

The UK Woodland Assurance Standard

Examples to illustrate application of SLIM Woodland criteria

The SLIM criteria

The UKWAS standard has adopted the definition set by the Forest Stewardship Council:

Your woodland will be classed as Small and / or Low Intensity Managed, or SLIM, when it is small or, irrespective of its size, it is managed at a low intensity.

A wood is defined as a **Small Wood** when it is 100 hectares or under in size.

A woodland management unit is classed as a **Low Intensity Managed Woodland** when:

- a) the rate of timber harvesting is less than 20% of the mean annual increment (MAI)¹ within the total production woodland area of the unit

AND

Either

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

or

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

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

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Further examples will be added from time to time as necessary

Example 1 – the small woodland

12 ha of lowland mixed broadleaves in 3 compartments comprising 4 ha of mid rotation oak on a regular thinning cycle, 5 ha of 10 year old mixed broadleaves and 3 ha of intensively managed hazel coppice with a 0.5 ha coupe coppiced every year.

Is it small? Yes, this wood is classed as small because it is under the 100 ha size threshold.

Is it low intensity management? It does not matter. A small wood will be classed as a SLIM woodland irrespective of whether the management regime meets the low intensity management criteria as well.

Any complications?

No, not if the woodland ownership is just this one small wood.

Yes, if it is a small wood within a larger woodland estate:

- Providing it is managed as a separate management unit with its own management plan then it will still be classed as small.
- On the other hand, if the wood was simply three compartments managed within a whole estate management plan covering an area greater than 100 ha then it would not be classed as small. In this case, the woodland estate would only be classed as SLIM if it met the low intensity management criteria.

Example 2 – the extensive, low input, low output woodland

This 300 ha native Scots pine wood is managed for environmental objectives as one unit within one management plan. The age class averages 80 with a General Yield Class (GYC) of 6. Timber is harvested periodically by *ad hoc* selective thinning rather than on a formal commercial cycle.

Is it small? No, it is larger than the 100 ha threshold.

Is it low intensity management? To qualify it must meet two tests:

Test 1: **The 20% MAI threshold test.** First we need to consider the 20% MAI threshold test. Local growth models may be available to forecast volume production but if not the Forestry Commission's General Yield Class (GYC) models can be used to estimate growth rates. In this case the GYC tables show that the MAI for 80 year old Scots pine growing at GYC 6 is 6 m³/ha. For management of this woodland to be classed as low intensity the rate of harvesting must be less than 360m³ (6m³/ha x 300ha x 20%) in any one year - not exceeding 1,800 m³ in total over the 5-year plan.

Test 2: **Total production over the 5-year plan period.** Provided this first test is met we need to consider the total production over 5 years. In this example it would not have exceeded 1,800 m³ so the wood will also have met this test which stipulates that annual production *or* average annual production must be less than 5,000 m³ a year. By meeting these 2 tests it will be classed as SLIM.

Example 3 – the commercial upland woodland

A 200 ha 42 year old thinned Sitka spruce wood managed commercially as one unit under a single management plan.

Is it small? No, it is larger than the 100 ha threshold.

Is it low intensity management? To qualify it must meet two tests:

Test 1: **The 20% MAI threshold test.** Local growth models may be available to forecast volume production but if not the Forestry Commission's General Yield Class (GYC) models can be used to estimate growth rates. In this Sitka spruce woodland we assume GYC 14 so the GYC tables show that MAI is $12.8\text{m}^3/\text{ha}$. For management of this woodland to be classed as low intensity the rate of harvesting must be less than 512m^3 ($12.8\text{m}^3/\text{ha} \times 200\text{ha} \times 20\%$) in any one year.

However, the wood is thinned at the marginal thinning intensity so annual thinning volumes would be $1,960\text{m}^3$ ($14\text{m}^3/\text{ha} \times 200\text{ha} \times 70\%$) which exceeds the 512m^3 threshold. It will not be classed as SLIM.

Test 2: **Total production over the 5-year plan period.** In this example the first test is not met so Test 2 does not apply.

Example 4 – the managed lowland woodland

200 ha mixed broadleaves

A 200 ha wood dominated by mixed broadleaves such as sycamore, ash and birch of about 60 years of age and managed as high forest on a regular thinning cycle. All 200 ha is managed as one unit under a single management plan.

Is it small? No, it is larger than the 100 ha threshold.

Is it low intensity management? To qualify it must meet two tests:

Test 1: **The 20% MAI threshold test.** Local growth models may be available to forecast volume production but if not the Forestry Commission's General Yield Class (GYC) models can be used to estimate growth rates. In this lowland mixed broadleaf woodland we assume GYC 8 (based on top height measurements for age 60) so the GYC tables show that MAI is $7.5\text{m}^3/\text{ha}$.

For management of this woodland to be classed as low intensity the rate of harvesting must be less than 300m^3 ($7.5\text{m}^3/\text{ha} \times 200\text{ha} \times 20\%$) in any one year - not exceeding $1,500\text{m}^3$ in total over the 5-year plan. If this is the case the first test is met so we need to consider Test 2 below.

On the other hand, we can consider a second scenario in which all 200 ha of broadleaves is thinned at the marginal thinning intensity. The manager would then expect to remove $1,120\text{m}^3$ ($8\text{m}^3/\text{ha} \times 200\text{ha} \times 70\%$) in each year. The annual threshold of 300m^3 will be exceeded. In this case the first test is not met so Test 2 does not apply. It will not be classed as SLIM.

Test 2: **Total production over the 5-year plan period.** Provided the first test is met we need to consider the total production over 5 years. In the first scenario above it would not have exceeded $1,500\text{m}^3$ so the wood will also have met the second test which stipulates that annual production or average annual production must be less than $5,000\text{m}^3$ a year.

By meeting these 2 tests it will be classed as SLIM.