

United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard

UKWAS

UNITED KINGDOM WOODLAND ASSURANCE STANDARD

Version 2.0

STANDARD-SETTING PROCESS

(12.03.13)

Document History

Version 1 – approved by Steering Group (18.01.07)

Version 1.1 – Section B2 amended by Board to incorporate revised Steering Group constituency list approved by Members at AGM in November 2007 (07.04.09)

Version 2.0 – approved by Steering Group (12.03.13)

Introduction

The UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) is a certification standard which sets out the requirements which woodland owners and managers and certification authorities can use to certify woodland management in the United Kingdom. The standard is the product of an inclusive and transparent process which has involved a balanced representation from the UK forestry and environmental community. It has been designed to ensure that it reflects the requirements of the UK Government's UK Forestry Standard (and through this the guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki in 1993 and Lisbon in 1998), the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification's Sustainable Forest Management Requirements.

This is a consolidating document which defines the existing standard setting process and procedures.

Scope

The document defines the procedures and process requirements for the development, maintenance and revision of the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard.

The procedures have been developed to ensure alignment with the requirements of the FSC and PEFC forest certification schemes. To ensure their continued alignment, these procedures should be subject to review, as a minimum, a year prior to the commencement of a formal revision of the UKWAS standard.

Purpose

This standard setting document defines the roles, responsibilities and authorities of the UKWAS Steering Group in relation to the delivery of the national forest certification standard for the UK.

Effective date

12 March 2013

References

- UKWAS - Memorandum of Association (Amended 25 November 2002)
- UKWAS - Articles of Association (Adopted 25 November 2002)
- UKWAS – Steering Group Rules
- Forestry Commission/Forest Service: The UK Forestry Standard (3rd edition 2011) and UKFS Guidelines series
- FSC – FSC International Standard - Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship (FSC-STD-01-001) (V5-0) (February 2012)
- FSC International Standard – Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards (FSC-STD-60-002) (V1-0) (October 2009)
- FSC – FSC International Standard - Process Requirements for the Development and Maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards (FSC-STD-60-006) (V1-2) (April 2009)
- PEFC International Standard – Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements (PEFC ST 1003:2010)
- PEFC International Standard – Standard Setting – Requirements (PEFC ST 1001:2010)
- ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994 Code of Good Practice for Standardisation
- ISEAL Code of Good Practice - Setting Environmental and Social Standards v5.0 (June 2010)

Terms & definitions

- Certification schemes – the forest certification schemes which have approved or endorsed the UK Woodland Assurance Standard as the certification standard in their UK schemes – currently the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).
- Company – the company known as ‘United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)’ established to own and manage the standard.
- Members – Members of the Company.
- Standard – the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.
- Steering Group – the group established by the Company which is equivalent to a national-level FSC Standards Development Group or PEFC Standardising Body.
- Steering Group members – members of the Steering Group.
- United Kingdom – Great Britain & Northern Ireland.

A. General Provisions

A1 Independence

A not-for-profit company, ‘United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)’, was established in 2002 to own and manage the standard. The Company is constituted as a ‘Company Limited by Guarantee And Not Having A Share Capital’ (registered in Scotland: Company Number SC199337). The Company is managed by the Members.

The Company’s Objects are:

To own, interpret, develop and promote a certification standard for forest management in the United Kingdom on behalf of United Kingdom forestry and environmental communities, and bodies which represent the interests of people working in woods and forests or using them for the purpose of recreation, for the general benefit of people.

The Company’s Memorandum and Articles of Association do not provide for the Company to undertake certification or accreditation thereby ensuring that the certification standard shall be developed independently from the certification or accreditation processes.

A2 Territory

The standard setting process covers the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

B. Participatory Process

B1 Introduction

The first edition of the standard was the product of an inclusive and transparent process which involved a balanced representation from the UK forestry and environmental community. The standard was designed to reflect the requirements of the UK Government's 'UK Forestry Standard' (and through this the guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki in 1993 and Lisbon in 1998) and the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship.

All stakeholders were invited to participate in the development of the standard and associations representing the UK's forest and woodland owners and managers were fully supportive of the process and were active participants. The first edition of the standard was approved by FSC and published in 1999. PEFC Council endorsed the standard in 2002. A second revised edition was published in 2006 and a third edition in 2011.

The Company's Members appoint a broadly based Steering Group which has responsibility for interpreting the standard and ensuring its periodic revision to take account of experience from its application and new information that arises.

B2 Steering Group

The first edition of the standard was developed by an independent and broadly based Technical Working Group and launched in May 1999 prior to the establishment of the Company.

Articles 38 to 40 of the Company's Articles of Association provide for the establishment of a Steering Group and define its terms of reference and operating procedures:

- Article 39 requires that the Steering Group shall maintain, amend and interpret the standard. A Steering Group was appointed in November 2002.
- Article 38 requires that "Steering Group Rules" shall be adopted (and can be amended from time to time) by Members in a General Meeting. The Steering Group Rules shall regulate, *inter alia*, the number, appointment, retirement and removal of Steering Group members. The Steering Group Rules were adopted in December 2003.

The Steering Group comprises economic, environmental and social stakeholders with twelve defined constituencies with an agreed maximum representation for each:

Woodland owners (6), forestry practitioners (5), state forest enterprises (4), environmental organisations (6), forest user organisations (2), wood processing industry (3), wood products trade (2), forest workforce (2), UK countryside, environment & heritage agencies (3), local government & national park authorities (2), forestry standard setting and labelling bodies (6) and education, research & training (3 non-voting).

An invitation to Sponsoring Members to reconfirm their appointees to the Steering Group or to make new appointments shall be made prior to the standard-setting process commencing. The Steering Group may also invite additional persons to provide technical expertise or to represent stakeholder groups not otherwise represented.

In addition there is an independent Chair and a Company Secretary.

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.

B3 Transparency

The publication of this document on the website ensures transparency of process.

The commencement of the standard-setting process and information on the objectives, scope and development process shall be communicated publicly and stakeholder representatives shall be notified directly through the website, certification schemes' websites and trade media in a timely manner. This will allow all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to the process. Key documents including this standard-setting process document and related documents, the consultation drafts and the formal responses to comments received shall be available to all interested parties by publication on the website and direct notification of stakeholder representatives. Steering Group members shall receive all relevant papers and minutes of meetings and shall be responsible for keeping their constituents informed. Summary progress reports will be publicly issued following Steering Group meetings.

No information on the development of the standard shall be withheld unreasonably.

B4 Consultation

A list shall be maintained of those to be consulted at each stage of the standard-setting process and thereafter kept informed of progress; inclusion on the list shall be open to any stakeholder on request.

The process for developing and revising standards shall include provision for consultation through notifying a wide range of stakeholders and publicising the availability of the following documents as a minimum:

- a) An 'Initial Stakeholder Consultation' - an invitation to comment on the current standard which should identify any areas already identified as requiring review (minimum consultation period of 60 days).
- b) A 'Revision Draft' which should include a summary of the stakeholders' initial comments and clearly identify and explain the proposed changes (minimum consultation period of 60 days).
- c) A 'Pre-approval Draft' which should include a summary of the further stakeholder comments and clearly identify and explain the proposed changes (minimum consultation period of 30 days).

Additional drafts may be issued at the discretion of the Steering Group.

NOTE: The Steering Group may at its discretion adopt a 'fast track' process for adapting the standard for use in limited applications. In considering what process to adopt, the Steering Group shall take account of the requirements of the certification schemes.

B5 Consensus

Decisions of the Steering Group shall require the unanimous vote of those attending and voting at a duly convened meeting of the Steering Group. Any member attending the meeting but abstaining from voting shall not be counted (Article 40.3).

B6 Drafting

The Steering Group shall be responsible for the drafting of the standard and subsequent revisions and shall make such arrangements as it considers necessary.

B7 Records

The Steering Group shall keep the following records of the standards development process:

- a) List of all consultants or other individuals who have been involved in drafting the standard, together with their affiliations.
- b) List of all forest stakeholders invited to participate in the standards setting process.
- c) List of all forest stakeholders sent specified drafts of the standard and invited to comment.
- d) List of forest stakeholders that have participated in the standard-setting process through other means, together with a note of the nature of such participation.
- e) Summary progress reports issued following Steering Group meetings.
- f) Copies of each draft of the standard which was prepared during the development process.
- g) Copies of all comments submitted in writing with respect to the specified draft standards.
- h) Summaries of comments on each draft, together with a brief explanation of the way in which those comments were responded to in the draft.

The Steering Group shall provide the certification schemes with a copy of the complete set of records specified above in support of their approval/endorsement processes and shall keep a copy of the records for at least seven years. These records will also be made available on the website and, on request, to all interested parties.

B8 Forest testing

The drafting of the first edition of the standard was informed by the results of testing the standard in the forest. In revising the standard, any necessary additional pilot testing and/or experience gained from the application of the standard shall be used to inform the revision process.

B9 Regional

In developing the first edition of the standard, account was taken of accredited standards in neighbouring territories and those with similar geographic or ecological scope and this shall continue to be done when undertaking a revision.

C. Governance

C1 General

The operation of the Company is governed by its Memorandum & Articles of Association together with the Steering Group Rules. These are available on the website.

C2 Duties and responsibilities of the Chair

Article 63 provides for the Members of the Company to appoint a Chair of the Company as recommended by the Steering Group. By convention the Chair shall also chair the Steering Group.

The Chair shall:

- a) Have overall responsibility for ensuring that the documented standards development procedures are implemented.

- b) Have overall responsibility for ensuring that the views of all stakeholder groups are properly and fairly represented in the standards development process and in subsequent decision making.
- c) Have overall responsibility for facilitation of meetings and the smooth running of the standards development process.
- d) Represent the overall interests of the standards development process rather than any particular stakeholder group.

All decisions are made on the basis of consensus and by convention the Chair shall not cast a vote.

C3 Decision making

The quorum for the transaction of the business of the Steering Group shall be two-fifths of all the persons who at the commencement of the meeting are Steering Group members (Article 40.2).

Decisions of the Steering Group shall require the unanimous vote of those attending and voting at a duly convened meeting of the Steering Group. Any member attending the meeting but abstaining from voting shall not be counted (Article 40.3).

In order to expedite the standard-setting process Steering Group members will be encouraged not to re-open decisions already made unless there is new information to be considered.

C4 Decision to approve the standard

The Steering Group shall be responsible for approving the standard or any revision thereof.

Approval of the standard by the Steering Group shall require the unanimous vote of those attending and voting at a duly convened meeting of the Steering Group. Any member attending the meeting but abstaining from voting shall not be counted (Article 40.3).

C5 Dispute resolution

Any query relating to the interpretation of the meaning of the standard shall be remitted to an Interpretation Panel which shall be appointed by the Steering Group to provide it and users of the certification standard with advice on its interpretation. The Steering Group shall appoint an independent chair of the Interpretation Panel and shall publish its rules, procedures and advice on the website.

Any grievance relating to the standard setting process should be addressed to the Company Secretary and shall be considered and determined by the Steering Group in accordance with the provisions of Articles 40.2 and 40.3 (see C3 above). In the event of a complainant wishing to appeal against the Steering Group's determination the matter shall be remitted to the chair of the Interpretation Panel whose decision shall be final.

D. Review of the Standard

D1 Revision

The standard shall be reviewed and revised as necessary on a five year cycle.

D2 Participation of certification schemes

The Steering Group shall invite the national offices of the certification schemes to participate in the review process by:

- a) Notifying them of its intention to begin a review process and providing a projected time line to be discussed and agreed with them.
- b) Requiring them to confirm that these standard-setting procedures will meet their requirements.
- c) Requiring them to undertake internal consultation at national level throughout the standard-setting process and to complete it prior to the issue of an agreed Pre-approval Draft. (*N.B. It would be helpful if certification schemes could seek guidance from their international organisations on the acceptability of the proposed revisions throughout the process.*)

D3 Elements of the review

The review process should include as a minimum the steps set out in section B4 and incorporate the following elements:

- a) An Interpretation Review – a consideration of any advice developed by the Interpretation Panel.
- b) A Technical Review – a consideration of any new scientific or technical knowledge.
- c) An International Benchmarking Review – 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.)
- d) A Standard Users' Feedback Review - a consideration of feedback from certificate holders and accredited certification authorities. (To be provided by the certification schemes.)
- e) A Review of the Initial Stakeholders' Consultation – a consideration of consultees' comments and responses.
- f) A Small and Low Intensity Managed Woodlands Review – a consideration of the impact and applicability of the standard for small and low intensity operations.
- g) A Certification Schemes' Requirements Review – 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.

D4 Amendments induced by certification schemes

In the event that a certification scheme requires a revision to be made to the standard or the standard setting process prior to the normal revision period, the Steering Group shall consider the requirement and make any such amendment as it considers appropriate.