

## Consultation Paper Sections:

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### 1. Introduction

The first edition of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) was published in January 2000 and there have been three revisions. The current version is UKWAS 4.

The UKWAS standard is designed to reflect the governmental UK Forestry Standard and the requirements of the two leading global certification schemes, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC). It also reflects best practice drawn from a range of sources and adapted, where appropriate, to UK circumstances.

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.

### 2. The review, revision and consultation process

The UKWAS standard-setting process was revised prior to the commencement of the UKWAS review and revision to take account of best practice and to ensure continued alignment with the latest FSC and PEFC requirements. The revised process is set out in the document: *UKWAS Standard-setting Process (Version 3.0)*.

The review-and-revision process is based on evidence-gathering and thorough consultation with stakeholders. A detailed document sets out the plan and timetable for this revision: *UKWAS Review & Revision Plan & Timetable 2020-23*. The aim is for UKWAS 5 to be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

An independent working group comprising an independent chair and a balance of economic, environmental and social stakeholders was appointed by the UKWAS steering Group to review and, if considered necessary, revise the standard. Based on an initial evidence-gathering exercise, an Issues Paper was prepared in November 2020 and reviewed by the working group which concluded that a revision was necessary.

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

- **Phase 1** (December 2020 – February 2021): working group to prepare Initial Revision Draft
- **Phase 2** (March/April 2021): stakeholder consultation 1 (60 days)
- **Phase 3** (May - September 2021): working group to analyse stakeholder feedback and prepare Second Revision Draft
- **Phase 4** (October/November 2021): stakeholder consultation 2 (60 days)

- **Phase 5** (Dec 2021 – May 2022): working group to analyse stakeholder feedback, prepare a Pre-approval Draft and remit it to the steering group.

This second stakeholder consultation is Phase 4 of the revision process.

### Key documents

- UKWAS Standard-setting process (Version 3.0): <http://ukwas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/UKWAS-Standard-Setting-Process-Version-3.0-FINAL-22.11.19.pdf>
- UKWAS Revision 2020-23: Review & Revision Plan & Timetable: <http://ukwas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/UKWAS-5-Review-Revision-Plan-Timetable-FINAL-21.05.20.pdf>

## 3. Revision of the Standard

The UKWAS 4 standard was published in 2018 following the most comprehensive revision in the history of UKWAS. It was more succinct, logical and user-friendly and included major structural changes and was well received by users. For this current revision, the emphasis has therefore been on updating text, looking for gaps and, where necessary, providing more detail.

The findings of the initial evidence-gathering exercise are presented in an Issues Paper<sup>1</sup> and Annexes available on the UKWAS website. Based on the issues identified, the working group released an Initial Revision Draft for consultation in March. There was an excellent response from stakeholders and the working group has now considered the feedback and prepared a Second Revision Draft for a further round of consultation.

The Second Revision Draft of UKWAS 5 is the result of four months of intensive review and discussion of the stakeholder comments by the working group; the working group is now seeking stakeholder's views on their second draft.

A comprehensive Consultation Report is available on the UKWAS website: <https://ukwas.org.uk/consultation/> The report sets out the working group's response to each issue raised by respondents on a section-by-section basis. It also includes a list of respondents and details their input.

Two versions of the Second Revision Draft standard are available:

- The **full version** includes the full text with requirements, guidance and example verifiers.
- The **short version** includes only requirements so making it easy to understand the overall shape of the draft.
- Both versions show deleted and additional text so you can see what has changed.

Both drafts can be downloaded from <https://ukwas.org.uk/consultation/>

For ease of reference, changes made since the previous consultation round are highlighted in yellow.

There are lots of changes, mostly in Guidance. Changes to Requirements are often minor but the more significant changes to Requirements are indicated overleaf.

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<sup>1</sup> Issues Paper: <http://ukwas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/UKWAS-Revision-2020-23-Issues-Paper-Final.pdf> Annexes: <http://ukwas.org.uk/library/> and go to Consultations / UKWAS Revision Process (2020-23) / Phase 1 documents - Initial Revision Draft preparation

## Significant changes to draft requirements

### - In Section 2, Management planning:

#### **2.4 Productive potential of the woodland management unit (WMU)**

- **2.4.2 Requirement:**
- Amended text relating to the average annual allowable cut.

#### **2.7 Woodland restructuring**

- **2.7.1 Requirement:**
- Deletion of 'gradually restructured' so first sentence of requirement now reads: *Even-aged woodlands are restructured to achieve an appropriate diversity of in-stand structure, species, sizes, ages, spatial scales, regeneration cycles and open space.*

#### **2.8 Tree species selection**

- **2.8.1 Requirement:**
- Inclusion of 'potential impacts of climate change' as a factor to be taken into account in a).
- New d) applying to HCV woodlands that native species be used for regeneration and that natural regeneration of non-native tree species is managed to safeguard conservation values.

#### **2.9 Introduction of non-native species**

- Amended sub-section heading to include the notion of introduction
- **2.9.1 Requirement:**
- a) now applies at the 'individual woodland' level not at the WMU level.
- New b) requires that non-native trees are not introduced to HCV woodlands.

#### **2.11 Conservation**

- **2.11.1 Requirement:**
- New c): *Throughout the WMU, management planning identifies opportunities where conservation and the enhancement of biodiversity may be achieved alongside other objectives.*

#### **2.13 Conversion**

- **2.13.2 Requirement:**
- Revised overarching paragraph for b) to include 'restored': *The new or restored land use is more valuable in terms of its biodiversity, landscape or historic environment benefits, and all of the following conditions are met:*
- First bullet of b) now refers to 'significantly high carbon stock'
- Fourth bullet of b) on the conversion and subsequent site management protection includes new sub-bullet: *The status and condition of statutory designated sites*
- Bullet in b) that the conversion entails <5% of the WMU now expanded and becomes new c): *Conversion exceeding 5% of the WMU by area or 500 ha in total takes place only with the prior approval of the relevant certification scheme(s).* This requirement is necessary to meet PEFC requirements.

### - In Section 3, Woodland operations:

#### **3.1 General**

- **3.1.2 Requirement:**
- Addition of natural capital values and measures to protect water supplies to listed elements of planned woodland operations.

#### **3.2 Harvest operations**

- **3.2.3 Requirement:** requirement on stump removal revised: *Stump removal is practised only for: Phytosanitary reasons, Forest infrastructure developments, Restoration of open-ground habitats.*

#### **3.4 Integrated pest management**

- Sub-section re-titled – previously: *Pesticides, biological control agents and fertilisers*

- 3.4 now covers pesticides and biological control agents only. Fertilisers forms new 3.5.
- Full re-write of sub-section from 3.4.1-3.4.6 with pesticide and biological control agent text structure aligned.

### 3.5 Fertilisers

- New sub-section previously covered in 3.4. Full re-write of requirements from 3.5.1-3.5.3 with text structure aligned with revised 3.4.

## – In Section 4, Natural, historical and cultural environment:

### 4.1 Statutory nature conservation sites

- **4.1.1 Requirement:** b) amended: *Adopting a precautionary approach, the identified areas, species and features of high conservation value are maintained and brought into good condition over time.* Previously, requirement was to maintain and, where possible, enhance.

### 4.3 Management of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)

- **4.3.1 Requirement:** new g): *The primary management objective for PAWS is restoration to native woodland of a type appropriate to the site.*

### 4.6 Maintenance of biodiversity and ecological functions

- **4.6.1 Requirement:** Additional bullet point requiring that natural reserves are *maintained in a favourable condition*.

### 4.7 Maintenance of local native seed sources

- **4.7.1 a) Requirement:** scope of requirement changed from sections 4.1-4.4 to 4.1-4.3.
- **4.7.1 b) Requirement:** clarifications on use of planting stock.

### 4.8 Protection of cultural and historic environment sites

- **4.8.1 Requirement:** b) moved to Guidance.
- Revised terminology to describe cultural and historic environment aspects.

### 4.9 Game-rearing, shooting and fisheries management

- 4.9 sub-section title amended to *Game-rearing, shooting and fisheries management*.
- 4.9: sub-sections re-ordered to align with sub-section title.

## – In Section 5, People, communities and workers:

### 5.1 Public access rights, permissive uses, traditional rights, and the health and wellbeing of local people, visitors and communities

- 5.1 sub-section title amended to include visitors.
- **5.1.3 Requirement:** b) clarification on demand for specific types of access provision or community use.

### 5.2 Minimising adverse impacts

- **5.2.1 Requirement:** scope extended by inclusion of visitors in addition to local people.

### 5.6 Workers' rights

- **5.6.1 Requirement:** new b) added on equality: *Owners/managers promote equality, so that all workers are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities.*

## – Glossary - items added or revised:

- **Appropriate Assessment** (*amended text*)
- **Buffer** (*amended text*)
- **Carbon balance** (*amended text*)
- **Cultural features** (*amended text*)
- **Environmental and social risk assessment** (*new text*)

- **Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)** (*text moved from 1.3.1 Guidance*)
- **Heritage assets** (*new*)
- **Historic environment** (*amended text*)
- **Lower-impact silvicultural systems (LISS)** (*amended text*)
- **Lower intensity forest management approaches** (*possible new glossary term to replace LISS*)
- **Peatland** (*amended text*)
- **Pest** (*new*)
- **Priority species** (*amended text*)
- **Public rights of way** (*amended text*)
- **Root zones** (*new*)
- **Semi-natural habitat** (*new*)
- **Shelterwood** (*amended text*)
- **Short rotation coppice (SRC)** (*amended text*)
- **Significantly high carbon stock** (*new: text still under consideration*)
- **Statutory bodies** (*amended text*)
- **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** (*new*)
- **Water course** (*amended text*).

## 4. Questions for stakeholders

This Consultation Draft is just that: it presents the revision working group's ideas on how to improve the standard based on stakeholder feedback received. The working group now welcomes further comments from stakeholders and standard-users; you may raise any issue but it would be particularly helpful to focus your input on the latest proposed changes highlighted in yellow in the draft.

In particular, the working group seeks specific feedback on the issues set out below:

1. **Sub-sections 3.4 on Integrated pest management and 3.5 on Fertilisers**
2. **Sub-section 4.3.1 on Management of PAWS** requiring that the primary management objective for PAWS is restoration to native woodland.
3. **Sub-section 4.8 Protection of cultural and historic environment sites** – has the working group adopted right terminology to describe cultural and historic environment aspects? See also **Glossary** definitions of *Cultural features*, *Heritage assets* and *Historic environment*.
4. **Glossary - Lower-impact silvicultural systems (LISS) and Lower intensity forest management approaches** - the working group seeks views on replacing the term 'LISS' with 'Lower intensity forest management approaches' as defined in the glossary.

## 5. How should I respond and what is the deadline for making my input?

### 5.1 What do I need to read?

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

You will also need to refer to the following documents available on <https://ukwas.org.uk/consultation/>:

#### UKWAS Consultation Drafts:

- Full version
- Short version (requirements-only).

## 5.2 How do I respond?

Please use the **Consultation Template** available on <http://ukwas.org.uk/consultation>.

The template is the full text of the draft standard which also allows you to make comments throughout the document in the green-shaded free text boxes provided for each section of the document.

**This is a 60-day consultation. Your feedback is required by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.**

Please send all your responses to [ukwas@ukwas.org.uk](mailto:ukwas@ukwas.org.uk).