for the National Tree Safety Group) |
| FCMS028 | 2012 | Biosecurity - good practice for those involved in forestry |

National Forest Inventory

| | | |
|----------|-----------|--|
| FCNFI111 | 2012 | Standing timber volume for coniferous trees in Britain |
| FCNFI112 | 2012 | 25-year forecast of softwood timber availability |
| | TBC(2014) | Biomass in live woodland trees in Britain |
| | TBC(2014) | Carbon in live woodland trees in Britain |

Plant Health

| | | |
|----------|------|--|
| FCPH002 | 2012 | Import Inspection Fees for Wood, Wood Products and Bark (reissued in FC branding with amendments to text) |
| FCPH004 | 2012 | The United Kingdom Wood Packaging Material Marking Programme (reissued in FC branding with amendments to text) |
| FCPH-ALB | 2013 | Asian longhorn beetle - Pest Alert |
| FCPH-ADD | 2013 | Ash dieback disease - Pest Alert |
| FCPH-EY | 2014 | Elm yellows - Pest Alert |
| FCPH-PL | 2014 | Phytophthora lateralis - Pest Alert |

Practice Guides

| | | |
|---------|-----------|--|
| FCPG102 | 2011 | Conserving and managing trees and woodlands in Scotland's designed landscapes |
| FCPG103 | 2012 | Achieving diversity in Scotland's forest landscape |
| FCPG019 | 2012 | Greenspace design for health and well-being |
| FCPG020 | 2012 | Managing deadwood in forests and woodland |
| FCPG021 | 2013 | Choosing stand management methods for restoring planted ancient woodland sites |
| FCPG022 | 2014 | Building wildfire resilience into forest management planning |
| | TBC(2014) | Design techniques for forest management planning |
| | TBC(2014) | Managing forests in acid-sensitive water catchments |
| | TBC(2014) | Managing open habitats in upland forests |

Practice Notes

| | | |
|---------|------|--|
| FCPN017 | 2012 | Minimising the impact of the great spruce bark beetle |
| FCPN018 | 2012 | Choosing Sitka spruce planting stock |
| FCPN019 | 2013 | Managing public safety on harvesting sites |
| FCPN020 | 2013 | Monitoring the oak processionary moth with Pheromone traps |
| FCPN103 | 2013 | Expanding woodland in Special Protection Areas for golden eagles |

| | | |
|---------|------|--|
| FCPN104 | 2013 | Managing woodland access and forest operations in Scotland |
| FCPN021 | 2014 | Establishing and managing gene conservation units |
| FCPN022 | 2014 | Planning for brownfield land regeneration to woodland and wider green infrastructure |

Research Reports

| | | |
|---------|------|--|
| FCRP017 | 2012 | Trees people and the built environment - Proceedings of the Urban Trees Research Conference 13-14 April 2011 |
| FCRP018 | 2012 | Understanding the carbon and greenhouse gas balance of forests in Britain |
| FCRP019 | 2012 | Marginal abatement cost curves for UK forestry |
| FCRP020 | 2012 | Recreational use of forests and disturbance of wildlife |
| FCRP021 | 2012 | Economic benefits of greenspace |
| FCRP022 | 2013 | Insights from behavioural economics for ecosystem services and valuation |

Research Notes

| | | |
|---------|------|---|
| FCRN010 | 2011 | Biodiversity in fragmented landscapes |
| FCRN011 | 2011 | Natural regeneration in western hemlock plantations on ancient woodland sites |
| FCRN012 | 2013 | Air temperature regulation by urban trees and green infrastructure |
| FCRN013 | 2013 | Species preference of small mammals for direct sown tree and shrub seeds |
| FCRN014 | 2013 | Modelling ecological networks and dispersal in grey squirrels |
| FCRN015 | 2013 | A framework for sharing experiences of community woodland groups |
| FCRN016 | 2014 | Forestry and surface water acidification |

Statistics

| | | |
|---------|------|-------------------------------|
| FCFS212 | 2012 | Forestry Facts & Figures 2012 |
| FCFS213 | 2013 | Forestry Facts & Figures 2013 |

Technical Notes

| | | |
|---------|------|---|
| FCTN019 | 2012 | Fence marking to reduce grouse collisions |
| FCTN020 | 2013 | Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from forest civil engineering |

UKFS & Guidelines

| | | |
|---------|------|---|
| FCFC001 | 2011 | The UK Forestry Standard |
| FCGL001 | 2011 | Forests and biodiversity (UKFS Guidelines) |
| FCGL002 | 2011 | Forests and climate change (UKFS Guidelines) |
| FCGL003 | 2011 | Forests and historic environment (UKFS Guidelines) |
| FCGL004 | 2011 | Forests and landscape (UKFS Guidelines) |
| FCGL005 | 2011 | Forests and people (UKFS Guidelines) |
| FCGL006 | 2011 | Forests and soil (UKFS Guidelines) |
| FCGL007 | 2011 | Forests and water (UKFS Guidelines) |
| FCFC002 | 2012 | The UK Forestry Standard - summary checklist (ebook) |
| | 2014 | Science and innovation strategy for forestry in Great Britain |

UKWAS Technical Review – Topping Trees with Harvesters - Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (Note from Forestry Commission)

Harvesters have been used to top trees in order to create standing deadwood in support of the requirements of UKWAS.

Harvesters are work equipment and as such their use falls under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER). PUWER place duties on people and companies, who own, operate or have control over work equipment. PUWER requires that equipment provided for use at work is:

- suitable for the intended use;
- safe for use, maintained in a safe condition and inspected to ensure it is correctly installed and does not subsequently deteriorate;
- used only by people who have received adequate information, instruction and training.

Though an over simplification the basic idea in this legislation is that anything people are given to do their work is deemed to be work equipment and that work equipment must be used as the manufacturer intended.

Harvesters are not built or designed to fell trees at height and as such it was thought that there may be design limitations that may make the practice of topping using harvesters for deadwood creation unsafe. Consequently, Forest Enterprise Scotland contacted four machine manufacturers to ask for their views. Three manufacturers responding in writing quoting PUWER and advising that they would not support this type of work.

In light of the above it is the view of the FC Safety, Health and Environment team that the FC should observe the manufacturers' guidance and should not be creating deadwood using a harvester. H&MOs have supported this view and we will write to all Management Units advising them of this decision to be effective from 1 April 2014

Emily Ramsay
Safety, Health & Environment
13 February 2014

UKWAS Initial Stakeholder Consultation (1st May – 30th June 2009)**Respondents' Comments****Phil Webb (Director/Lead Auditors (UKFCG) UK Forest Certification Ltd)**

I realise the initial consultation for V4 closed at the end of March but wonder if you are aware of the legislation changes which impact on V3.1 indicator 4.2.3. Please see below an extract from our forthcoming e-news to our Group Members which I think is self-explanatory.

Burning Lop and Top UKWAS 4.2.3

If your forest management includes burning lop and top, please note recent changes to legislation regarding registration of exempt activity. Previously registered under exemption 30 of the Waste Management Regulations 1994, these registrations were 'one off' with no renewal date. Registration is now required through **The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 (Exemption D7 - Burning Waste in the open (Non-agricultural Waste only))**. Registration can be completed online using the following link (but you still have to navigate a few pages to register) (<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/exemptions>)

Registration is simple (I submitted a registration at 11pm one evening and my permit had arrived by return e-mail within a few minutes!) PLEASE REMEMBER – unlike earlier permits, the new permit has to be RENEWED EVERY 3 YEARS. Environment Agency state they will issue a reminder one month prior to expiry date.

RSPB (Mike Wood, UK Forestry Policy Officer)**Introduction**

The RSPB values independent third party forest management certification against robust environmental standards that include biodiversity protection and enhancement for priority habitats, priority species and designated wildlife sites. This needs to be audited at forest, not just regional, level. We also value associated traceability requirements and auditing – 'chain of custody' certification - to aid transparency and certainty in the specification and sustainable procurement of forest products.

It is important to the RSPB that the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) meets the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) International principles and criteria for sustainable forest management as a credible and robust way to assist biodiversity protection and enhancement within sustainable forestry.

The RSPB also values the FSC's governance processes for standard setting (as well as for audit of forest management and chain of custody which fall outside UKWAS's standard setting competence). This includes the 'three chamber approach' of environmental, social and economic representation at standard setting and its interpretation, for FSC audit of forest management and chain of custody, and through FSC governance.

Within the UKWAS standard the RSPB has concerns about the approach to, and requirements for biodiversity enhancement, and the definition of, and the approach to the certification of Small and/or Low Intensity (SLIM) woodlands. We also have wider concerns about as uptake of UKWAS by owners and managers of SLIM woods, either audited as individual certificate holders, or within co-operative or collaborative forest management as part of combined 'group' certification.

The RSPB would be concerned about any moves to reduce the environmental content of the UKWAS standard, or any proposals to separate UKWAS from FSC accreditation. This would be a retrograde step in sustainable forestry. UKWAS has been a positive, not perfect, environmental improvement mechanism with a constructive multiple stakeholder approach. The RSPB would like to see UKWAS improved in terms of content, effectiveness and uptake to protect and enhance the

biodiversity associated with native woodlands and appropriately located and designed forestry plantations.

1. UKWAS revision – biodiversity enhancement

The RSPB is concerned that the content and approach of the UKWAS standard does not sufficiently drive biodiversity enhancement for priority habitats and priority species, for example the restoration of peatland and lowland heathland habitats from inappropriately located forestry plantations, as well as native woodland habitat restoration. The UKWAS approach allows restoration rather than pushing it.

We are looking for the revision to address this, while recognising that UKWAS is not the complete delivery plan for country biodiversity/environment strategies, but it should encourage owners/managers to go further than the UK Forestry Standard minima for biodiversity enhancement, as well as the protection of designated wildlife sites and species.

2. Small and/or low intensity management woodlands

The RSPB sees certification of small and/or low intensity managed (SLIM) woodlands as a potentially useful mechanism to assist the restoration and onward management of native woodlands to help regain and protect their wildlife value.

The RSPB remains concerned that the 'small' woodland category within UKWAS was set at 500ha, not 100ha, ignoring the sensible recommendations of the small woodland working group to UKWAS at a previous revision. The reduced requirements on 500ha woodlands may stretch credibility in terms of size and type of woodland that is deemed 'small', meanwhile there may be little benefit of enhanced access to certification for native and community woods of 10-100ha.

Data on influence of the previous development of UKWAS requirements for SLIM woods, and subsequent SLIM certification, would be helpful and should be sought from the proposed SLIM Woodlands Review, which should also scope out UKWAS uptake and woodland management barriers for SLIM woods.

We also have concerns about the uptake of UKWAS, particularly by owners/managers of small and/or low intensity managed native woodlands. We recognise the limitations of the standard setting role of UKWAS Steering Group which may restrict its ability to effectively address uptake for SLIM woods, as well as the limits of what can be approved by FSC. We recognise that the UKWAS Steering Group wants to increase SLIM uptake, as well as FSC's previous request for refinements to assist SLIM certification. We also recognise that certification may not be considered relevant or pressing for small woods, particularly if there is insufficient local market pull or issues of under/lapsed management.

We would welcome SLIM group scheme development by the certification bodies as well as the adoption of the proposed EU Rural Development Regulation co-operative measures in grant schemes to aid ecological survey, monitoring and management planning towards UKWAS SLIM certification.

The RSPB would also welcome further discussion by the UKWAS Steering Group on barriers to certification, and wider management issues related to the restoration and management of small and/or low intensity managed native woodlands. This should form part of the proposed SLIM Woodlands Review for this revision, as well as ongoing work for the Steering Group or its members.

3. Lack of continuous environmental improvement in standard revision

The RSPB is concerned that subsequent revisions of UKWAS have not really embodied the idea of continual environmental improvement. We even have concerns that this revision may seek to reduce the environmental content and effectiveness of the standard, as part of wider 'de-regulation' agendas.

4. Other issues

a. Standard revision process in relation to certification systems

We have had previous concerns about the standard revision process being made challenging and cumbersome at times due to uncertainty or lack of clarity of FSC International policy processes, and therefore what UKWAS needs to do and when. This can make project planning for revision of a standard to meet FSC's timetable and needs very difficult.

The UKWAS Steering Group relies on FSC UK to gather information from, and negotiate with FSC International which we recognise may be a difficult and challenging task in often changing circumstances due to the nature and phasing of FSC policy development compared to UKWAS revision timetable, and provision of FSC support systems to its national initiatives.

We welcome the continued professional advisory and advocacy role that FSC UK provides to the UKWAS Steering Group when standard setting - including giving interim advice during evolving external policy contexts - as well as FSC UK's UKWAS Steering Group member role.

b. Social representation

We, as well as other members of UKWAS Steering Group would welcome better representation from the social sector, but

it is difficult to locate suitable stakeholders able and willing to participate in voluntary forest management standard setting.

c. Historic environment

It seems an odd oversight that UKWAS does not have clearly stated requirements on historic environment conservation for both features and designated sites. This is part of UK Forestry Standard and its associated Forest Guidelines on Historic Environment, and hence part of UKWAS, and would already be part of management planning, design, operation and connect with veteran trees, deadwood biodiversity, access and social aspects of UKWAS.

Additional comment received separately

I have an additional comment for UKWAS revision:

The RSPB would like to see an UKWAS requirement related to the restriction of the use of lead ammunition for vertebrate control due to toxicity to wildlife, in particular wild birds, from spent lead ammunition left in the environment.

This could be written into Section 5 – Protection & Maintenance - in a requirement under pollution control (5.5) with cross-referencing from the deer management requirement (5.1.5). There should be a presumption against the use of lead ammunition with consideration of alternative materials and methods. The time from when a revised standard is introduced and the time that all certified owners/managers are given to comply – 2 years? - would provide a phasing in period for such a measure.

Scottish Woodlands Ltd (Stuart J. Wilkie, Certification & Environment Manager)

Scottish Woodlands fully support the concept of UKWAS as the single certification standard for the UK and would wish it to continue as such. It is important that both FSC and PEFC feel able to continue their endorsement of UKWAS. Scottish Woodlands believe that previous versions of UKWAS have been prepared to a high standard and current co-operation and consensus which largely exists amongst stakeholders has been a very positive feature of UKWAS. These factors have been instrumental in helping to expand forest certification in the UK.

The UK is a highly regulated and compliant country with many environmental, health and safety, and business regulations. In addition, the existence of the UK Forestry Standard already sets a high bar for sustainable forest management in the country. UKWAS has served the UK forest industry well over the years as it is concise, relevant and tailored to UK circumstances. It is able to weigh issues (such a land tenure, which is not a contentious issue) in a UK context and set appropriate requirements. Previous versions of UKWAS have therefore been both robust and workable.

As forest managers we have become accustomed to working with UKWAS and our staff are familiar with the structure and requirements. We see the process going forward as one of evolution and see no value in large scale change at this time. Considering all of the above Scottish Woodlands would view with some alarm the rigid imposition of IGIs by FSC on the UK if this was to happen.

Scottish Woodlands have reviewed the standard in detail. Our detailed comments are about providing more clarity and guidance or taking account of changes to the background in which the industry operates (such as pests and diseases) rather than substantial changes to the standard itself. Rather than submit a detailed and lengthy response we have chosen to annotate a Word document version of the Standard with our comments and suggestions. Hopefully this will assist with the review process.

The Word document is attached with this submission.

Aitchesse Ltd (Steele Haughton)

PROPOSAL FOR CHANGE TO UKWAS REQUIREMENT 3.3.2

1. Background

Forest management standards have been a feature of UK forestry since the Forestry accord and, subsequently, the launch of the UK Forestry Standard in 1998. 'Standards' are now largely accepted as a logical framework within which to measure practice in UK forests and reassure the public, consumers and timber processors that the UK grown timber they buy has

been produced to reasonable environmental and socially responsible standards.

It is recognised that while 'principles' are essentially fixed, the subsidiary standards, practice guidance and compliance indicators need to be reviewed periodically to ensure that the aims and objectives of the standard are being met and are in reasonable balance.

A recent study by WWFⁱ predicts a doubling of global demand for wood and wood products by 2050 and highlights the vital role that plantation forests will have in the protection of the World's natural and semi natural forest habitats and in the reduction of net carbon emissions.

The original UK standards are largely a 'one size fits all' framework that apply the same practice 'rules' to all (particularly non ancient) UK woodland ranging from mixed broadleaved woodland in the south of England to Sitka spruce plantation forests in the uplands of Wales and Scotland.

2. Coordinated Standards

There is a clear logic and appeal in the coordination and cross referencing of UK forestry standards (between the UK Forestry Standard, UK Woodland Assurance Standard and the standards required to achieve FSC or PEFC certification in the UK).

However, such interlocking has the potential to result in entrenched reluctance for any change because 'it conflicts with another standard'.

The various UK standards have different review and revision timetables so that any proposal for change is likely to have 'just missed' the review of one of the standards and therefore be seen as seeking to alter a standard that has just been updated. This cannot be used as an argument against logical change; changes have to start somewhere.

3. Biodiversity, Adaption to Climate Change and Species Choice

a. Background and History

The UKWAS standard on species choice is covered under Section 3. Woodland design: creation, felling and replanting, subsection 3.3 Species selection:

3.3.2 Requirement

The proportions of different species in new planting, or planned for the next rotation of an existing woodland, shall be as follows:

- Where at least two species are suited to the site and matched to the objectives:

- < 65% primary species
- > 20% secondary species
- > 10% open space
- > 5% native broadleaf.

- Where only one species is suited to the site and matched to the objectives:

- < 75% primary species
- > 10% open space
- > 5% native broadleaf
- > 10% other areas managed for biodiversity as a major objective.

The requirement in relation to open space does not apply to very small woodlands (i.e. 10 ha or under).

Means of verification

- Management planning documentation
- Field observation.

Our research indicates that the percentages fixed as a requirement by the UKWAS standard were adopted directly from the UK Forestry Standard without further input or researchⁱⁱ.

The UK Forestry Standard seeks to reflect UK government and ministerial internationally agreed commitments to sustainable forest management. The Standard develops high level principles through into practical guidance and requirements. The fixed percentages used in the UKFS are understood to have been arrived at by discussion at the Technical Working Group that originally drafted the standardⁱⁱⁱ. There does not appear any research or evidence base supporting the fixing of the species per cent ages. The percentages were not derived from any 'parent' European or international agreements or ministerial commitments. The percentages were not specifically reviewed or tested for effectiveness as part of the recent revision of the UKFS.^{iv}

b. Application of standards

Although the wording of the UKWAS standard on species choice hints at some flexibility in application of the standard (if “suited to the site and matched to the objectives” and justified by the owner/manager) in practice there is no flexibility at all as percentages are applied as strict ‘rules’ by supervisors, assessors and auditors.

Requirements are often applied at the forest plan scale e.g. restocking within a plan period has to comply with the ‘rules’. In practice there is no scope for compliance at a portfolio or ownership scale to allow a better overall realisation of ‘the right trees in the right place’. There is no scope for maximising commercial timber production where this is practically logical while supporting biodiversity maintenance or enhancement where this is most valuable.

Although UKWAS ‘Procedures for use of the certification standard’ recognise that scale is an important factor that needs to be taken into account when applying standards^v, in practice, requirements on species proportions are generally applied on a ‘one size fits all’ basis.

c. The application of the species choice requirement

Application of requirements should seek to achieve a balance between potential conflicts (say between requirements for biodiversity and productivity). We believe that the correct balance should be different in different forests depending on history, objectives, species and scale e.g.:

i. In small woodlands in lowland England on fertile sheltered sites, there are likely to be a range of native and non native species that can be grown to produce a utilisable crop of timber while developing into a range of habitats and biodiversity. The reduction in the value of saleable timber and therefore economic sustainability is relatively small, for a high improvement in biodiversity

ii. In upland Britain over 250 metres amsl, the available choice of species may be very restricted, particularly when the primary objective is for a productive commercial forest growing saleable timber. The maintenance of a proportion of (unplanted) open ground does provide habitats for a limited range of plants and animals that would not thrive within areas planted with trees. Most commercial forests incorporate in the order of 15% open ground in the form of forest road verges, rides and water course margins.

Current application of ‘the rules’ in upland production forests can result in a reduction in productivity of 25% or more. Open ground produces no timber and secondary and tertiary species often produce little more than low volumes of poor quality chipwood.

4. Outcomes

UKWAS requirement 3.3.2 is applied to all UK forest areas from lowland broadleaved PAWS to upland commercial Sitka spruce plantation forests. In many cases, we believe we can demonstrate that the manifestation of this standard ‘on the ground’ in upland productive forests is ‘token’ areas of moribund broadleaves planted in tubes. The trees in these areas struggle against unsuitable conditions and attack from deer; few generally survive more than a few years. The real result is not the theoretical improvement in biodiversity but rather an illogical reduction in the productivity and economic sustainability of the forest. We believe that we can demonstrate that, in upland plantation forests in GB, the biodiversity and climate change adaptability value of the current requirement 3.3.2 is minimal and the reduction of productivity is counter to requirement 2.2.2. on maintenance of the forest’s long-term productive potential.

Auditors of standards and group scheme managers apply requirement 3.3.2 with no flexibility. It is likely this is partly because percentages are quoted as fixed numbers in the requirement. No such set levels are given for productivity or economic sustainability requirements and they may therefore be seen as less certain or important. There is no effective flexibility in the current application of requirement 3.3.2 for an owner to balance the requirement over a group or portfolio of woodlands where, for example, the owner can demonstrate overall compliance of the holding. There is evidence that the application of such flexibility in the application of FSC standards elsewhere^{vi} has facilitated the support and funding of work in native forest areas by commercial plantation forest enterprises. This could allow development of significant sources of new funding for important woodland conservation (such as PAWS restoration) work in GB.

The WWF report (1 WWF Living Forests Report 2013, Forests and Wood Products) highlights the need to make the most of productivity of plantation forests as a real contribution to the reduction in pressures on the World’s natural forests.

Requirement 3.3.2, as currently implemented, prevents GB’s upland forests making a full contribution.

In summary, we believe that UKWAS requirement 3.3.2:

- Is not supported by any clear evidence base
- is not dictated by wider international policy commitment
- results in unreasonable reduction in productivity in certain, particularly plantation, forests with little or no real increase in biodiversity
- may provide a framework within which increases in the productivity of plantation forests can provide support for important work in Ancient Woodland Sites.

5. Proposal for change to UKWAS

We believe that the following alternate wording for UKWAS requirement 3.3.2 would:

- comply with the underlying principles and ministerial commitments
- improve the net benefits from forests in GB
- improve the sustainability of forests complying with the standard
- help ensure the requirement is applied 'on the ground' as intended
- comply with FSC and PEFC principles and therefore allow standards and requirements to be co-ordinated as the other standards are reviewed.

Proposed revised wording:

Requirement 3.3.2:

The proportions of different species in new planting, or planned for the next rotation, shall be as follows:

3.3.2.1 Forest areas under 200 metres above sea level and Ancient Woodland Sites (AWS):

- Where at least two species are suited to the site and matched to the objectives:
 - < 65% primary species
 - > 20% secondary species
 - > 10% open space
 - > 5% native broadleaf.

- Where only one species is suited to the site and matched to the objectives:
 - < 75% primary species
 - > 10% open space
 - > 5% native broadleaf
 - > 10% other areas managed for biodiversity as a major objective.

3.3.2.2 Forest areas over 200 metres above sea level other than Ancient Woodland Sites:

- <90% primary species
- >10% open space and areas managed for biodiversity as a major objective.

Requirements may be achieved at a forest/woodland level or at an ownership or occupancy level.

The requirement in relation to open space does not apply to very small woodlands (i.e. 10 ha or under).

Open space may include unplanted areas managed as part of a WMU.

Means of verification

- Management planning documentation
- Field observation.

6. Intentions

It is our intention to submit the proposal to FSC-UK to revise the UK FM criteria (6.3) and indicators (6.3.2) and to the Forestry Commission for revision of the UK Forestry Standard (notes 8, 11 and 23).

References:

- WWF Living Forests Report 2013, Forests and Wood Products
- Personal correspondence with Peter Wilson 2014.

- iii Personal correspondence with Mike Garforth 2014
- iv Telephone conversation with FC (Richard Howe) Feb 2014.
- v <http://ukwas.org.uk/the-standard/introduction/procedures-for-use-of-the-standard>: “Many of the requirements in the certification standard, particularly those relating to woodland design, woodland operations and conservation, relate to proportions of the overall woodland area. In applying the requirements, an approach must be adopted which allows the woodland owner/manager to achieve the requirement in a way that is best suited to the characteristics of the woodland and conforms to the spirit of the certification standard.”
- vi Personal correspondence with David Balfour, MD of Timberlands Ltd, New Zealand

Confederation of Forest Industries (Andrew Heald, Technical Advisor)

CONFOR is concerned that UKWAS does not place economic sustainability equally alongside environmental and social sustainability, and that some woodlands are being certified as being sustainably managed, which do not have any direct economic input as a result of forest goods or services produced in that woodland.

CONFOR believes that UKWAS should better consider economic sustainability in forest management and should reflect the following PEFC and FSC criteria:-

PEFC

5.3 Criterion 3 Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood)

5.3.2 Forest management planning shall aim to achieve sound economic performance taking into account any available market and possibilities for new markets and economic activities in connection with all relevant goods and services of forests

5.3.4 Forest management practices shall maintain and improve the forest resources and encourage a diversified output of goods and services over the long term.

FSC

Principle #5: Benefits from the forest

Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

5.1 Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.

Institute of Chartered Foresters (Shireen Chambers, Executive Director)

The Institute welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. For the sake of clarity we have attached an annotated Word document version of the Standard with our comments and suggestions which we hope will assist with the review process. These comments relate more to seeking clarity and guidance or taking account of changes to the background in which the industry operates (such as pests and diseases) rather than substantial changes to the standard itself, and are summarised below:

Support for UKWAS in its present form

ICF fully support the concept of UKWAS as the single certification standard for the UK and would wish it to continue as such. It is important that both FSC and PEFC feel able to continue their endorsement of UKWAS. Previous versions of UKWAS have been prepared to a high standard and current co-operation and consensus which largely exists amongst stakeholders has been a very positive feature of UKWAS. These factors have been instrumental in helping to expand forest certification in the UK.

The UK is a highly regulated and compliant country with many environmental, health and safety, and business regulations. In addition, the existence of the UK Forestry Standard already sets a high bar for sustainable forest management in the country. UKWAS has served the UK forest industry well over the years as it is concise, relevant and tailored to UK circumstances. It is able to weigh issues in a UK context and set appropriate requirements. Previous versions of UKWAS have therefore been both robust and workable.

We see the process going forward as one of evolution and see no value in large scale change at this time. Considering all of the above we would view with some alarm the rigid imposition of IGIs by FSC on the UK if this was to happen.

1. Then need to make Certification more accessible to woodland owners

Many owners are reluctant to spend money on certification unless they can clearly see the benefits. Any increase in the burden of paper work and auditing will only serve to increase the „turn off“ for private owners who own circa 55% of the UK woodland / forest estate. We need a simple route to certification that is sustainable and has longevity and will be attractive to all forest /woodland owners.

In terms of risk to sustainable forest management the main area of risk is at the small and low end of the market – i.e. fuel wood where there will be massive future exploitation which will be hard to control and UKWAS may have no relevance or bearing.

There is not a one fits all approach and whatever scheme is in place it needs to be flexible and stand the test of time. Any revision to the standard should aim to simplify the certification process and not lead to additional burdens or costs.

2. Redefinition of SLIMF

Currently SLIMF is defined as less than 500ha. This definition is important in setting sampling intensities in audits and hence woodland owner’s costs. The FSC and PEFC define the UK as “low Risk” and therefore there should be some benefit, in the form of lower sampling intensity, flowing to UK woodland owners. We would like to see small redefined as less than 1000ha. There is no evidence that woodlands in the 500-1000ha category are “riskier” than those up to 500ha. Indeed it is at the smaller scale where some of the riskier practices are most prevalent. 1000ha is used as “small” in other parts of the world and in a world context 1000ha is not a particularly large forest.

Egger (UK) Ltd. (Simon Hart, Business Development Compliance Manager)

1. Support for UKWAS

We fully support the concept of UKWAS as the single certification standard for the UK and would wish it to continue as such. It has strength in being a UK bottom up standard rather than a FSC International top down standard. It is important that both FSC and PEFC feel able to continue their endorsement of UKWAS. Previous versions of UKWAS have been prepared to a high standard and current co-operation and consensus which largely exists amongst stakeholders has been a very positive feature of UKWAS. These factors have been instrumental in helping to expand forest certification in the UK.

The UK is a highly regulated and compliant country with many environmental, health and safety, and business regulations. In addition, the existence of the UK Forestry Standard already sets a high bar for sustainable forest management in the country. UKWAS has served the UK forest industry well over the years as it is concise, relevant and tailored to UK circumstances. It is able to weigh issues in a UK context and set appropriate requirements. Previous versions of UKWAS have therefore been both robust and workable.

We see the process going forward as one of evolution and see no value in large scale change at this time. We are not proposing any changes to the text.

Considering all of the above we would view with some alarm the rigid imposition of IGIs by FSC on the UK if this was to happen.

2. The need to make Certification more accessible to woodland owners

Many owners are reluctant to spend money on certification unless they can clearly see the benefits. FSC seem to be increasing the intensity of auditing and this does not appear to be risk adjusted. This is leading to increased costs and will only serve to increase the ‘turn off’ for private owners (who own circa 55% of the UK woodland). More appropriate, lower cost routes, need to be found.

Any revision to the standard should aim to simplify the certification process and not lead to additional burdens or costs.

3. Revision Period

With UKWAS entering its fourth revision, and little difference between the previous three, and bearing in mind the highly regulated nature of UK forestry we ask that the revision period is **extended to 10 years**. The current 5 year cycle, with protracted rounds of consultation is unnecessary and consultation fatigue makes stakeholders less likely to engage.

4. Redefinition of SLIM

Currently SLIM is defined as less than 500ha. This definition is important in setting sampling intensities in audits and hence woodland owner's costs. The FSC and PEFC define the UK as "low Risk" and therefore there should be some benefit, in the form of lower sampling intensity, flowing to UK woodland owners. We would like to see "small" redefined as less than 1000ha. There is no evidence that woodlands in the 500-1000ha category are "riskier" than those up to 500ha. Indeed it is at the smaller scale where some of the riskier practices are most prevalent. 1000ha is used as "small" in other parts of the world and in a world context 1000ha is not a particularly large forest. It should be remembered that SLIM or non-SLIM woods are measured against the same Standard requirements.

FC and NRW

The attached response is drawn from all three countries in Great Britain. It reflects experience of the government forestry departments, as state forest managers and holders of the most extensive certificate (s) in the UK, and as the forest regulators and standard setting body.

General Points

1 Documentation – UKWAS guidance.

Inadequate documentation is frequently raised as a CAR and it perhaps points to a need for more guidance. An example is in 7.1, where the results of consultation are required to be demonstrated.

2 Interpretation by the certification body, (CB)

Whilst there is scope for flexibility in interpretation of UKWAS by the CB, some sort of appeal or informal second opinion might be useful to instigate. For example, we recently had an issue over signage in Wales. There is the interpretation panel, but sometimes the nature of the issue could perhaps be resolved more expediently.

Specific points raised by the countries

3 Deadwood

The principal development is that the **creation** of snags at anything above normal harvesting height using harvesters has been deemed in the UK as un-approved by the machine manufacturers and therefore potentially un-safe. In the UKWAS standard, there is an action under requirements (6.2.2) for "creating snags" and snags are also mentioned in the guidance, however this is mitigated by considerations of safety.

Although it does not appear in the UKFS Biodiversity Guidelines, the term "creation" is introduced in the deadwood practice guide. It appears on p4 and in table 2 and specifically on p13 "Creating and Expanding Deadwood Habitat" where the creation of snags with a harvester is specifically referred to and illustrated. This needs to be revised and possibly the use of the term "creation" in the UKWAS needs to be qualified. More emphasis could be put on the idea of accrual or accumulation over time used in place of "creation". A further thought is lopping and pollarding of trees to create deadwood habitats in living trees could or should be mentioned.

4 Wind-farms

Wind-farms and turbines are a particularly contentious and pressing issue, especially in Scotland. As an interpretation note (No. 8) has been issued, the import of this should be considered as part of the UKWAS revision.

There still seems to be uncertainty on the issue of "wind efficiency felling" and where "low risk" or "controlled wood" applies. There is perhaps a case for re-visiting the UKWAS standard to ensure it is clear and reflects these judgements.

5 Resilience Issues

The increasing threats to forests have raised the profile of resilience and there was a feeling that UKWAS could go further to try and secure the future sustainability of UK woodlands. Resilience is covered in sections 3.1 to 3.3 of UKWAS, where it is stated that species choice should be informed by considerations of resilience and climate change in the guidance to 3.3. The UKFS climate change Guidelines have a lot to say about adaptive management and species selection on pages 27 – 28 and native woodland is discussed on p18 of the Biodiversity Guidelines.

6 Pests and Diseases

Plant health and bio-security are considered in the UKFS page 26 and on Guidelines on general forestry practice Nos 3, 6, 21, 22. These were a relatively late addition to the UKFS and are perhaps not fully reflected in UKWAS sections 5.1.1 / 5.1.2.

A pressing issue is the sometimes dramatic changes to forest plans that are required due to the current pest outbreaks. This discussed in Cardiff last year but does the wording of UKWAS need to be changed to reflect this?

7 Lease holdings: the state forest services have particular restrictions on their ability to comply with the letter of UKWAS requirements where game management, access and other legal rights are held by a third party; usually this arises where the forestry land is leased.

These restrictions should be recognised as compromising the forest managers ability to comply namely under section 6.4, Game Management, and under 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, Woodland Access etc.

(A suggestion from FE England for addressing lease holdings is included in an appendix at the end.)

Other issues for discussion

8 Forest regulators and certification: conservators in Scotland suggested that some route to report regulatory infringements to CBs might help to avoid the potentially embarrassing situation of having forests certified whilst the owners were in breach of regulations. CBs do collect stakeholder feedback but this is only at the time of audit and not all forest regulators are content to contribute to this.

9 Interpretation of the FMU and forest districts: issues have been reported as arising where the FMU is the forest district - but the requirements seem to be applied by the CB at a management plan level. Clearly there is a need to balance the need to manage all areas of a district responsibly on one hand with the flexibility to spread requirements across a district (and maximise their benefits) on the other.

10 UKWAS SLIM: it will be interesting to see what the effects of this are and whether the lower audit requirement lessens costs in practice and results in more certificates. It will also be interesting to see whether more CARs arise where the audit intensity is lower.

11 Integrated land use: there is much policy emphasis on this and on the concept of ecosystem services at country level so perhaps they should be brought out, or at least mentioned, in the UKWAS standard.

12 Water management: it is a UKFS good practice requirement (Nos 2 and 4) to take river basin management plans into account. This could be reflected in UKWAS 2.1

13 Soil and ground vegetation damage: in 6.1 the "Guidance" could say a little more about the protection of soils and ground-flora in relation to harvesting. The UKFS soils guidelines there is quite a bit on this (Guidelines 9,10 16) for example and in the biodiversity guidelines under Native Woodlands (Guideline 6) and maybe 3 – under priority habitats could be considered relevant.

14 Long Term Retentions: the definition could usefully be put into the Guidance text in 6.2.1

Appendix: Lease Holdings

In section 6.4 the wording could be amended to specifically exclude woods leased for forestry purposes only and where the shooting rights are retained by the landowner and the game management not under the influence or legal control of the owner of the forestry lease.

In section 7.2.2 under "Guidance" we would like to see added to the existing list on "Public Access may be denied in the following situations" a further bullet point:

- woodlands held under forestry-only leases where the landowner has made clear his intention not to support the forestry lease holder in allowing or encouraging public access beyond that already existing in public rights of way.

In addition, any extensive and fragmented estate of over a thousand hectares over where public access is generally allowed could be granted a percentage (say 20%), where public access is denied for good reason without compromising its certification status as a whole.

UPM Tilhill

See Appendix 6 for comments on 3.5, 5.5.2, 6.2.1 & 6.6.2.

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (David Gibson, Chief Officer)

I am responding on behalf of The Mountaineering Council of Scotland to the consultation.

We would like to take this opportunity to draw your own attention to a Forestry Commission document which isn't mentioned in the relevant paragraph in the assessment guide. The guide correctly states "In Scotland: The Land Reform (Scotland) Act (2003) grants a right of responsible access to land, including woodland. Guidance on responsible behaviour together with circumstances where access may be restricted is set out in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code". However it makes no mention of the document "Managing Woodland Access and Forest Operations in Scotland" which (amongst other aims) seeks to ensure that woodland is managed to take account of access during felling or thinning operations. See [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/FCPN104.pdf/\\$FILE/FCPN104.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/FCPN104.pdf/$FILE/FCPN104.pdf)

This important document was drawn up in consultation with the National Access Forum, of which we are a member. We consider that an appropriate reference to this document should be included in the guide.

I hope that these comments will be helpful and look forward to your acknowledgement of this response.

UPM Tilhill comments

| Ref | Requirement/Guidance | Consultation Response |
|-------|--|--|
| 6.2.2 | <p>Owners/managers shall plan and take action over time to provide a diversity of both standing and fallen deadwood habitats throughout the woodland WMU and to accumulate deadwood volumes and maintain veteran trees, where this does not conflict with safety of the public or forestry workers or the health of the woodland.</p> <p>Actions shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying areas where deadwood is likely to be of greatest ecological value • Keeping standing dead trees, snags and veteran trees • Keeping and protecting old, previously pollarded trees alive through appropriate management • Managing suitable trees to eventually take the place of existing veterans • Only harvesting windblow when it is of significant value or unless more than 3 m³/ha is blown and sufficient deadwood is accumulating on site • Keeping naturally fallen trees or major branches • When thinning or clearfelling, creating snags and providing fallen deadwood where insufficient has already accumulated. | <p>Application of the clause needs to be pragmatic – 20m³/ha throughout the WMU has been found to often to impractical and/or unachievable which, when audited externally, after harvesting works are completed is very difficult to demonstrate to CBs. There is often a conflict between the requirement to remain as much deadwood as possible and pressures from best silvicultural practice in terms of grounds preparation and drainage. Often woodland owners have an issue, particularly in high profile locations, of the aesthetic impact this has on the landscape. We understand the need to have a measurable target but we like to see the emphasis more on the importance of siting deadwood in the most beneficial & appropriate locations rather than the fixation with a number which the Standard seems to give forest managers.</p> |
| 6.2.1 | <p>Guidance (part) - Natural reserves should be predominantly wooded, permanently identified and in locations which are of particularly high wildlife interest or potential. They should be managed by minimum intervention unless alternative management has a higher conservation or biodiversity value.</p> | <p>We manage forests which have very valuable habitats (or the potential for very valuable habitats that require some intervention to enhance their status and maintain them in the long term. A common example of this would be upland bog habitat with a good Sphagnum cover and with the water table at or near the surface for most of the year. These habitats are often within a WMU and in danger of being depleted if the tree cover and other potential colonising species as well as drainage,</p> |

| | | |
|-------|--|--|
| | | isn't managed correctly. I don't think the UKWAS definition of NR reflects this type of vision and therefore we probably need a broader more flexible definition which incorporates ecological restoration back to open ground habitats |
| 5.5.2 | Biodegradable cutting-chain lubricants shall be used where practicable. | Current guidance on practicality focusses on health and operator costs – audits of site operations regular bring up the issue of machines not being designed to operate on non-mineral oils which we apply at our discretion but broader guidance note would be of assistance to auditors. |
| 3.5 | Conversion to non-forested land | Simple clarity on how Interpretation Note 8 will be applied in UKWAS 4. |
| 6.2.1 | <p>A minimum of 15% of the woodland area shall be managed with conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as a major objective including:</p> <p>a) Conservation areas and features as identified in sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.3.</p> <p>b) Long-term retentions: stable stands and clumps are identified and constitute a minimum of 1% of the woodland area.</p> <p>c) Natural reserves: areas of woodland have been set aside where biodiversity is the prime objective. Natural reserves shall comprise at least 1% of plantations and 5% of semi-natural woodlands.</p> <p>d) Areas being restored to semi-natural woodland or to non-woodland habitats (see requirements in sections 3.5.1, 6.1.3 and 6.3.2).</p> | There is regular misunderstandings/confusion for forest managers over the classification, distinction and suitable management approach for natural reserves and long-term retentions. It would be useful to have a more detailed description of both habitat types (using examples?) and the management approach that would be considered appropriate. |

Feedback on FSC UK workers' rights proposals

Dr Owen Davies, Forest Standards Manager, FSC UK

September 2014

1. Introduction

In July 2014, FSC UK shared for discussion with the UKWAS Steering Group some tentative proposals for addressing perceived gaps in UKWAS arising from new workers' rights requirements in version 5 of the FSC Principles and Criteria. The proposals elicited a wide variety of responses, and this document represents an attempt to summarise the feedback received accurately but concisely as an aid to further discussion of this topic. The text of the original e-mail circulated to Steering Group members is reproduced in the annex.

Author's note – In writing this summary I have resisted the urge to further explain my original proposals or to offer counter-arguments to any of the feedback, as I don't believe this would do anything to advance the debate at this stage. Various positions have been set out (and hopefully recounted faithfully here) and I believe that the next step should be to discuss and agree a way forward face-to-face. I have, however, taken the liberty of suggesting a starting point for that discussion.

2. Feedback

Feedback has been organised below according to whether it applies generally to the workers' rights proposals, or specifically to equality or mechanisms for resolving grievances. Comments are attributed to respondents using numbers in square brackets which correspond with those in the table below, which also indicates the constituencies and declared interests of the relevant steering group members:

| No. | Respondent | Organisation | Constituency | Interests |
|-----|------------------|----------------|--|------------------|
| 1 | Stuart Wilkie | ICF | Forestry practitioners | Econ / Env / Soc |
| 2 | Andrew Heald | Confor | Woodland owners, Forestry practitioners, Wood processing industry | Econ / Env / Soc |
| 3 | Ewan McIntosh | | | |
| 4 | Moira Baptie | FES | Country forestry authorities and forestry enterprises | Econ / Env / Soc |
| 5 | Jonathan Spencer | FCE | Country forestry authorities and forestry enterprises | Econ / Env / Soc |
| 6 | Gordon Pfetscher | Woodland Trust | Environmental organisations | Econ / Env / Soc |
| 7 | David Sulman | UKFPA | Wood processing | Econ |

| | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|------------------|
| | | | industry | |
| 8 | Mike Seville | CLA | Woodland owners | Econ / Env / Soc |
| 9 | Richard Howe | FC | Standard setting | |
| 10 | Rachel Chamberlain | NRW | Country forestry authorities and forestry enterprises | Econ / Env / Soc |
| 11 | Marie-Christine Flécharde | Soil Association | Certification body | |
| 12 | Roger Cooper | UKWAS Interpretation Panel | | |

2.1 General

The proposals are not thought to go beyond what is required by UK law [1, 6] and are consistent with the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard [9] (which explicitly mentions the Equality Act 2010 in the context of service provision, employment, and public engagement and consultation).

Some respondents consider the proposals to be appropriate in the context of the strengthened social requirements in version 5 of the FSC Principles and Criteria [6, 11], without adding significant burden to owners/managers, especially of small and low intensity managed woods [6]. Some endorse the texts as written [6 (equality and grievances), 11 (equality only)], while others propose text changes or additions [4 (equality only), 11 (grievances only)].

Another group of respondents, however, consider that the requirements are far beyond what is necessary for a forestry standard [5, 7] or that the issues, while important, are not priorities for sustainable forest management [2] with no objective evidence that they are a problem in the UK context [2]; our focus should be on 'real issues' [1]. They see an unnecessary burden, a failure to recognise that, 'In general terms, the UK forestry sector has its house in order, (not least because of stringent UK regulation)', and a duplication of oversight [7, supported by 5 and 8], in a standard that is 'already far too paperwork heavy and field light' [5]. They consider the proposals to be too complex [1, 2] and prescriptive [1].

A third group suggest [1] or endorse [3, 12] a simplification of the proposals, integrated as far as possible with existing requirements, or suggest reliance on UKWAS 1.1.1 (compliance with the law) as an alternative to new requirements [1, 5], potentially 're-drafting 1.1.2 to explicitly include management practices and employees' [11].

Of general interest to the UKWAS revision process are the comments on guidance and, in particular, means of verification. One respondent raises concerns that ill-judged means of verification can lead to a 'pointless paper chase' [1], with another agreeing that paper records should not be the default means of verification but should only be consulted if 'an issue is raised in discussion with workers' [10]. It is suggested that further clarification on the use of means of verification and guidance may be of value in UKWAS 4 [11].

2.2 Equality

Two respondents support the proposal as written [6, 11], while another suggests detailed changes to the proposed text [4], as shown below (with deletions shown as strikethrough and insertions shown in red):

Requirement

There shall be **awareness of and** compliance with ~~equality legislation~~ **the Equality Act 2010**.

In non-SLIM woodlands, there shall be conformance with the ~~ACAS advisory booklet Delivering Equality and Diversity~~ **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Guidance and Codes of Practice**.

Means of verification

All woodlands:

- Discussions with employees, contractors and/or volunteers reveal no evidence that they have been subject to any form of discrimination, **harassment or victimisation on the grounds of their protected characteristics**.

Non-SLIM woodlands:

- Documented equality policy and consideration of issues in all **relevant policies and** procedures
- Procedure for equality monitoring (**employers with 150 staff or more**).

Guidance

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination, **harassment or victimisation** in the workplace and in wider society on the basis of **9 protected characteristics**:

- age
- **gender reassignment** (being or becoming a transsexual person)
- ~~being married or in a civil partnership~~ **marriage and civil partnership**
- ~~being pregnant or having a child~~ **pregnancy and maternity**
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion **and**, ~~belief or lack of religion/belief~~
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Public Authorities (including Non-departmental Public Bodies) will also have to meet the specific requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED) as specified by the appropriate administration.

As well as **embedding and** promoting equality in employment practices, training opportunities, awarding of contracts and management activities, owners/managers

should also consider equality issues in the context of stakeholder engagement. [The respondent also notes that ‘The Equality Act is also very specific in relation to requirements for the provision of good, facilities and services to members of the public – this needs to be built in to any separate requirements around access/recreation/community.’]

The same respondent suggests that it would be more beneficial to provide links to EHRC guidance and codes of practice than to ACAS documents in the UKWAS Appendix [4].

A contrasting view is that, as compliance with equality legislation is policed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, UKWAS should have no role beyond requiring compliance with the law as per 1.1.1; if a decision is taken to include any explicit references they should be subject to input from human rights lawyers, and public bodies are likely to be better positioned to comply than most others [5, supported by 7].

A compromise position might be a much simplified requirement, which one respondent proposes could be inserted after UKWAS 8.3.2 [1]:

8.3.3 Requirement

There shall be compliance with equality legislation.

Means of verification

Discussions with employees, contractors and/or volunteers reveal no evidence that they have been subject to any form of discrimination.

The omission of guidance is consistent with the suggestion that any attempt to summarise the Equality Act as per the original proposal is fraught with danger [5]. The proposer of this simplified requirement justifies the approach to means of verification thus [1]:

UKWAS itself states that “Certification is **not** a legal compliance audit. Certification bodies will be checking that there is no evidence of non-compliance...” I think this is the pivotal phrase in that we should not have to **prove** at audit **compliance** with Equality Legislation only that the auditor should not come across any evidence that the law is being broken. An important distinction... Sections 8.3.1 and 8.3.2 (Workers’ Rights) already encapsulate this notion quite well and only require a brief discussion between the auditor and workers to confirm that they have been fairly treated. We should simply echo this for Equality issues.

2.3 Mechanisms for resolving grievances

One respondent supports the proposal as written, stating that ‘having looked at the ACAS Code and learnt that any employment tribunal would rely on it in case of a dispute I cannot see much difficulty in spelling out briefly in UKWAS via a new requirement what is currently un-written but will apply in any case’ [6]. Another suggests a number of text changes [11]:

Considering the UK context (i.e. existence of an ACAS Code of Practice on those issues, assumption that at least larger companies will already have a Policy/Procedure in place to deal with those aspects, also Union reps might be in place, etc.) maybe the wording could be modified to say something like “employees should be made aware of existing mechanism to solve disciplinary and grievance issues. If such procedure is under development there is a mechanism in place to ensure that employees are made aware of it and are involved in its development”.

Non SLIMF-woodland should also probably be required to maintain records of disciplinary actions and grievances, this in my view should be part of the requirement rather than place under “means of verification”.

Possibly SLIMF woodland should only be required to be aware of the existence of the ACAS Code?

One respondent considers the proposal to be a significant reinterpretation of the FSC requirement, suggesting that its intention ‘is to ensure that all workers have the opportunity to fairly resolve grievance NOT to ensure that employees contribute to the writing of an HR procedure’ [2].

A simple solution to this issue, making maximum use of existing UKWAS text, is proposed by another respondent [1], as shown below (with insertions shown in red):

8.3.2 Requirement

Employees and other workers shall be permitted to negotiate **terms and conditions** collectively with their employers should they so wish.

Means of verification

Discussions with employees and other workers reveal no evidence that they have been prevented from negotiating collectively.

3. Suggested starting point for further discussion

The much simplified texts proposed by Stuart Wilkie on behalf of the ICF seem to have met with some support, and keep changes to the existing UKWAS text to a minimum. It is suggested that these form the basis for further discussion of these workers’ rights issues:

8.3.2 Requirement

Employees and other workers shall be permitted to negotiate **terms and conditions** collectively with their employers should they so wish.

Means of verification

Discussions with employees and other workers reveal no evidence that they have been prevented from negotiating collectively.

8.3.3 Requirement

There shall be compliance with equality legislation.

Means of verification

Discussions with employees, contractors and/or volunteers reveal no evidence that they have been subject to any form of discrimination.

The Steering Group may wish to consider the following points:

- While the benefit of performance based means of verification involving direct contact with workers is undeniable, consideration may be given to the merit in management system based means of verification for large organisations where it is not possible for auditors to canvass a meaningful proportion of workers.

- Consideration may be given to including relevant ACAS and EHRC guidance and codes of practice in the UKWAS Appendix, both for the benefit of certificate holders and so that FSC UK can argue credibly to FSC International that these issues are being addressed explicitly.

Annex – Original FSC UK e-mail shared with UKWAS Steering Group members 1 July 2014

Dear All,

Apologies for being so slow to circulate this, but please see below some possible UKWAS text for discussion as mentioned at the Steering Group meeting on 5 June. This is intended to address some workers' rights issues in version 5 of the FSC Principles and Criteria. As discussed at the meeting, this is a very tentative draft and I would be grateful if you could restrict any onward distribution to colleagues with specialist knowledge who may be able to offer input; I realise that this is a potentially contentious area and that careless wording could open a huge can of worms, so your views would be very gratefully received.

A requirement is proposed for insertion before UKWAS 8.3.1 to address FSC criterion 2.2; 'The Organization shall promote gender equality in employment practices, training opportunities, awarding of contracts, processes of engagement and management activities'. The proposed text for discussion goes beyond what is required by the FSC criterion, taking into account UK equality legislation and best practice:

Requirement

There shall be compliance with equality legislation.

In non-SLIM woodlands, there shall be conformance with the ACAS advisory booklet Delivering Equality and Diversity.

Means of verification

All woodlands:

- Discussions with employees, contractors and/or volunteers reveal no evidence that they have been subject to any form of discrimination.

Non-SLIM woodlands:

- Documented equality policy and consideration of issues in all procedures
- Procedure for equality monitoring.

Guidance

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society on the basis of

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability

- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

As well as promoting equality in employment practices, training opportunities, awarding of contracts and management activities, owners/managers should also consider equality issues in the context of stakeholder engagement.

A further requirement is proposed for insertion before UKWAS 8.3.1 to address in part FSC criterion 2.6; 'The Organization through engagement with workers shall have mechanisms for resolving grievances and for providing fair compensation to workers for loss or damage to property, occupational diseases, or occupational injuries sustained while working for The Organization'. Compensation is considered to be addressed by UKWAS 8.4.1. The proposed text for discussion attempts to reflect the fact that much forest management involves contractors and that this requirement may only feasibly be applied to employees:

Requirement

Employees shall be involved in the development of disciplinary and grievance procedures in conformance with the ACAS statutory code of practice Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

Means of verification

- Documented disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Discussions with employees demonstrate that they have been involved in the development of disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Records of disciplinary actions and grievances maintained and up to date.

Guidance

In addition to the statutory code of practice, owners/managers with employees should also refer to the ACAS advisory booklet Employee Communication and Consultation when engaging employees in the development of disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Finally, the following best practice guidance is proposed for inclusion in the UKWAS Appendix under 8.3 Workers' Rights:

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Codes of Practice:

2009: Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

ACAS Advisory Booklets:

2014: Delivering Equality and Diversity

2014: Employee Communications and Consultation

If you have time to make any comments on this I would be delighted if you could share them by Friday 18 July. Your comments will feed into the draft text that I take to FSC International to seek their views before the UKWAS deliberations begin in earnest.

An Analysis of Corrective Action Requests (CARs) Emerging from Forest Management Certification Audits in the UK prepared by Sandy Greig for the Forestry Commission

Background

1. Forest management certification audits in the UK are conducted against the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). There are currently 3 accredited Certification Bodies carrying out FM certification audits in the UK which meet the requirements of the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC). The main evaluations take place at 5 yearly intervals, with annual surveillance audits between the main evaluations. Certification Bodies are required to place a public summary of their audit reports on the FSC International website. As at 1 January 2014 there were 44 FSC Forest Management/Chain-of-Custody certificates, including group and resource manager certificates, listed on the FSC website, covering some 1.45 million hectares of forest in the UK.

2. When an auditor decides that some aspect of forest management does not meet the UKWAS requirements, a Corrective Action Request (CAR) is raised. CARs can either be major or minor. Certification cannot be finalised if there is an outstanding major CAR: with minor CARs the forest manager is given a specific deadline by which the issue must be resolved to the auditor's satisfaction. CARs are listed in the public summaries of the audit reports.

3. Conducting an analysis of CARs provides useful data on the areas in which forest managers are failing to meet UKWAS requirements. It also provides insights into forest practice in the UK more generally. This will help the forestry sector to prioritise actions to improve standards of forest management, and should inform the next revision of the UKWAS standard.

Report and Contents

4. This report was commissioned by Richard Howe of the Forestry Commission GB. The report analyses all the CARs listed in the most recent main evaluations for each of the 44 current FSC FM/COC certificates in the UK. The report provides:

- A summary of the area (hectares) covered by individual, group and resource manager certification, and the area currently certified by the different CBs.
- An analysis of major and minor CARs by UKWAS section.
- A breakdown of the nature of the CARs between those relating to inadequate documentation and those observed on site visits.
- An assessment of the CARs relating to Group certification.
- An assessment of whether there are significant differences between the CARs raised for individual, multi-site and group certification.
- A commentary on whether there appear to be significant differences between CARs raised by the different Certification Bodies (CBs).
- A comparison between the findings of this study and a similar one carried out by Simon Jeffreys of Tilhill in 2002.
- An assessment of the implications of the findings in relation to UK forestry practice.

Methods

5. The analysis was based on the public summary reports relating to the most recent Main Evaluation audits for all the UK FM/CoC Certificates listed on the FSC UK website as at January 2014. As main evaluations take place every 5 years, the dates when the certificates were issued ranges from 2009 through 2013. The great majority of the audits were against UKWAS Version 2, with those from 2013 being against Version 3.0 or 3.1. As the structure of UKWAS did not change between versions 2 and 3, the revision did not create a problem in terms of this analysis. There was very little evidence that the changes to requirements and means of verification between Version 2 and Version 3 resulted in an increase in the number of CARs.

6. An Excel spreadsheet was constructed, containing the following information for each of the 44 certificates:

- Certificate code
- Certificate issue year
- Certification Body
- Property name
- Woodland area (hectares) covered by certificate
- Type of certificate (Single, Multi-site, Group)
- Duration of audit (days)
- Major CARs (listed by type and UKWAS Section)
- Minor CARs (listed by type and UKWAS Section)

Analysis by Certification Type and Certification Body

7. **Table 1** below shows the breakdown of type of certificate by Certification Body

| Type of Certificate | Number of Certificates | Area (hectares) | Certification Body | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| | | | SGS Qualifor | Soil Association | Commercial Union | Rainforest Alliance |
| Single | 13 | 9,438 | 1 | 6 | 6 | - |
| Multi-site | 12 | 1,057,410 | 2 | 9 | 1 | - |
| Group | 19 | 388,286 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| | 44 | 1,455,134 | 8 | 22 | 13 | 1 |

Table 2 below shows the area certified by each of the Certification Bodies

| | Certification Body | | | | Totals |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| | SGS Qualifor | Soil Association | Commercial Union | Rainforest Alliance | |
| Area (hectares) | 1,225,742 | 165,754 | 56,951 | 6,687 | 1,455,134 |
| % of total area | 84% | 11.5% | 4% | 0.5% | 100% |
| Mean area per cert | 153,217 | 7,534 | 4,381 | 6,687 | 33,071 |

8. The total area of woodland currently certified in the UK is shown as 1,455,134 hectares. This compares with the figure given in the Forestry Commission statistics, as at 31 March 2013, of 1,362,000 hectares of certified woodland which is stated to be 44% of the woodland area in the UK.

9. Tables 1 and 2 above show that while single owner certificates represent almost 30% by number, they represent less than 1% by area. Multi-site certificates represent 73% by area, due mainly to the certificate covering the whole of the Forestry Commission land holding in England, Scotland and Wales, an area of 924,000 hectares. (Note that this certificate pre-dates the separation of the FC in

Wales). The figures for the four Certification Bodies are markedly distinct, SGS Qualifor certificates currently represent 18% by number but 84% by area. Rainforest Alliance no longer offer forest management certification in the UK.

Analysis of Major and Minor CARs by UKWAS Section

10. Table 3 below shows the number of major CARs by UKWAS section divided between CARs based on inadequate documentation, resulting from office based checks, and CARs resulting from site visits. Where a CAR related to documentation was picked up during the site visit, for instance the lack of a plan for dealing with accidental spillages, this was allocated to “site”. The UKWAS sections are described as follows:

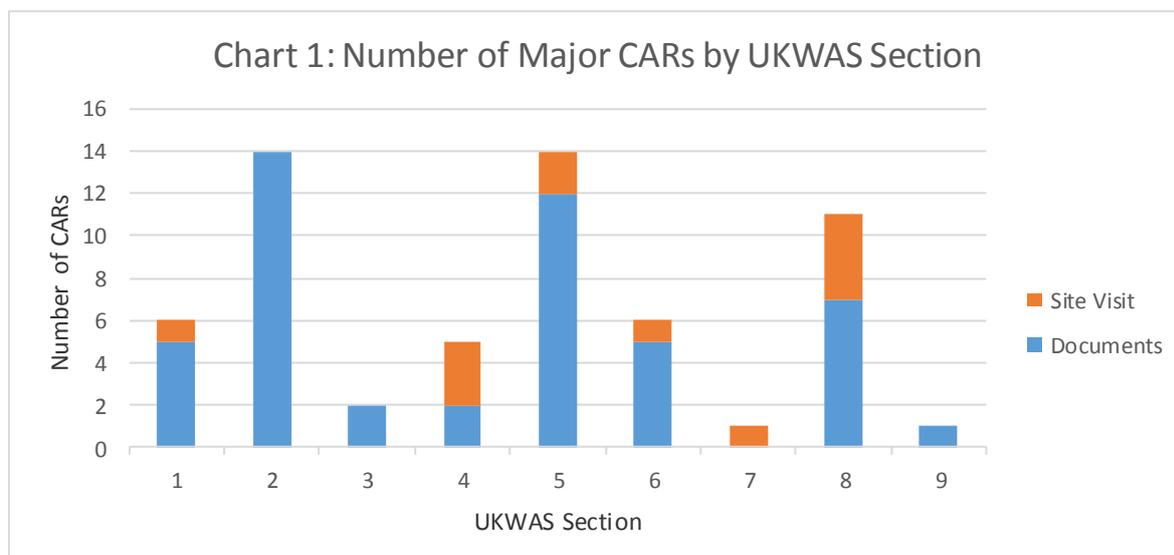
- Section 1. Compliance with the law and conformance with the requirements of the certification standard.**
- Section 2. Management planning**
- Section 3. Woodland design: creation, felling and replanting**
- Section 4. Operations**
- Section 5. Protection and maintenance**
- Section 6. Conservation and enhancement of biodiversity**
- Section 7. The community**
- Section 8. Forestry workforce**

In addition certain CARs were described in the audit reports as overall, or were not allocated a specific section: these have been listed in the tables below as “Other”.

Table 3: Major CARs shown by UKWAS Section

| UKWAS Section | Documents | Site | Total | Examples (abbreviated) |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---|
| Section 1. Compliance | 5 | 1 | 6 | Doc: No signed commitment to UKWAS Site: Unauthorised quad biking |
| Section 2. Man. planning | 14 | nil | 14 | Doc: No monitoring plan |
| Section 3. Design | 2 | nil | 2 | Doc: No EPS checklist |
| Section 4. Operations | 2 | 3 | 5 | Doc: No track planning consent Site: Lack of warning signs |
| Section 5. Prot/maint | 12 | 2 | 14 | Doc: No chemical reduction policy Site: No emergency plan (spillage) |
| Section 6. Biodiversity | 5 | 1 | 6 | Doc: No PAWS policy Site: Insufficient deadwood left |
| Section 7. Community | nil | 1 | 1 | Site: No warning notices |
| Section 8. Workforce | 7 | 4 | 11 | Doc: No operator certificates Site: Unsafe high seats |
| Other | 1 | nil | 1 | Doc: Poor overall compliance |
| Totals | 48 | 12 | 60 | |

The major CARs are shown in **Chart 1** below:



11. Overall there were 60 UKWAS related major CARs, 80% of which arose from non-existent or inadequate documentation. The main sources of these CARs were under Sections 2, 5 and 8 with 23%, 23% and 18% of the total respectively. These are analysed by UKWAS sub-section in Tables 4, 5 and 6 below:

Table 4: Major CARs under UKWAS Section 2 - Management Planning

| UKWAS Sub-section | Number of CARs | Description in UKWAS (abbreviated) |
|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 2.1.1 | 4 | Management planning documents |
| 2.2.4 | 3 | Harvesting and timber sales documents |
| 2.3.2 | 2 | Monitoring Plan |
| 2.3.5 | 2 | Annual monitoring of features of significance |
| 2.3.6 | 3 | Summary of monitoring results |
| Total | 14 | |

Table 5: Major CARs under UKWAS Section 5 – Protection and Maintenance

| UKWAS Sub-section | Number of CARs | Description in UKWAS (abbreviated) |
|-------------------|----------------|--|
| 5.1.2 | 2 | Tree health monitoring |
| 5.1.4 | 3 | Deer management strategy |
| 5.2.1 | 3 | Strategy for minimising the use of chemicals |
| 5.2.2 | 1 | Use of pesticides justified and recorded |
| 5.2.3 | 1 | Best practice in the use of pesticides |
| 5.2.4 | 3 | Use of highly hazardous chemicals |
| 5.5.3 | 1 | Emergency plan for accidental spillages (site) |
| Total | 14 | |

Table 6: Major CARs under UKWAS Section 8 – Forestry Workforce

| UKWAS Sub-section | Number of CARs | Description in UKWAS (abbreviated) |
|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 8.1.1 | 6 | Compliance with H&S legislation and Codes |
| 8.1.2 | 3 | Instruction in safe working practices |
| 8.2.1 | 2 | Qualifications and training (competence) |
| Total | 11 | |

12. Table 7 and Chart 2 below shows the number of minor CARs by UKWAS section, analysed in the same way as the major CARs:

Table 7: Minor CARs shown by UKWAS Section

| UKWAS Section | Documents | Site | Total | Examples (abbreviated) |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|--|
| Section 1. Compliance | 5 | 6 | 11 | Doc: No ownership documents Site: Fly tipping |
| Section 2. Man. planning | 44 | 2 | 46 | Doc: Inadequate monitoring plans Site: Planned work not completed |
| Section 3. Design | 2 | nil | 2 | Doc: No assessment of impacts |
| Section 4. Operations | 7 | 8 | 15 | Doc: Inadequate operations planning Site: Burning lop and top |
| Section 5. Prot/maint | 22 | 6 | 28 | Doc: Inadequate pesticide records Site: No chemical spillage kits |
| Section 6. Biodiversity | 19 | 8 | 27 | Doc: Inadequate sporting leases Site: Inadequate deadwood left |
| Section 7. Community | 9 | 4 | 13 | Doc: Lack of tree safety surveys Site: Inadequate warning signs |
| Section 8. Workforce | 11 | 7 | 18 | Doc: No checks on operator certs. Site: Compliance with H&S codes |
| Other | 4 | nil | 4 | Doc: Chain of custody certificates |
| Totals | 123 | 41 | 164 | |

13. Overall there were 167 minor CARs, 74% of which arose from non-existent or inadequate documentation. The main sources of these CARs were under Sections 2, 5 and 6 with 28%, 17% and 16% of the total respectively. These are analysed by UKWAS sub-section in Tables 8, 9 and 10 below:

Table 8: Minor CARs under UKWAS Section 2 – Management Planning

| UKWAS Sub-section | Number of CARs | Description in UKWAS (abbreviated) |
|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 2.1.1 | 11 | Management planning documentation |
| 2.1.3 | 4 | Review of management planning documents |
| 2.2.1 | 1 | Planning and budget forecasting |
| 2.2.2 | 2 | Maintaining productive potential |
| 2.2.3 | 2 | Harvesting of non-timber wood products |
| 2.2.4 | 5 | Harvesting and timber sales documentation |
| 2.3.1 | 1 | Implementation of the management plan |
| 2.3.2 | 9 | Monitoring plan |
| 2.3.3 | 5 | Maintaining monitoring records |
| 2.3.4 | 2 | Analysing and using monitoring data |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|--|
| 2.3.5 | 2 | Annual monitoring of special features |
| 2.3.6 | 2 | Summary of monitoring results |
| Total | 46 | |

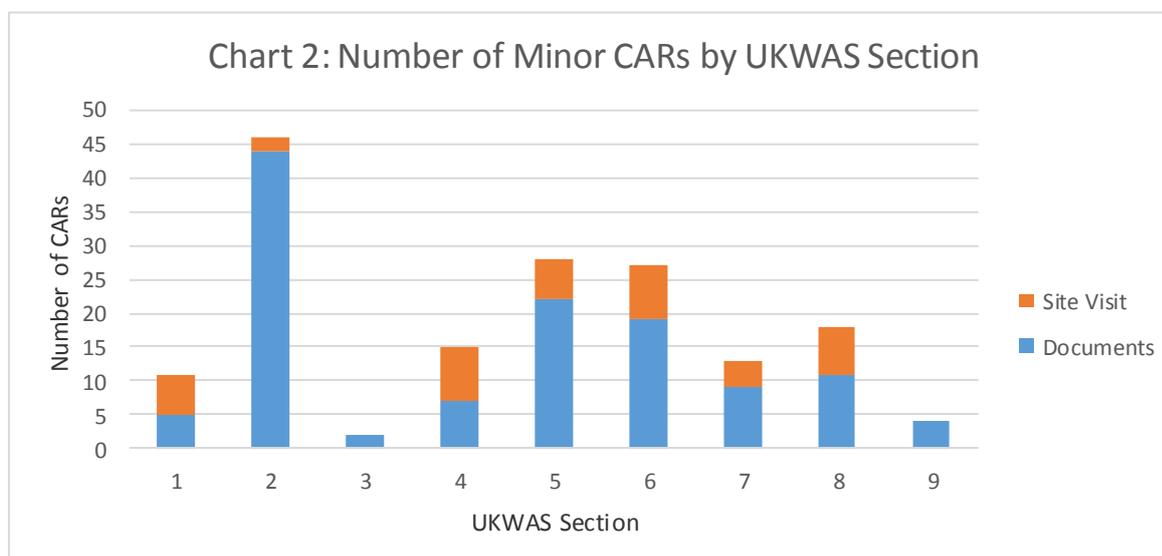


Table 9: Minor CARs under UKWAS Section 5 – Protection and Maintenance

| UKWAS Sub-section | Number of CARs | Description in UKWAS (abbreviated) |
|-------------------|----------------|--|
| 5.1.2 | 1 | Tree health monitoring |
| 5.1.4 | 2 | Deer management strategy |
| 5.1.6 | 1 | Awareness of safety plans and procedures |
| 5.2.1 | 1 | Strategy for minimising the use of chemicals |
| 5.2.2 | 5 | Use of pesticides justified and recorded |
| 5.2.3 | 3 | Best practice in the use of pesticides |
| 5.2.4 | 2 | Use of highly hazardous chemicals |
| 5.4.2 | 1 | Alignment of fencing |
| 5.5.1 | 2 | Disposal of waste |
| 5.5.2 | 6 | Use of biodegradable lubricants |
| 5.5.3 | 4 | Emergency plan for accidental spillages |
| Total | 28 | |

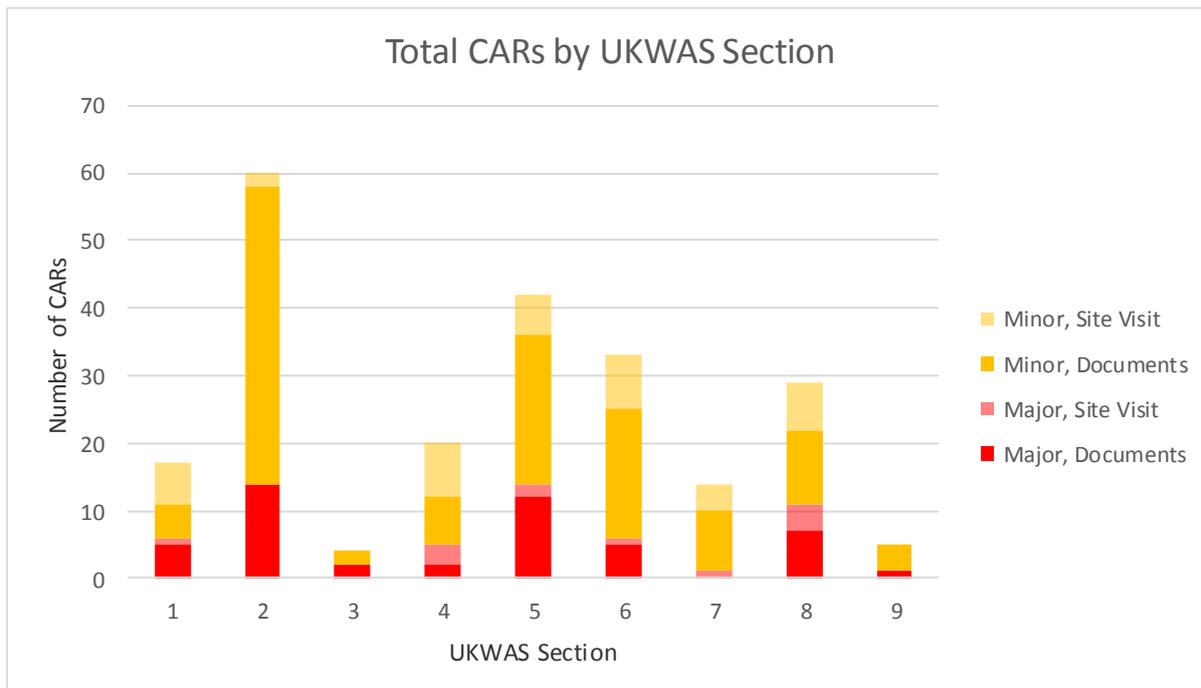
Table 10: Minor CARs under UKWAS Section 6 – Biodiversity

| UKWAS Sub-section | Number of CARs | Description in UKWAS (abbreviated) |
|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 6.1.1 | 4 | Identifying/mapping special features |
| 6.1.2 | 1 | Managing designated sites |
| 6.1.3 | 1 | Identifying small scale habitats in woodlands |
| 6.2.1 | 5 | Maintenance of biodiversity – 15% of woodland |
| 6.2.2 | 2 | Provision of deadwood habitats |
| 6.3.2 | 5 | PAWS policy and practice |
| 6.4.1 | 6 | Hunting, game rearing and shooting licences |
| 6.4.2 | 2 | Shooting of native game |
| 6.4.3 | 1 | Impacts of game management |
| Total | 27 | |

14. The major and minor CARs are shown together in Table 11 and Chart 3 below:

Table 11: Major and Minor CARs shown by UKWAS Section and type

| UKWAS Section | Major CARs | | Minor CARs | | Total CARs | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| | Doc | Site | Doc | Site | Doc | Site | Total | |
| | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | % |
| Section 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 17 | 7 |
| Section 2 | 14 | nil | 44 | 2 | 58 | 2 | 60 | 27 |
| Section 3 | 2 | nil | 2 | nil | 4 | nil | 4 | 2 |
| Section 4 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 20 | 9 |
| Section 5 | 12 | 2 | 22 | 6 | 34 | 8 | 42 | 19 |
| Section 6 | 5 | 1 | 19 | 8 | 24 | 9 | 33 | 15 |
| Section 7 | nil | 1 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 14 | 6 |
| Section 8 | 7 | 4 | 11 | 7 | 18 | 11 | 29 | 13 |
| Other | 1 | nil | 4 | nil | 5 | nil | 5 | 2 |
| Totals | 48 | 12 | 123 | 41 | 171 | 53 | 224 | 100 |



15. The main points emerging from the figures in Table 11 are as follows:

- The total number of CARs issued was 224, averaging 5.1 CARs per certificate.
- Of the total number of CARs, 27% were major and 73% were minor.
- Of the total number of CARs, 76% were related to inadequate or non-existent documentation and 24% emerged during site visits.

- The most common source of CARs came under Section 2 – Management Planning (27%) followed by Section 5 – Protection and Maintenance (19%), Section 6 - Biodiversity (15%) and Section 8 – Workforce (13%). Together the CARs from these 4 Sections comprised 74% of the total number of CARs.
- The most common source of CARs related to documentation was under Management Planning, with 26% of the total number of CARs.
- The most common sources of CARs emerging from site visits were under Operations and Workforce, with 5% of the total number of CARs each.

Assessment of CARs relating to Group Certification

16. When auditing group schemes, auditors check whether group scheme management and documentation meet the requirements set out in the relevant standards of the certification scheme. With FSC this is FSC-STD-30-005 (V1-0). Groups can either consist of individual members who manage their own woodland or can be the “resource manager” type where the group manager manages the woodland on behalf of the owner. The group certificates do not normally distinguish between these two types, and indeed some groups are a mix of both types.

The total number of group related major CARs issued for the 19 Group schemes was 27. A breakdown of the type of CARs issued is as follows:

- Inadequate group management and internal auditing – 9
- Inadequate group rules - 5
- Poor timber sales protocols – 3
- Inappropriate use of FSC logo – 3
- Miscellaneous (1 CAR each) – 7

17. The total number of group related minor CARs issued for the 19 Group schemes was 34. A breakdown of the type of CARs issued is as follows:

- Inadequate documentation on group structure – 15
- Inadequate internal audit – 6
- Inappropriate use of labels and trademarks -3
- Poor invoicing procedures – 2
- Miscellaneous (1 CAR each) – 8

Comparison between UKWAS CARs raised for Single, Multi-site and Group Certification

18. **Table 12** below shows the number of UKWAS CARs by the different types of certificate:

| Certificate Type | No. of Certs. | Area in hectares | UKWAS CARs | | | Number of UKWAS CARs | |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------|-------------|
| | | | Major | Minor | Total | Per cert. | Per 10k ha. |
| Single | 13 | 9,438 | 14 | 24 | 38 | 2.9 | 40.3 |
| Multi-site | 12 | 1,057,410 | 16 | 49 | 65 | 5.4 | 0.6 |
| Group | 19 | 388,286 | 30 | 91 | 121 | 6.4 | 3.1 |
| Totals | 44 | 1,455,134 | 60 | 164 | 224 | 5.1 | 1.5 |

Table 12 indicates that the number of UKWAS related CARs per certificate is roughly the same for multi-site and group certification, and around twice that for single certification. However based on the number of CARs per 10,000 hectares of woodland there is a huge difference between the 3 types of certification. It would be a mistake to read too much into these figures as the area of single

certification is very low compared to the others, and because almost 1 million hectares is covered by one multi-site certificate.

Comparison between CARs raised by different Certification Bodies

19. **Table 13** below shows the number of UKWAS CARs raised by the different Certification Bodies:

| Item | Certification Body | | | | Total |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|
| | SGS | SA | CU | RA | |
| Number of certificates | 8 | 22 | 13 | 1 | 44 |
| Area (hectares) certified | 1,225,742 | 165,754 | 56,951 | 6,687 | 1,455,134 |
| Number of Major CARs | 5 | 12 | 37 | 6 | 60 |
| Number of Minor CARs | 51 | 72 | 40 | 1 | 164 |
| Total number of CARs | 56 | 84 | 77 | 7 | 224 |
| No. of CARs per certificate | 7.0 | 3.8 | 5.9 | 7.0 | 5.1 |
| No. of CARs per 10k ha. | 0.5 | 5.1 | 13.5 | 10.5 | 1.5 |

Table 13 indicates that there some difference between the number of CARs per certificate but a far greater difference between the number of CARs per 10,000 hectares. Again it is probably a mistake to read too much into these figures for the same reasons given in paragraph 18. It is perhaps significant that Commercial Union have a far higher proportion of major to minor CARs than SGS Qualifor or the Soil Association.

Comparison with the 2002 CAR Analysis by Simon Jeffreys

20. In January 2002 Simon Jeffreys produced a report for the UKWAS Support Unit “An analysis of all Forest Management Certification Corrective Action Reports in the United Kingdom”. It is instructive to compare the CARs issued over the last 5 years with those issued before 2002. Note that the 2002 report identified 44 CARs (described as “other”) relating to Group certification: these have not been included in the analysis below. It should also be noted that pre-2002 certification would have been against UKWAS Version 1: fortunately the section structure of UKWAS has not changed with successive versions.

21. **Table 14** below shows an overall comparison between the 2002 and this (2014) report:

| Item | 2002 Report | 2014 Report |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Number of certificates | 29 | 44 |
| Area (hectares) certified | 1,083,906 | 1,455,134 |
| Number of Major CARs | 42 | 60 |
| Number of Minor CARs | 268 | 164 |
| Total number of CARs | 310 | 224 |
| No. of CARs per certificate | 10.7 | 5.1 |
| No. of CARs per 10k ha. | 2.9 | 1.5 |

Table 14 shows that the number of certificates and the certified area increased significantly since 2002, hardly surprising as forest management certification only started in the UK in 1999. The average area covered by a certificate is now 33,070 hectares compared with 37,376 in 2002. The number of CARs per certificate and the number of CARs per 10,000 hectares have both roughly halved between 2002 and 2014. It is noticeable that the proportion of major CARs has increased

from around 13% of total CARs in 2002 to 27% of total CARs in 2014. However it is not possible to explore this issue further as the commentary in the 2002 report does not distinguish between major and minor CARs.

22. **Table 15** below compares the number of CARs issued by UKWAS Section

| UKWAS Section | 2002 Report | | | | 2014 Report | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Major | Minor | Total | % | Major | Minor | Total | % |
| Section 1. Compliance | 4 | 14 | 18 | 6 | 6 | 11 | 17 | 8 |
| Section 2. Man. plan. | 15 | 48 | 63 | 20 | 14 | 46 | 60 | 27 |
| Section 3. Design | 5 | 27 | 32 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Section 4. Operations | 2 | 24 | 26 | 8 | 5 | 15 | 29 | 9 |
| Section 5. Prot/maint | 7 | 55 | 62 | 20 | 14 | 28 | 42 | 19 |
| Section 6. Biodiversity | 9 | 59 | 68 | 22 | 6 | 27 | 33 | 15 |
| Section 7. Community | nil | 25 | 25 | 8 | 1 | 13 | 14 | 6 |
| Section 8. Workforce | nil | 16 | 16 | 5 | 11 | 18 | 29 | 13 |
| Other | nil | nil | nil | nil | 1 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Totals | 42 | 268 | 310 | 100 | 60 | 164 | 224 | 100 |

Table 15 shows that the 3 UKWAS Sections with the highest % of CARs has not changed between 2002 and 2014 - Sections 2, 5 and 6. The biggest increases in % between 2002 and 2014 are in Sections 2 and 8, while the biggest decreases have been in Sections 3 and 6.

23. The conclusion section of the 2002 report commented on the “most common failings” These are set out by UKWAS Section below, with thoughts on whether progress has or has not been made:

| UKWAS Section | 2002 Most Common Failings | 2014 |
|---------------|---|--|
| Section 2 | Management Planning, records and monitoring | Still a source of a high number of CARs |
| Section 3 | Consultation before restructuring. Meeting species % requirements | These issues appear to have been largely resolved |
| Section 4 | Harvesting management | Not a significant source of CARs |
| Section 5 | Deer management, chemical use and reduction strategy, biofuels | All continue to be issues |
| Section 6 | Conservation areas, long term retentions, deadwood, PAWS Local consultation, public health and | All except LTRs are still issues but overall fewer biodiversity CARs |

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Section 7 | safety | Public H&S remains an issue but fewer consultation related CARs |
| Section 8 | Records of competence and insurance | Considerable increase in the number of CARs, esp. major |

Conclusions: Implications of the 2014 findings for UK Forest Practice

24. A number of conclusions, which have implications for UK forest managers, industry leaders, regulators and policy makers, can be reached from the foregoing analysis. It should be noted that these are to a degree subjective and there would be merit in instigating an industry wide discussion on the findings. The following points emerge:

A. Size Matters. There is evidence that the number of CARs issued is far higher, on a per hectare basis, with certificates covering smaller areas: see Table 16.

Table 16: Number of CARs by size of certified area

| Item | Area Covered by Certificate (hectares) | | | | Totals |
|---------------------|--|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| | <1,000 | 1,000 – 10K | 10K – 100K | >100K | |
| No. of certificates | 16 | 18 | 8 | 2 | 44 |
| No. of CARs | 61 | 73 | 73 | 17 | 224 |
| Total area (ha) | 5,724 | 78,560 | 257,937 | 1,112,913 | 1,455,134 |
| CARs per cert. | 3.8 | 4.1 | 9.1 | 8.5 | 5.1 |
| CARs per 10K ha | 107 | 9.3 | 2.8 | 0.15 | 1.5 |
| % of certified area | 0.5% | 5% | 18% | 76.5% | 100% |
| % of CARs | 27% | 33% | 33% | 7% | 100% |

Overall 27% of the CARs came from 0.5% of the certified area and only 7% of the CARs came from 76.5% of the certified area. This would suggest that the managers of the largest properties and groups have got to grips with the requirements of certification, while the smaller owners/managers have not. Another possibility is that the Certifying Bodies scrutinise the smaller properties more intensely, at least proportionately to their size, and if they look closely enough some non-compliance is likely to turn up. It will be interesting to see whether the less onerous means of verification for SLIM woodlands, the size threshold for which was raised from 100 hectares to 500 hectares for UKWAS Version 3, will result in less CARs for smaller properties.

B. Get the Documentation in order. Some 73% of the CARs were due to a lack of or inadequate documentation revealed during the office based part of the audits. A further 6% of the CARs were due to inadequate documentation revealed during the site visits, for instance a lack of operational checklists. So almost 80% of the total number of CARs issued were document related. It is not known what percentage of audit time was spent on the site visits, and there is an argument that inadequacies in documentation may be easier to pick up than problems on site. In addition it can be argued that some of the requirements relating to documentation are excessive, and the extension to the SLIM threshold should make a difference for smaller properties. Nevertheless there is a clear message for forest owners and managers to improve documentation.

C. Sort out Management Planning. Some 27% of the CARs were due to inadequate planning, monitoring and record keeping: monitoring on its own made up almost half of this total. This suggests that more should be done to clarify and communicate the requirements and guidance in

this area. There is a clear link here with the work of the regulatory and grant giving authorities as under the new Rural Development Regulation (RDR) a woodland management plan will be required to access RDR grant support. Forestry Commission England have recently revised their management planning template, so that it is UK Forestry Standard compliant. It is a short step for this to be UKWAS compliant. If the other UK forest regulatory authorities were to follow down this line it should help to reduce the number of management planning CARs.

D. Safety First. All the CARs relating to Section 8 of UKWAS, and half of the CARs relating to Section 7 of UKWAS are related to the safety of the workforce or the public. Together they constitute 16% of the total number of CARs. The majority of these were due to inadequate documentation. The Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA), launched in 2012, represents a recognition by the industry of the need to improve its safety performance. It is reasonable to hope that this initiative will result in a reduction in safety related CARs.

E. Requirements relating to Pesticides. Some 8% of the total number of CARs issued related to Section 5.2 of UKWAS – Pesticides, biological control agents and fertilizers. It seems likely that some of these are due to the amount of uncertainty that surrounds this area, and the fact that it has seen considerable revision in each successive version of UKWAS. The deficiencies do not seem to be related to any particular size of woodland or type of certificate. There is a case for initiating an advice and information campaign within the industry to improve performance in this area.

F. Differences between Auditors and Certifying Bodies? It is not possible to demonstrate conclusively that there are differences between the approach of and interpretation by different auditors, but there is a sense that this is the case. In particular there appear to be inconsistencies between whether to issue a major or minor CAR for what seems to be the same issue. There would be merit in exploring the findings of this report with the currently active Certifying Bodies, and feeding the results into the next revision of UKWAS.

Acknowledgements

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March 2014

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