

United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard

UKWAS Revision 2009-2011

Consultation Paper

December 2010

www.ukwas.org.uk

This page has been left blank

Foreword

Welcome to this Consultation Paper seeking views on proposed changes to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

Our review of the certification standard began in 2009 with an evidence-gathering phase which included an Initial Stakeholder Consultation. The findings were published as an Issues Paper early in 2010 and since then the UKWAS Steering Group has been considering what changes should be made to the certification standard. The culmination of the year's work is a Consultation Draft of the certification standard for a 60-day consultation period.

This Consultation Paper reviews the revision process and summarises the changes proposed. The full text of the consultation standard plus revision notes is provided in a separate Consultation Draft to which you will also need to refer.

So that the Steering Group can conclude its work, it is vital that all stakeholders and other interested parties take this consultation opportunity to provide feedback on the changes made or, of course, on those that they still wish to be made. An electronic Feedback Form in Word format is also provided as a separate document for your use.

This is a 60-day consultation and your feedback is required by 31st January 2011.

For full information on how to respond see section 5 of this Consultation Paper.

Once the Steering Group has analysed your feedback it will consider what further changes should be made to the certification standard.

A further 'Pre-approval Draft' will be issued at the end of April 2011 for 30 days of additional stakeholder consultation before a final version of the 3rd edition of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard is agreed.

UKWAS Steering Group

3rd December 2010

This page has been left blank

Contents

Foreword

Sections:

1. Introduction
2. The revision and consultation process
3. Summary of the issues
4. Revision of the Standard
 - a. Editorial and terminology issues
 - b. Major proposed revisions
 - c. Other proposed revisions
 - d. Format and design of the published standard
5. How to respond to this consultation

Key documents

- **UKWAS Revision 2009-2011: Consultation Draft (December 2010)**
www.ukwas.org.uk/assets/documents/UKWASThirdEditionConsultationDraftDecember2010.doc
- **UKWAS Revision 2009-2011: Issues Paper (February 2010)**
[http://www.ukwas.org.uk/assets/documents/UKWAS%20Revision%202009-11%20Issues%20Paper%20\(Web%20Version\).pdf](http://www.ukwas.org.uk/assets/documents/UKWAS%20Revision%202009-11%20Issues%20Paper%20(Web%20Version).pdf)
- **UKWAS Revision 2009-2011: Process and Timetable (March 2009)**
<http://www.ukwas.org.uk/assets/documents/UKWAS%20REVISION%20PROCESS%202009-2011%20%20Standard%20Setting%20Process%20document.pdf>

Section 1:

Introduction

This section provides a brief review of the development of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard and the revision process.

The first edition of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard was published in January 2000 following agreement amongst a wide group of stakeholders in 1999.

Forestry knowledge and practice is constantly evolving as is society's interpretation of the economic, environmental and social context within which woodland managers must work. It is important, therefore, that the certification standard is regularly reviewed and updated using a process that is thorough and open.

The UKWAS Steering Group's first review of the standard resulted in a second edition being published in November 2006; this edition was further amended in November 2008 following further review to accommodate better the needs of those managing smaller and low intensity managed woods.

The Steering Group agreed a formal standard-setting process for future reviews in April 2008 and this requires that the certification standard is reviewed quinquennially. The UKWAS standard-setting process is aligned with the FSC and PEFC requirements and is set out in the document: *UKWAS Standard Setting Process (Version 1.1)*. The review process is based on evidence gathering and thorough consultation with stakeholders.

Section 2:

The revision and consultation process

This section outlines in brief the standard-setting and consultation process.

A detailed document sets out the arrangements for the 2009-11 revision: *UKWAS Revision 2009-2011: Process and Timetable*.

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

- **Phase 1 (2009):** this was the **evidence gathering** phase including a 60-day initial stakeholder consultation in May-June 2009. There were seven elements of this phase:
 - 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 phase identified the key issues that would need to be considered during the main revision drafting phase and these were published in an Issues Paper: *UKWAS Revision 2009-2011: Issues Paper*.

- **Phase 2 (2010):** this was the **main revision drafting** phase when all the issues identified in the Issues Paper were considered by the Steering Group with the support of a drafting sub-group which met seven times. This phase was concluded with the publication of a Consultation Draft for 60 days' consultation to take place in December 2010 and January 2011: *UKWAS Revision 2009-2011: Consultation Draft*.
- **Phase 3 (2011):** this will be the **conclusion phase** and will include analysis of the consultees' comments and suggestions and further revision of the draft certification standard. A pre-approval draft will be issued for a further 30 days' consultation by the end of April 2011 prior to any further amendment. The finalised certification standard will be available to FSC UK and PEFC UK by the end of July 2011 so that they can submit it for approval through their international scheme processes.

The Steering Group intends to launch the new third edition of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard in November 2011.

This Consultation Paper provides a report on the revision and the proposed changes and invites feedback from standard users, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Section 3:

Summary of the issues

This section summarizes the issues identified in the evidence gathering phase.

The Issues Paper contains the findings of Phase 1 of the standard-setting process – evidence gathering. The following is a brief summary of the main points identified and taken into consideration during the Phase 2 main revision drafting work. For fuller information refer to the Issues Paper.

3.1 Certification Schemes' Requirements Review

The certification schemes were asked for information on any new or revised policies, procedures or guidance that is relevant to the revision.

FSC UK advised that there was an ongoing revision of the FSC's Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship; their publication is anticipated in 2011. Following consultation with FSC at international level, FSC UK and the UKWAS Steering Group agreed that the revision of the UKWAS standard would proceed using the current Principles and Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 April 2004) so avoiding undue delay in the UKWAS revision process.

The plan is to bring the UKWAS standard into conformance with the new FSC Principles and Criteria during the next quinquennial revision to be concluded in 2016.

FSC UK presented suggested textual amendments to take account of new policies, procedures and guidance that have been issued by FSC since the publication of the UKWAS second edition.

PEFC UK confirmed that no changes to PEFC's requirements were anticipated. Revised PEFC standards were released on 26th November 2010 so, as part of the current UKWAS consultation, PEFC UK will undertake a conformance check against these.

3.2 International Benchmarking Review

The certification schemes were asked to undertake 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.

FSC UK

FSC UK compared the UKWAS with the FSC national forest management standards for Germany, Holland, Denmark and Sweden. UKWAS makes an interesting contrast to these examples and it is particularly interesting to note that:

- UKWAS is the only standard approved by FSC with a bespoke format adopted to suit local conditions rather than following that of the P&C
- UKWAS is generally less prescriptive
- UKWAS relies to a greater extent on well-understood guidance provided by other authorities
- Consequently UKWAS is less prone to being out of date.

The Steering Group concluded that these points should be seen as positive for UK owners although it recognises that the bespoke UKWAS format is a complicating factor for certification bodies undertaking FSC audits.

PEFC UK

A PEFC UK team undertook international benchmarking in 2009 to follow up the ProForest Report commissioned by the UKWAS Steering Group as part of its 2008 Small Woods Review. ProForest's report, entitled *Maintaining and extending market access for UK timber from small and/or low intensity managed (SLIM) woods*, recommended *inter alia* that further consideration should be given to simplifying certification processes.

PEFC UK's objective was to examine approaches to certification under PEFC requirements in other European countries with a view to identifying ways of increasing the uptake of certification in the UK with a particular focus on medium-sized woodlands of 100 to 500 hectares. Visits were made to Geneva, Belgium, Slovakia and Norway and the summary findings were as follows:

- Certification is tailored to the circumstances in each country – history, forest types, ownership patterns
- A high level of co-operation was found between state/private owners (Belgium and Slovakia) or between private owners (Norway)
- Certification is based on large “groups” with internal audit processes embracing both large and small properties providing some cross-subsidy for smaller owners
- Certification is more accommodating to small owners than in the UK
- The costs to private owners are much lower than in UK.

Evidence from the countries visited indicates that certification costs (to the owner) can be much lower than in the UK. Part of the reason for this appears to be that the intensity of both internal audit (group schemes) and external audit (certification bodies) is lower than in the UK.

The UKWAS Steering Group therefore commissioned Sandwood Enterprise to undertake a further study focusing on what measures could be taken in the UK to reduce auditing costs. From this work, the UKWAS Steering Group concluded that the two options most likely to help drive down auditing costs are:

- Changing the area threshold and/or intensity thresholds for Small and/ or Low Intensity Managed (SLIM) woodlands in the UK
- Promoting group certification as the most cost effective route for most independent owners to achieve certification.

See section 4 b (ii) below in relation to redefining the area threshold for SLIM woodlands.

3.3 Interpretation Review

An Interpretation Panel is appointed by the UKWAS Steering Group to provide advice on interpretation of the standard for standard users. Two Interpretation Notes have been issued for the second edition:

- Interpretation Note 6 - Use of bio-solids (November 2006)
- Interpretation Note 7 - Wind farm development on certified forest land (October 2008).

In relation to Section 5.2.5c on fertilizers, the Interpretation Panel concluded that the use of bio-solids as a fertilizer is permitted within the limits stated in requirements 5.2.5a and 5.2.5b and that when bio-solids were used as a fertilizer an assessment of the environmental impacts of their application was necessary under the relevant parts of Requirements 3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.1.3.

In relation to Section 3.5.1 on conversion to non-forested land, the Interpretation Panel concluded *inter alia* that in the case of wind farm development on certified forest land, timber felled from areas where wind turbines and their associated infrastructure will be located may not be sold as UKWAS certified timber. The Panel also provided guidance that timber harvested from areas which are felled as part of wind farm development but which will subsequently be restocked or will otherwise meet the provisions of Requirement 3.5.1 (enhanced ecological value; improved landscape; cultural /archaeological restoration) may be sold as certified timber.

Further requests for interpretation on the provisions for conversion of woodland to non-forested land have made clear that the UKWAS requirements needed review to improve clarity.

3.4 Small and Low Intensity Managed (SLIM) Woodlands Review

A full consideration of the impact and applicability of the standard for small and low intensity managed (SLIM) operations was undertaken in 2007 when the UKWAS Steering Group established a Small Woods Task Group. The principal recommendation was to expand the 'small woodland' category to include woodlands managed at a low intensity so creating a new 'small and/ or low intensity managed' (SLIM) woodland category. In consequence, the Steering Group issued an amended version of the UKWAS standard in 2008 to take account of the task group's recommendations. Another recommendation relating specifically to the current full revision was to seek opportunities to better cater for small woods, especially for 'very small' woods (<10 ha).

The new SLIM woodland category is important because the level and complexity of management needed to meet the requirements of the certification standard depends on the size and type of the woodland management unit being audited. In deciding the appropriate intensity of audit and in undertaking their assessment, certification bodies take account of the size of the woodland and the scale and intensity of management and operations. For some requirements, SLIM woodlands

are not expected to need the same level of documentation or management systems and procedures as are normally used for larger or more intensively managed woodland areas

In the Issues Paper, the UKWAS Steering Group also noted that the need for SLIM woods to submit to certification under the FSC scheme would be much reduced if the UK were to be classified by FSC as 'low risk'. This would allow up to 30% of uncertified material to enter a certified supply chain as 'Controlled Wood' for 'mixed sources' certificates so potentially removing the necessity for all woodlands to be certified.

Since then FSC UK has undertaken risk assessment work and recommended to FSC at international level that England, Scotland and Wales be considered low risk for controlled wood purposes and that Northern Ireland be considered as an unspecified risk until felling licences are introduced. FSC's response is awaited.

The PEFC scheme currently includes a similar non-controversial sources mechanism although PEFC International announced on 4th November 2010 that it is committed to the objective of working towards PEFC labelled products being comprised entirely of certified material.

See section 4 b (ii) below in relation to redefining the area threshold for SLIM woodlands.

3.5 Technical Review

This is a consideration of any new scientific or technical knowledge.

The principal source of technical information to underpin the UK Woodland Assurance Standard is the governmental UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and Guidelines. Revised editions will be published in 2011 but a conformance check of the UKWAS requirements against the new UKFS has been carried out at the UKFS requirement level. This check found no significant areas of non-conformance except for the new Climate Change Guidelines' requirements relating to climate change adaptation and resilience.

3.6 Standard Users' Feedback Review

Since, at the time of the review in early 2009, all current certificates had been issued by FSC the review did not apply to PEFC UK.

The FSC UK review solicited no complaints from certification bodies but some detailed suggestions for improvements and clarifications have been received through this review or directly from the CBs.

As a separate exercise, FSC UK telephoned a cross-section of UKWAS certificate-holders to poll the views of forest managers. This revealed a measure of frustration about the level of bureaucracy, either because of the UKWAS itself, or because of the 'extended requirements' placed on the UKWAS by the certification bodies. A desire for the process to be simplified or streamlined appears to be universal.

3.7 Initial Stakeholders' Consultation

A consultation paper was issued on 1st May 2009 and comments were requested by 30th June 2009. Seventeen individuals and organisations submitted comments and these are provided in full in Appendix 5 of the Issues Paper. Each comment was allocated to the appropriate section of the UKWAS standard and considered by the Steering Group.

Section 4:

Revision of the Standard

This section summarizes the proposed revisions to the certification standard.

a. Editorial and terminology issues

To reflect common usage the following changes in terminology have been adopted throughout the certification standard:

- 'Accreditation service' in place of 'accreditation authority'
- 'Certification body' in place of 'certification authority'
- 'Certification scheme' in place of 'certification programme'
- 'Historic environment' in place of 'archaeology' where context permits because it is a broader concept and better reflects the intent of the certification standard.
- As short hand for the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, the term 'certification standard' is adopted in preference to 'standard' for consistency throughout the document and to avoid any confusion with the governmental UK Forestry Standard.
- The term 'forestry workforce' is adopted in sections 1.1.5, 4.1.1 and 4.2.1 for consistency with the title of Section 8 (Forestry workforce) and because it is a broader term covering employees and contractors.

In addition, advisory notes have been introduced as a new editorial device in the following sections on these topics:

- 1.1.5 – adjustment of area within woodland management unit
- 2.2.4 – chain-of-custody certification requirements
- 3.5.1 – certification of timber from woodland converted to non-forested land
- 5.2.4 – additional certification scheme requirements relating to the use of pesticides
- 6.1.3 – certification of timber from woodland converted to non-forested land
- 8.1.1 – fulfilling health and safety functional roles.

These notes are included in the guidance column and provide advice for owners/ managers on related matters which are outwith the direct scope of a forest management certification standard e.g. in section 2.2.4, owners/ managers are advised to check the specific requirements of certification schemes in relation to chain-of-custody certification matters.

Their status is clarified in the Introduction (Part 3): 'Such information is provided as an advisory note only and shall not be considered by certification bodies when assessing conformance with the certification standard'.

b. Major proposed revisions

Numerous changes are proposed throughout the certification standard and full details are given in the revision notes incorporated in the Consultation Draft. The nine most significant issues are summarised below:

(i) Definition of Woodland Management Unit (WMU)

Sections: Introduction (Part 4) and consequential changes in text throughout.

Nature of issues:

The term 'woodland management unit' is already used in Part 3 of the Introduction in relation to Area Specificity but it is undefined. Elsewhere in the certification standard, reference is generally to 'woodland' or 'woodlands'.

Requests were received for clarity on what constitutes the area to which the management planning documentation relates.

Proposals:

The aim in these new and revised sections of the Part 4 of the Introduction is firstly, to define clearly what a WMU can be, and secondly, to ensure clarity and flexibility in regard to WMU application in reality.

The WMU is defined thus: 'The woodland management unit (WMU) is the area to which the management planning documentation relates. A WMU is a clearly defined woodland area, or areas, with mapped boundaries, managed by a single managerial body to a set of explicit objectives which are expressed in a self-contained woodland management plan.'

Further elaboration provides information on the application of the term in practice.

(N.B. This term is synonymous to the term 'Forest Management Unit' used by certification schemes.)

(ii) Definition of small and/ or low intensity managed (SLIM) woodland

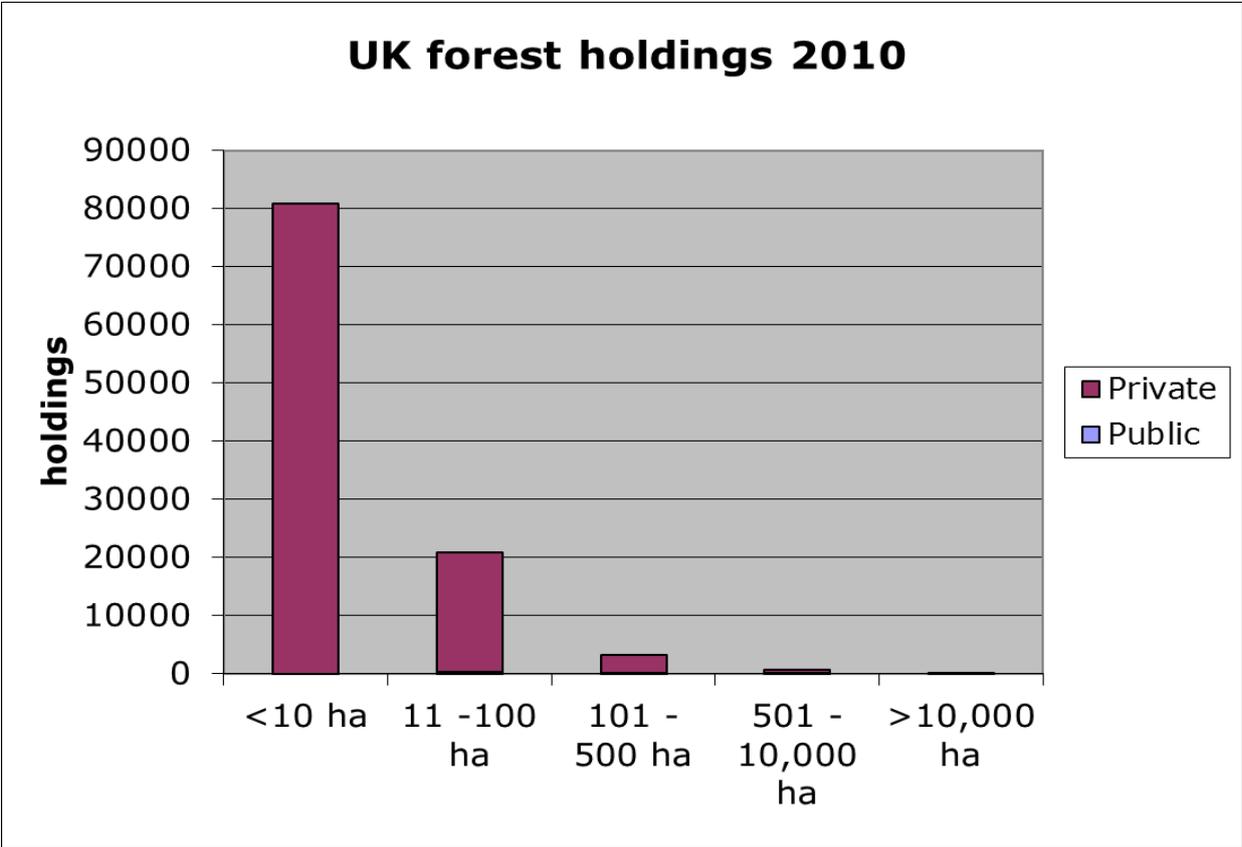
Sections: Introduction (Part 4)

Nature of issues:

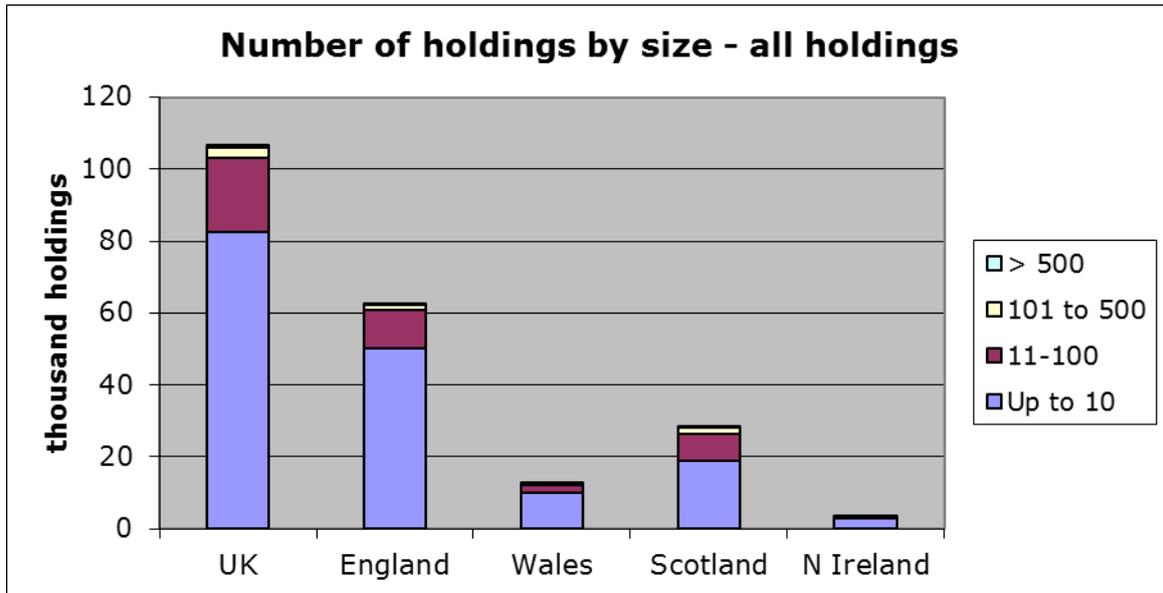
As outlined in sections 3.2 and 3.4 of this consultation paper, the option of amending the definition of ‘small’ woodlands in the context of the SLIM woodlands definition has been raised and this could deliver benefits in terms of auditing requirements for smaller owners.

How considered:

In considering this issue, the UKWAS Steering Group was provided with statistics on forest ownership by the Forestry Commission. These show that fewer than 4% of UK forest holdings by number are greater than 100 hectares in size which is the current upper threshold for ‘small’ in the UKWAS SLIM woodland category.



Breaking down the data to look at differences in individual countries shows some variation but it is clear that holdings greater than 100 hectares represent a very small number of ownerships in any of the UK countries.



Specific Questions:

A 'small woodland' is currently defined as: 'an individual woodland of 100 hectares or under in size'.

- 1) Do you consider that the definition of 'small woodland' should be changed?
- 2) If so, what new area threshold should be applied?
- 3) How do you believe your proposal would benefit smaller owners?
- 4) How do you believe your proposal would affect the total area of woodland under certification in the UK?

(iii) Climate change adaptation and resilience

Sections: 2.2.2, 3.3.1, 6.3.3,

Nature of issues:

The new UKFS Climate Change Guidelines will include requirements relating to climate change adaptation and protection.

Proposals:

Additions have been made relating to climate change adaptation and resilience in relation to species choice and planting stock.

(iv) Conversion to non-forested land

Sections: 3.5.1, 6.1.3 and 1.1.5

Nature of issues:

This section of the standard has been the subject of repeated requests for clarification especially in relation to woodland removal associated with wind farm development.

Proposals:

Section 3.5.1 has been extensively modified to clarify that that conversion is only acceptable in exceptional circumstances and must deliver clearly defined biodiversity, landscape or historic environment benefits. Four tests must be met for conversion to be acceptable including an additional test so that in assessing the benefits from conversion the comparison is not between the existing woodland cover and the proposed new land use but between 'any type of practicably achievable woodland cover' on the site and the new land use. Adapting the forest type therefore becomes the default option to deliver the biodiversity, landscape or historic environment benefits with conversion to non-forested land being the least favoured option.

Other text is redrawn to clarify, elaborate and better define the existing text rather than to change the intention of the requirement.

A new advisory note is included to clarify when timber can be certified.

Section 6.1.3: changes to the guidance are made to align it with Section 3.5.1.

Section 1.1.5 is amended to clarify that the owner/ manager commits to 'protect and maintain the WMU and its ecological integrity in the long term'.

Also in Section 1.1.5, a new advisory note refers owners/ managers to certification scheme requirements relating to adjustment of the area within the WMU.

Specific Questions:

Should 'compensatory planting' be acceptable to mitigate conversion to non-forested land?

(v) Pesticides, biological control agents and fertilizers

Sections: 5.2 (all sub-sections)

Nature of issues:

The key issue relates to application of the derogation system for use of 'highly hazardous' chemicals (as defined by FSC) which is cited in the current certification standard. Due to a change in FSC's processes, the current requirement cannot be used by non-FSC certificate holders since it

relies on an internal FSC mechanism that can only be implemented by FSC certificate holders. Therefore, the current requirement in 5.2.4 is incompetent and requires revision.

Proposals:

For clarity – an explicit distinction is made between ‘chemical pesticides’, ‘fertilizers’ and ‘biological control agents’ (BCAs) throughout 5.2.

The fundamental principle relating to minimising use is now enshrined in a new section 5.2 which covers chemical pesticides and fertilizers but not BCAs since these are a key tool in reducing use of chemical methods. This makes clear that minimisation is the key element and is to be underpinned by the development of an Integrated Pest Management Strategy (5.2.1) and a basis for use (5.2.2 and 5.2.3).

Section 5.2.1 makes clear that primary reliance is on prevention and biological control methods where practicable.

It also allows for a ‘written statement’ as a verification option within management planning rather than additional documentation.

5.2.2 (a) is elaborated to clarify that the basis for the required justification for use which must be made in terms of economic, social and environmental costs.

5.2.4: this complex section has been revised so that it can be applied by owners/ managers seeking certification through either the FSC or PEFC certification schemes. It introduces a revised requirement and guidance for use of chemical pesticides and BCAs:

- Chemicals and BCAs must be approved by the UK authorities and not banned by international agreement
- WHO 1A&B pesticides can only be used in the strictly limited circumstances set out in (a) to (c)
- There is a provision for Certification Schemes to have a mechanism to permit use of WHO 1A&Bs subject to the mechanism meeting UKWAS requirements set out in (c)
- No reference in (c) to ‘site by site basis’ so allowing certification schemes with greater flexibility to determine the best mechanism.
- Reference to the FSC Highly Hazardous Chemicals list and derogation process removed as the mechanism cannot be applied to non-FSC certification.

An advisory note is added recommending owners/ managers to check with their CB/ group manager on any additional Certification Scheme requirements.

In section 5.2.5 there is an additional requirement to keep fertiliser usage records.

(vi) Defining high conservation value (HCV) areas

Sections: 6.1.1 and consequential change in 3.5.1

Nature of issues:

Requests were received to define explicitly which forests are of 'high conservation value'.

Proposals:

The use of the term 'high conservation value' in 6.1.1 (a) is intended to clarify that this is the UKWAS definition of high conservation value (HCV) areas and features.

(N.B. this is analogous to the Forest Stewardship Council's High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) terminology.)

(vii) Deadwood, veteran trees and stumps

Sections: 6.2.2, 4.2.4

Nature of issues:

The current certification standard contains only interim guidance on deadwood in 6.2.2.

Proposals:

The text of 6.2.2 has been revised to conform to an advance extract on deadwood and veteran trees from the UKFS Biodiversity Guidelines.

In 4.2.4, stump removal has been added to the requirement so shall only to be practised where it is unlikely to have significant negative effects.

(viii) Flexibility in management of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)

Sections: 6.3.2

Nature of issues:

Concerns were raised that the certification standard allows insufficient flexibility in relation to PAWS management.

Proposals:

The overall focus is on incorporating greater flexibility into the requirement through changes in the guidance text.

The overarching guidance highlights that PAWS restoration is rarely an instant fix and that silvicultural intervention is appropriate so long as the evaluation has been done to guide the type of intervention. For clarity the term 'precautionary approach' is adopted rather than 'precautionary principle'.

The text is edited and elaborated to achieve greater clarity including in (a) using the term 'flora' in place of 'vegetation' – a subtle change to aid clarity as feedback indicates that in practice ground flora is often missed as a remnant to assess – and in (c) which embraces gradual change but leaves scope for flexibility e.g. in some cases clearfelling can be an option where preliminary surveys/ exploratory work confirm that any remnants can still be secured and enhanced.

(ix) Research plots

Sections: 2.1.1

Nature of issues:

Some owners, notably forest services, need to be able to establish research plots within a certified forest to work with e.g. pesticides, novel management techniques and exotic species that may not be permitted on the wider certified estate. This need is not currently catered for in the certification standard.

Outcomes:

The need for research plots to be able to include non-standard management techniques was accepted and consideration was given to look for opportunities to revise e.g. 5.2.1-5.2.5 and 2.1.1.

A reference to 'research policy' is now proposed in 2.1.1 (guidance) in relation to management planning documentation but no other opportunities were identified.

Advice has been sought from FSC and PEFC on how others have dealt with this issue but no solution has yet been identified although the possibility of excising the plots from the WMU has been suggested.

Proposals:

In 2.1.1 (guidance), a new reference to 'research policy' is now proposed in relation to management planning documentation.

Specific Questions:

How can research plots for testing non-standard management techniques be best accommodated within a certified WMU?

c. Other proposed revisions

Numerous other changes are proposed throughout the certification standard and details are given in the revision notes incorporated in the Consultation Draft.

The revised sections include:

- Introduction – general updating and clarifications
- 1.1.1 – elaborated compliance requirements
- 1.1.2 – elaborated conformance requirements
- 1.1.5 – informing the forestry workforce of the practical implications of certification
- 2.1.1 – addition of Red Data List species to what should be taken into account when preparing management planning documentation
- 2.1.1 – addition of a fire management plan, a deer management plan, an integrated pest management strategy, a research policy, and project plans as examples of documents to which the management planning documentation may refer
- 5.1.1 – invasive plant and animal species added to list of risks that planting and restructuring plans shall be designed to minimise
- 5.1.3 – management of invasive plants added to list of management activities that shall be undertaken in co-ordination with neighbours where possible
- 5.1.5 – clarification that fire plan shall be developed as appropriate to the level of risk
- 6.1.1 (c) – clarification that communication and consultation shall be ongoing rather than on a one-off basis
- 6.1.3 – addition of reference to the Forest Service's afforestation and environmental policy to identify priority habitats in Northern Ireland
- 7.1.1 – clarifications to ensure a systematic approach to the identification of consultees, that there is an obligation to consult stakeholders at every five-year re-certification and that the frequency of consultation should be justified

- 7.3.1 & 7.3.2 – existing 7.3.1 is disaggregated for greater clarity - 7.3.1 focuses on the wider local economy and a new 7.3.2 is created to focus on providing economic opportunities for local communities.
- 7.3.1 - elaboration to clarify that this requirement embraces a wider range of products and services including non-timber forest products and recreational activities
- 7.4.3 - additional verifier for Non-SLIM woods covering a complaints process and provision of a public contact point for complainants
- 8.4.1 - insurance documents shall be displayed and insurance cover shall be adequate.

d. Format and design of the published standard

The UKWAS (second edition) (2006) was made available as a paid-for paper document costing £10 and free on www.ukwas.org.uk in two electronic formats – pdf and html. The amended version (2008) was only available in the electronic formats.

The Consultation Draft is a text version of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard in Word format for use as a working document. The fully designed and published version of the current standard may be viewed on-line in a pdf formatted version designed for downloading and printing for use as a paper document, or in an html formatted version designed for use on-line or for selective printing:

[http://www.ukwas.org.uk/assets/documents/UKWAS%20Second%20Edition%20\(Amended%20November%202008\)%20Web.pdf](http://www.ukwas.org.uk/assets/documents/UKWAS%20Second%20Edition%20(Amended%20November%202008)%20Web.pdf)

http://www.ukwas.org.uk/standard/certification_standard/index.html

The Steering Group would welcome your views on how these designs might be improved.

Question 1

The Steering Group's initial conclusions are:

- To retain the current bespoke UKWAS format and section order
- To seek opportunities through improved design to better emphasise the importance of text references to additional information sources – Management Planning, Biodiversity Action plan, Forest Reproductive Material Regulations and References.

Do you agree?

Question 2

Would the following be helpful?

- Inclusion of a “How to use” section at the beginning of the certification standard indicating different functionality, including how to use the different electronic and conventional formats.
- Inclusion of a section/ table showing the division of responsibilities for different aspects of certification between the UKWAS Steering Group, certification bodies, certification schemes and accreditation services i.e. a “Who does what” section.
- Inclusion, in electronic formats, of interactive electronic links to information sources and documents listed in the Appendix references – this might draw on the approach adopted in the revised UK Forestry Standard and help to ensure that links are kept up to date.

Question 3

In relation to publication formats:

- Is publication as a paid-for paper document necessary and what would you be prepared to pay for a copy?
- Which electronic formats, including any additional formats, would be most useful?

Section 5:

How to respond to this consultation

This section explains how to respond to this consultation.

This Consultation Paper reviews the revision process and summarises the changes proposed.

You will also need to refer to the following documents:

- **UKWAS Consultation Draft:** the full text of the consultation standard plus revision notes.
- **UKWAS Feedback Form:** an electronic feedback form in Word format is provided as a separate document which should be completed and returned by email.

These may be downloaded from <http://www.ukwas.org.uk/standard/revision/index.html>

This is a 60-day consultation and your feedback is required by 31st January 2011.

Please send all your responses to peter@wilsonapplied.com.

This page has been left blank

**UKWAS Support Unit
59 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 2JG**

**T: 0131 240 1419
E: ukwas@confor.org.uk**