

## Woodland Carbon Code Advisory Board minutes

Wednesday 14 May 2025 on Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Pat Snowdon, Vicky West, Andy Baker, Susan Szymborski-Welsh (Scottish Forestry), Matthew Brander (Edinburgh University), Robert South (Institute of Chartered Foresters), James Russell (Marston Vale Trust), Andy Grundy, Rebecca Fairman, Alex Hart (Soil Association), Chris Waterfield, Emma Stewart (Forestry Commission), Graham Clark (Country Land and Business Association), Ewan Mackie (Forest Research), Areeb Arshad (ACT), Peter Coleman (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero), Emma Kerr (Scottish Woodlands), Stuart Goodall, Kate Palmer (Confederation of Forest Industries - Confor), Robert Guest (Foresight Group), Emily Petrie (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Defra).

**Apologies:** Jamie Smith (Scottish Forestry), Ben Searle (Northern Ireland Forest Service), Emma Hinchliffe (IUCN - Peatland Code), Bruce Kennedy (Boston Consulting Group), Mark Broadmeadow (Forestry Commission), Fiona Hay (Welsh Government), Nick Blyth (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), Peter Wilson (Wilson Applied/ UK Woodland Assurance Standard), Steve Clarkson (Organic Farmers & Growers).

### 1. Outstanding actions

Pat provided updates on outstanding actions from the previous executive board meeting:

**Action 1:** Pat to discuss the Nature Market Strategy Board name with board members.

**Update:** Pat will mention this to board members at their next meeting later this month.

### 2. Updates

#### Statistics

Vicky shared statistics about the Woodland Carbon Code.

In 2024 to 2025, there were:

- 141 projects validated to the code
- 25 projects verified to the code
- Almost 11,000 new hectares of woodland registered with the code

She indicated that the average size of registered projects is increasing.

#### Carbon price data

Vicky reported that Ecosystem Marketplace has released updated data on the price of units from Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code projects. The information shows Woodland Carbon

Code unit prices more than doubled over five years - from an average of £11.02 in 2020 to £26.85 in 2024. Broadleaved woodlands attracted a slightly higher price than conifer woodlands in 2024.

Robert Guest asked whether there was data on the price units with different vintages attract and James Russell asked why broadleaf and conifer woodlands attract different prices. Vicky suggested the code could work with Ecosystem Marketplace to explore some of these topics in more depth.

Vicky noted that there has been an increase in the volume of information reported and thanked everyone who shared data to help promote transparency and confidence in the market.

### **ICROA and ICVCM accreditation**

Pat explained that the Woodland Carbon Code is due to have its International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance (ICROA) accreditation renewed this year. The team is preparing a renewal submission.

He also provided an update on preparations to apply for the code to be assessed by the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market this summer.

Andy Grundy and Emma Kerr highlighted that it is important the code is aligned with BSI's nature markets standards too.

Peter Coleman asked if the ICROA and ICVCM have any conflicting criteria. Pat explained that they mostly align.

### **Terms of reference**

Vicky presented updated Advisory Board terms of reference and invited comment from members. The group approved the updated terms.

### **Conflict of interest**

Vicky reminded members to complete the declaration of interest form and send it to Susan from the Woodland Carbon Code team. This is part of the work to prepare to apply for ICVCM and ICROA accreditation.

**Action 1:** All members to complete and return a declaration of interest form

### **3. Version 3.0 of the standard**

Andy Baker and Vicky outlined plans to release a new version of the code later this year. The update will help to ensure the code is clear, accessible, aligned with global and national standards and informed by the latest data and industry best practice.

Vicky and Andy discussed the main proposals and encouraged advisory board members to take part in the consultation which is running until Tuesday 10 June.

Graham Clark welcomed the proposal to enable more projects to use the small woods process by increasing the area of projects which can use it. James Russell added that this will be helpful for projects which want to generate units for their own use too.

Robert South noted that some existing projects may have liked to have had the option to use the small process. Pat explained it is difficult to retrospectively change existing projects due to risks to integrity.

Emma Kerr asked how much extra it might cost to validate biodiversity baseline surveys. Andy Grundy indicated that it would likely be on a case by case basis and offered to explore this with his team.

Robert South asked if it would be possible to include plastic free guards and regional price variations in the cashflow. Andy Baker explained that it is difficult to account for plastic free guards and to access robust data on regional prices at the moment, but this could be explored in future. Robert suggested adding a box into the cashflow to highlight any major discrepancies in pricing.

Peter Colman enquired if the updated documents and processes will increase or decrease processing times. Andy explained the updates aim to remove duplication from the documents so should help to speed up the process for all.

#### **4. Communications and engagement**

Pat and Susan outlined some ideas to enhance the code's communication and engagement activities, including working groups and shared communication campaigns.

Andy Grundy advocated for working groups as a way to help generate fresh ideas and perspectives.

Emma Kerr suggested a project developer forum or update meeting would also be helpful.

**Action 2:** Board members to provide any further feedback on communications and engagement to the Woodland Carbon Code team.

#### **5. Policy updates from countries**

##### **England**

Emily Petrie informed the group that the UK Government is running a consultation on raising integrity in voluntary carbon and nature markets and is currently analysing responses from its land use consultation. The UK Government has also published findings from a review of its Environmental Improvement Plan.

## **Scotland**

Pat highlighted that the Scottish Government is continuing to work on its climate change plan and recently published its [Programme for Government](#) which includes a commitment to create at least 10,000 hectares of woodlands this year.

He also reported that work to explore whether greenhouse gas removals should be integrated into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme is ongoing. The UK ETS Authority ran a consultation and is expected to make a decision later this year.

## **Wales**

Fiona Hay was unable to attend.

## **Northern Ireland**

Ben Searle was unable to attend.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

**Next meeting:** 9am to 11am on Wednesday 27 August 2025 via Microsoft Teams.