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mini**guide** to woodland certification



- what is woodland certification ?
- why certify your woodlands ?
- what is the certification process ?
- what support is available ?
- who can certify my woodlands ?

what is woodland certification ?

It is a way of independently proving that woodlands are sustainably managed with respect to economic, social and environmental criteria.

In the UK, standards of management are assessed to the **UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)**. This was developed by a wide range of organisations including those representing landowners, the forestry industry and environmental organisations. Timber from certified woodlands can carry a label providing the independent assurance to customers that it comes from a sustainable woodland managed to internationally agreed standards.



What is the Certification Standard (UKWAS)?

The Standard identifies the requirements of management and how they are verified. It has been designed to apply to all woodlands in the UK regardless of their size or complexity.

Many woodlands may already meet the majority of requirements within UKWAS and the Standard is easily attainable for most woodland owners. Woodlands in the UK are generally well managed and certification gives woodland owners the opportunity to prove this.

UKWAS - the basics

A brief outline of the main headings in the certification standard is below. For more details please see a copy of UKWAS, available from the Project Managers.

1. The owner must **comply with UK law** and manage the forest to UKWAS.
2. Woodlands require a **management plan** including monitoring of implementation.
3. **Environmental impacts** of woodland operations will be assessed and accounted for, aiming to maintain and enhance biodiversity.
4. **Forest operations** are planned and conducted to minimise adverse environmental impacts.
5. **Protection and maintenance** of the woodland to prevent damage.
6. Conservation and enhancement of **biodiversity**. Rare species and habitats are identified and protected and an area of woodland is managed with conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as a major objective.
7. The owner or manager engages in appropriate **consultation** where there is legitimate public interest, encourages or maintains access and protects sites of cultural significance.
8. The forest workforce adheres to **Health & Safety** legislation and are appropriately trained and equipped. Owners and contractors have adequate public and employers liability **insurance**.

why certify your woodlands ?

The Benefits

-  Access to more **grant aid** and support for woodland management.
-  Recognition for good management practices. The certificate is a **“Green Badge”** of sustainability that is internationally recognised and shows that you are committed to sustainable management.
-  Certification requires better **long-term planning** and monitoring which in turn leads to better and more efficient management decisions and ensures a professional approach.
-  Ensures **compliance with the law** - certification is an easy way to ensure that you are complying with the many rules and regulations that apply to woodland activities from the control of hazardous substances to the health and safety of workers.
-  **Market access** - markets for certified timber are growing as organisations become concerned about sources of timber. It also ensures continued access to timber markets.
-  Demonstrate to funders, neighbours and business partners that woodland is being managed to **internationally agreed principles**.



- 🌲 Links to “green” **purchasing policies** and ensuring a holistic approach to woodland management and sourcing of timber.
- 🌲 A way to **prove the benefits** of spending public money on woodlands.
- 🌲 **Corporate protection** - it allows organisations to justify their management practices through meeting an internationally recognised standard and that legal and statutory requirements are being met.
- 🌲 It gives woodland managers a framework for decision making and **explaining operations** to officials and the public.
- 🌲 Ensures that **biodiversity** and wildlife are recognised and that a proportion of management is targeted towards their benefit.
- 🌲 To contribute to **Government commitments** (50% increase in area of certified woodland over 5 years)
- 🌲 **Stimulates interest**, awareness and debate surrounding woodlands and what they can deliver to the public.
- 🌲 Potential to realise **non-timber benefits** that woodlands deliver to society in terms of image, health, environment, carbon storage and other non-market attributes.

frequently asked questions...

I don't manage my woodland for timber production so is certification relevant to me?

The standard is relevant to all woodlands. There are many benefits in going through the process especially if your woodland is managed for biodiversity or public amenity.

Do I have to allow the public into my woods as part of certification?

No. There is a requirement to maintain existing levels of access and to prove that some assessment has been taken of any local demand. Public access, other than on public rights of way, may be denied in a variety of situations. In practice, access creates few issues with regard to certification.

Certification has to cover so many different situations. How can it be relevant to me?

The majority of woodland owners should be able to achieve certification with minimal inconvenience. Additionally the needs of small woodland owners are being examined to make certification more relevant.

Is it true that certification is very costly?

On an area basis, certifying large woods is generally cheaper than for small ones. Group schemes are available that offer a much more cost effective way to achieve certification. Also, there is a range of Forestry Commission grants on offer to reduce the costs to woodland owners in the Pilot area (map p30). The grants available and costs of certifying through various group schemes are listed in this booklet.

Why should I manage my woodlands to a standard when nobody else does?

The current uptake of certification in the UK is around 40% of the forest area (1.1 million hectares) with a government commitment to raise this to 60% over the next 5 years. Certification is the only way of independently proving that woods and forests are managed sustainably.

Why should I certify my woodlands when there are already significant controls and legislation in place?

All woodlands should already be managed in accordance with existing controls and legislation but the certification process can highlight areas where there is room for improvement. The standard goes beyond the requirements of Woodland Grant Schemes and Felling Licences.

If you have other questions please contact Andy Long (0161 872 1660) or Gareth Mayhead (01925 816 217).

what is the certification process ?

Your woodland management practice, documentation and records will all need to meet the requirements of the standard. You will be audited against the standard and annually monitored to ensure that you continue meeting the requirements.

Woodlands can be certified as part of a **Group Scheme** or go through the process as an **Individual** and gain their own certificate. Individual certification is more expensive and is generally more appropriate for organisations with large forest areas.

Most small woodland owners who choose to enter into certification will join via a Group Scheme. A Group Scheme comprises of owners who jointly hold a certificate and are administered by a **Group Manager**. In this way the costs of certification are shared across the group and therefore reduced for individual members. The group manager is responsible for making sure that all members of the group meet the standard and rules of the group. Owners can join an existing group or set up their own.

An auditor from a **certification body** will annually assess the group manager and a sample of the group members' woodlands to ensure that they meet the standard.

Group schemes can be set up so that the management of the woodlands within the group are under the control of the group manager. Group managers who run groups in this way are called **Resource Managers**. Group members of these schemes may have to pay higher fees to reflect the increased level of management input needed.

Group schemes may vary in the way they are run. You should contact the individual group managers to get an idea of the requirements of the group and the application procedure. An outline of the process is shown alongside.



The Process

An **application** is made to the group manager to become a member. This will include some basic information about the woodland and their management. The group manager should provide you with information about their procedures and charges.

The **pre-assessment** is based on a study of documentation and an assessment of the woodlands. The aim is to identify at an early stage any areas where the applicant is unlikely to meet the standard and meet with the requirements of the group membership. The group manager will ensure the applicant fully understands both the requirements of the standard and group membership. Applicants will be **evaluated** on their ability to meet these requirements.

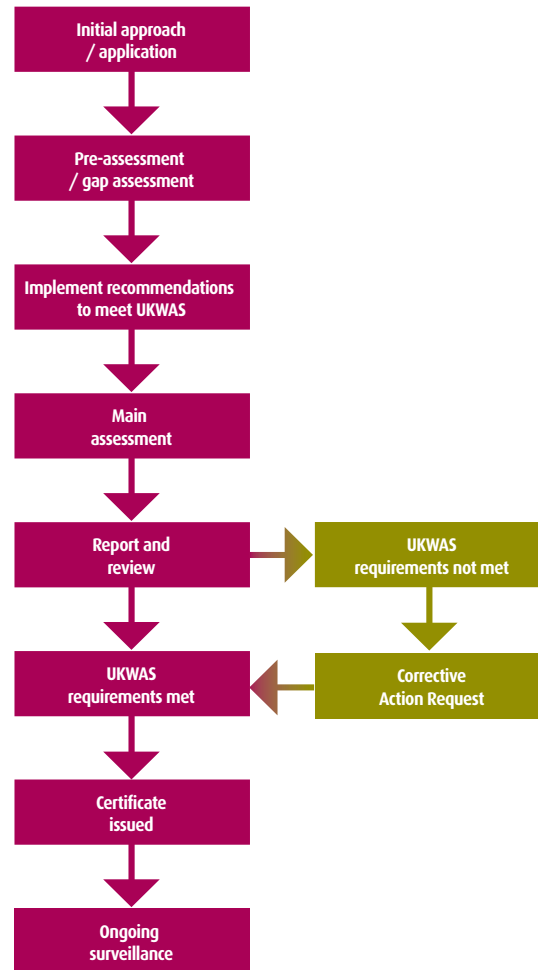
The owner is required to **implement any recommendations** that the group manager outlines to ensure that they meet the standard and group rules. Evidence will be required to prove that any gaps have been filled. When you are satisfied that the requirements of the **Standard have been met**, the Group Manager will return to review the evidence and check that no further areas of non-compliance exist.

The Group Manager will review the evidence of the **main assessment** and if necessary make some recommendations for minor or major changes - Corrective Action Requests (CARs). **A certificate will be issued** once the CARs have been closed off satisfactorily.

Each group has different systems for monitoring its members but there will be an **annual check** on group members to ensure that they are complying with the standard and group scheme rules.

Individual Certification

If you apply for individual certification the procedure is very similar to group certification except the certification body will be the entity that carries out the assessments and not the group manager. Membership of group schemes and individual certificates are normally valid for 5 years.




what support is available ?



The Forestry Commission has introduced a number of grants within the project area to assist with the process of achieving certification. These grants are in addition to existing Woodland Grant Scheme grants such as AMG or WIG.

The Project Managers can also offer assistance with:

-  Understanding the certification process and standard
-  Filling out relevant grant aid forms
-  Supplying woodland management templates to enable owners to write their own plans
-  Production of management plans
-  Running events and workshops for owners

There is also general advice available from the Forest Teams regarding woodland management and the Woodland Grant Scheme. **The grants available are listed overleaf** ►►

Management Planning Grant

To assist with the process of writing a woodland management plan that meets the requirements of UKWAS.

Area of Woodland	Total Grant
Up to 100 ha	£10 per ha
Above 100 ha	£5 per ha

There is a minimum payment of £300 for woodlands smaller than 30 ha.

Special Assessment Grants will also be available where more detailed investigation is needed. These will be for ecological, landscape and archaeological assessments and for stakeholder consultation. Where applicable, grants will pay up to 80% of agreed costs.

Forest Certification Grant

To reward woodland owners for becoming certified.

The rates of grant are as follows and are payable on receipt of a certificate proving compliance to UKWAS. Woodlands are only eligible if the certificate is issued after April 1st 2003.

Area of Woodland	Total Grant
Up to 10 ha	£150
10 to 30 ha	£300
30 to 100 ha	£450
Above 100 ha	£600

who can certify my woodlands ?

Group Schemes - company profiles

Independent Forestry

Independent Forestry has over 140 members within its **group scheme** and a wealth of experience to call upon. The group manager can help put management systems into place to ensure compliance with UKWAS. Each member will receive its own certification file containing rules, checklists and guidelines.

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Interface NRM

We provide a quality and cost-effective **group certification** service that is specifically designed for private small woodland owners in the Certification Pilot Project within The Mersey and Red Rose Forest areas. We use effective, simple systems that require minimal administration from you, but provide a reliable certification service tailored for the small woodland owner. Certification costs include the preparation of an UKWAS compliant management plan.

Gavin Jordan

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Scottish Woodlands

Scottish Woodlands were the first forest management company in Scotland to launch a **group certification** scheme in May 1999. The group scheme has grown to cover 105 properties totalling 45,270 hectares. Group scheme members' estates vary in size from 3000ha down to 10ha and properties are spread across Scotland, England and Northern Ireland.

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Selectfor

The Selectfor **group scheme** comprises of members with larger areas of woodland (100ha plus). Members must be actively managing their woodlands in line with continuous cover principles. For more information contact:

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Selectfor
Y Winllan
Brechfa
Carmarthen
Carmarthenshire
SA32 7QZ

Tel: 01267 202 233

**Tilhill**

Tilhill **group certification scheme** offers certification across the UK to all woodland owners, currently with 39 members, from 11 hectares upwards totalling over 57,000 hectares. Delivery of certification is through a day gap assessment, offering advice and instruction, summarised in a full gap report, followed by a day acceptance audit.

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www.tilhill.co.uk

Resource Manager Schemes - company profiles

Fountain Forestry

Fountain Forestry, the woodland management specialists; offers certification under their **resource manager scheme** (RMS). Under the scheme the company prepares and administers all aspects of certification for owners with whom they have woodland management agreements. The advantage of the RMS is that it is thorough, specifically tailored and easily reviewed. This ensures that the management plan becomes a useful working document and does not gather dust on the shelf.

Blackburn Office: 01254 272900
www.fountainsplc.com

Scottish Woodlands

Resource manager scheme -

please see Group Scheme section for contact details.

Tilhill

Resource manager scheme -

please see Group Scheme section for contact details.



Individual Schemes - company profiles

Soil Association

Woodmark is one of the longest standing and most respected FSC-accredited certification bodies. We apply a participatory & problem-solving approach, helping our clients realise what they want to do. At the cutting edge of FSC policy, we are redesigning certification for small woodlands (SLIMFs). English Nature, RSPB, Telford & Wrekin Council, The Body Shop & Duchy of Cornwall can't all be wrong!

Vanessa Linforth

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SGS

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Summary of Certification Costs

Group Schemes

Company	Area to be certified	Costs (all exclusive of VAT)			
		Initial Fee	Additional Fee	6 month visit	Annual Fee
Independent Forestry	1-100ha	£350	n/a	£75	£75
	101-250ha	£400	£0.60 per ha	£150	£150
Interface NRM	<10ha	£450	n/a	n/a	£150
	10-30ha	£600	n/a	n/a	£200
	30-100ha	£950	n/a	n/a	£350
Scottish Woodlands		£850 Approx. (Pre-assessment £350 + £500 auditing/admin)	n/a	n/a	£300 Approx.
Selectfor	Please contact directly for details and costs.				
Tilhill	Up to 100ha	£750	n/a	n/a	£300
	100ha +	£1250	n/a	n/a	£650

Resource Manager Schemes

Company	Costs and Conditions
Fountain Forestry	Please contact directly for details of costs and service levels
Scottish Woodlands	Please contact directly for details of costs and service levels
Tilhill	Membership of the Resource Manager scheme is covered within the Tilhill annual management fee. The level of management input is by negotiation

Individual Schemes

Company	Costs and Conditions
SGS	Costs are quoted on a site by site basis - please contact directly for a quote.
Soil Association	Overall costs are based on a day rate of £350 + VAT. The size and complexity of the forest area will determine the scope of the assessment.

glossary of terms

Accreditation

The guarantee, by an accreditation body, that certification bodies' practices and standards meet its requirements.

Biodiversity

The variety of ecosystems and living organisms, including genetic variation within species.

Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan sets out a programme of action to conserve and enhance biological diversity throughout the UK. It includes action plans for key habitats and species, and cross-sectoral programmes to encourage biodiversity conservation within all land uses and businesses. Local Biodiversity Action Plans integrate these measures at a local or regional level.

Certification

The issuing of a certificate by a certification body stating that a woodland has been audited against a stated standard and has met all the requirements.

Certification body

The body that audits woodlands against a stated standard and issues a certificate stating that the standard has been met.

Chain of custody

The channel through which products are distributed, from their origin in the forest to their end-use.

Compartment

A numbered or named smaller area of woodland within the woodland as a whole.

Corrective Action Request (CAR)

A recommendation made by an auditor that requires either major or minor changes are made before a certificate can be issued.

Felling licence

Licence issued by the Forestry Commission to permit trees to be felled. With certain exceptions it is illegal to fell trees in Great Britain without prior Forestry Commission approval.

Forestry Commission

The Government Department with responsibility for forestry policy in Great Britain.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

International, non-profit, forest accreditation organisation. It is an association of members.

Gap Report

A report produced by a group manager (or certifying body) which identifies areas where current management systems do not meet with the standard or group scheme rules. It is the result of a pre-assessment.

Group certification

Where 2 or more woodland owners become certified together as a group. This reduces the cost of certification.

Interested parties

People directly affected by or who have a significant interest in the forest being managed.

Non-conformance

When a requirement of the standard is not met.

Non-conformances can be major or minor.

Major non-conformances mean a certificate cannot be issued.

Certificates can be issued in the case of minor non-conformance on the condition that the requirements are fully met within a stated time period.

Pan European Forest Certification Committee (PEFCC)

International, non-profit, forest accreditation organisation.

It was established by forest owners and forest industries to provide means of assuring customers that products they buy come from sustainable forests.

Permissive (access/use)

Use by permission whether written or implied, rather than by right.

Pre-assessment**(Gap assessment, Pre-evaluation, Scoping visit)**

An assessment made by a group manager or certifying body, prior to the main assessment. It is carried out to highlight any potential gaps in the current woodland management systems.

Resource manager certification

The resource manager's systems are certified by a certification body. Woodlands managed by the resource manager to the stated certification standard gain certification.

Silvicultural system

The system of tending and regenerating woodlands and harvesting their physical products.

Small woodland

For the purposes of the Certification pilot project a small woodland is under 100ha in size.

Sub-compartment

A smaller numbered or named area within a compartment.

Surveillance visit

The monitoring visit the certification body (or group manager) makes, usually annually, during the 5 years duration of the certificate to ensure that the certification standard (or group scheme rules) continues to be met.

UK Accreditation Service (UKAS)

The UK's national accreditation body covering all types of certification bodies.

UK Forest Standard (UKFS)

The Government's approach to sustainable forestry.

UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)

The national certification standard for the UK. It is endorsed by both the FSC and PEFC.

Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS)

A scheme administered by the Forestry Commission to give grants to create new woodlands and manage existing ones.

the certification pilot

The Certification Pilot project in The Mersey and Red Rose Forest areas is one of 3 in England funded by the Forestry Commission. The other project areas are in North Yorkshire (Yorwoods) and in the Marches (Heartwoods). The project will run for 3 years within the area shown on the map.



The project is part of the long-term work that the two Community Forests are engaged in to create economic, social and environmental benefits through an increase in woodland cover and active management of existing woodlands.

The Project Aims:

1. Identify and evaluate appropriate incentive and support mechanisms for small woodlands seeking certification
2. Increase the uptake of certification for small woodlands bringing them into sustainable management
3. Evaluate what certification delivers in terms of the economic, social and environmental outputs of small woodlands
4. Evaluate how any benefits can be maintained

The project creates an excellent opportunity for woodland owners to achieve certification. It is important for the project managers to receive as much feedback as possible. We want to know your views on certification, whether good or bad, so that the level of support on offer can be assessed.

Contact the Project Managers for more information

Gareth Mayhead

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Tel: 0161 872 1660