

Woodland Carbon Code executive board minutes

Wednesday 24 September 2025 via Microsoft Teams

Present: Pat Snowdon, Vicky West, Andy Baker, Susan Szymborski-Welsh (Scottish Forestry), Fiona Hay (Welsh Government), Mark Broadmeadow (Forestry Commission), Ben Searle (Northern Ireland Forest Service)

Apologies: Jamie Smith (Scottish Forestry)

1. Outstanding actions

Pat provided an update on outstanding actions:

Action 1: Andy to prepare a paper on compensatory planting for a future meeting.

Update: Ongoing.

2. Conflict of interest

No members declared any conflicts of interest.

3. Updates

Vicky provided updates on a number of topics.

Statistics

Almost 700 hectares of new woodland have been verified to the code this year. This is seven times the amount which was verified last year.

Data shows the number of projects being validated with the code has been increasing over the last few years, with the average size of projects decreasing.

UK Land Carbon Registry platform update

S&P Global moved the UK Land Carbon Registry to a new platform on 18 August.

The updated system offers enhanced functionality, with improvements to both the public view and the experience for registered users.

The Woodland Carbon Code team is working with S&P Global to address some initial issues.

UK Land Carbon Registry retender

The registry retender project is almost complete. The project team hopes to communicate the result in the next few weeks.

ICROA and ICVCM applications

The Woodland Carbon Code team submitted its applications to be assessed by the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (ICVCM) and to renew its endorsement by the International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance (ICROA).

The team is now working to provide additional information as part of the initial completeness checks.

Action 2: Vicky to share draft responses with executive board members for review and feedback.

BSI early adopters

The code has applied to be an early adopter for BSI's Flex 701 nature investment standards. Successful projects will work with BSI from October 2025 to March 2026.

Validation and verification bodies

Vicky said the team was reviewing options to increase validation and verification body capacity. This would reduce the time it takes to complete validations and verifications.

Mark asked if validation and verification bodies could review projects' cashflows early in the process to provide a provisional indication if projects will pass the code's financial additionality test. Andy explained the cashflow is designed to do this already and allows project developers to see what changes they can make to ensure the project is eligible.

Risk register

Vicky shared the code's risk register. She explained that projects such as moving the code's website to a new platform and publishing buyer / seller contract templates have helped to mitigate some risks. The group discussed existing and emerging risks.

Action 3: Vicky to update and share the risk register with executive board members for further review and feedback.

4. Working groups

Vicky discussed plans to set up working groups to help enlist expertise from across the sector and to help engage stakeholders in the development of the code.

Members would be selected through a public recruitment process. Each group would focus on a specific issue and provide recommendations to executive board.

The code team propose the first working group would explore the monitoring of Woodland Carbon Code projects.

Members approved the principle of working groups which report to the executive board and discussed options for selecting chairs. Fiona suggested having a mix of longer and shorter sessions to ensure people have time to explore the subject while fulfilling their existing commitments.

The executive board approved monitoring for the subject of the first working group.

5. Nutrient neutrality

Andy led a discussion on whether Woodland Carbon Code units could be stacked with units from nutrient neutrality schemes in England. He presented a range of options for board members to consider.

Members discussed topics including:

- The importance of ensuring the code's validation and verification bodies have information about the nutrient neutrality scheme
- Legal additionality considerations if woodland creation was a requirement of a nutrient neutrality project
- How financial additionality should be assessed for projects on land already covered by a nutrient neutrality scheme

Members asked Andy to develop a paper with more information on each of the options. This will help them to provide a recommendation to the Nature Market Strategy Board before its December meeting.

Action 4: Andy to circulate a paper with options on nutrient neutrality so the executive board can provide a recommendation to Nature Market Strategy Board

Action 5: The Woodland Carbon Code team to create a list of all catchments where nutrient neutrality projects could take place, to identify possible overlaps with code projects.

6. Any other business

Pat highlighted that it was Ben's final meeting as an executive board member as he will be moving to a new role. All members of executive board thanked Ben for his contributions and wished him well in his new role.