

## Woodland Carbon Code Advisory Board minutes

Wednesday 26 November 2025 on Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Pat Snowdon, Andy Baker, Susan Szymborski-Welsh (Scottish Forestry), Fiona Hay (Welsh Government), Peter Coleman (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero), Robert South (Institute of Chartered Foresters), Lauren Dorricott (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Defra), Rebecca Fairman, Andy Grundy (Soil Association), Ewan Mackie (Forest Research), Kate Palmer (Confederation of Forest Industries - Confor), Renée Kerkvliet-Hermans (IUCN - Peatland Code), Matthew Doran (Country Land and Business Association), Craig Mackenzie (University of Edinburgh), Clara Guttman Belling (Cresco Capital Services), Natalia Dorfman (Kita Earth), Nick Swinburn (Woodland Trust), Bruce Kennedy (Boston Consulting Group), Alex MacKinnon (Tilhill Forestry).

**Apologies:** Breandan Mulholland (Northern Ireland Forest Service), Mark Broadmeadow, Chris Waterfield (Forestry Commission), Nick Blyth (Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals), Peter Wilson (Wilson Applied/ UK Woodland Assurance Standard), Steve Clarkson (Organic Farmers & Growers), Vicky West, Jamie Smith (Scottish Forestry), Areeb Arshad (ACT).

### 1. Welcome to new members

Pat welcomed new members to the board:

- Breandan Mulholland, Northern Ireland Forest Service
- Lauren Dorricott, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Defra

### 2. Outstanding actions

There were no outstanding actions.

### 3. Updates

#### Statistics

Andy Baker shared statistics about the Woodland Carbon Code.

- Almost 4,000 hectares were validated to the code from 1 April to 30 September 2025
- Over 1,400 hectares were verified to the code from 1 April to 30 September 2025

This represents a sizable increase from last year's figures. Pat thanked project developers, validators and verifiers and Woodland Carbon Code team members for their hard work in achieving this.

#### ICROA and ICVCM applications

The Woodland Carbon Code team has submitted 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 has provided additional information as part of the ICVCM initial completeness checks and hopes to receive more information very soon.

### **BSI early adopters**

The code will be an observer for the Peatland Code as it goes through BSI's Flex 701 nature investment standards early adopter process. The process is taking place from October 2025 to March 2026.

### **UKAS review of standard**

The UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) has reviewed version 3.0 of the code against the relevant ISO standards.

The Woodland Carbon Code team has responded to a request for more information in some areas and is awaiting further feedback.

### **UK Land Carbon Registry**

Andy Baker and Pat provided updates on various aspects of the registry.

**Updated platform:** S&P Global moved the UK Land Carbon Registry to a new platform in August. The Woodland Carbon Code team is working with S&P Global to log and address outstanding issues and ensure good communication with users.

**Retender:** Nick Swinburn asked about the criteria in the tender for a new registry provider. Pat explained it is a rigorous process which looks at factors including connectivity, cost and security.

**Data sharing:** The Woodland Carbon Code team has been receiving lots of requests to share or connect to registry data. The team has been helping to develop a Scottish Forestry process to manage these requests. The process will include legal, security, technical, governance and strategic considerations.

The group discussed the importance of sharing data around felling and carbon prices.

Natalia Dorfman offered support for any work on data consistency and automation. Kita Earth has expertise in this area.

**Action 1:** Andy Baker to follow up with Natalia on data support.

## **4. Woodland Carbon Purchase Fund**

Lauren Dorricott delivered a presentation on the UK Government's work to explore establishing a Woodland Carbon Purchase Fund.

The fund would buy Pending Issuance Units to help landowners generate revenue at an early stage in projects. It is hoped this would encourage more people to develop Woodland Carbon Code projects, helping to increase woodland creation across the UK.

The project is currently in the research and design phase. If the plan is viable, the fund would be launched in autumn 2027.

Craig Mackenzie asked if the fund would be available to projects across the UK. Lauren explained this is something which would be discussed as part of testing.

Bruce Kenndy suggested it would be helpful to test the plans with buyers and rating agencies as well as landowners.

## **5. Nutrient neutrality projects in England**

Andy Baker provided an update on work to explore how the code could accommodate projects which are taking part in nutrient neutrality schemes in England.

This could include updating the information required in the project design document, updating guidance on using the woodlands benefits tool and making an update to the cashflow.

Andy Grundy expressed concern that there is currently no public register of nutrient neutrality projects.

## **6. Clarification 1 to version 3.0**

Andy Baker outlined plans to release a clarification to version 3.0 in January. This would help to provide more guidance on areas including nutrient neutrality, survey map requirements and when landowner details are collected.

## **7. Project developer forum and case studies**

Susan Szymborski-Welsh shared plans to introduce quarterly online project developer forum meetings from January 2026. She also described work to update and gather case studies from project developers and carbon buyers.

Andy Grundy spoke about the launch of a new UK Nature Projects Association which took place in London on 24 November.

## **8. SBTi consultation**

Craig Mackenzie highlighted that the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is consulting on an updated draft of its revised Corporate Net-Zero Standard.

He led a discussion on section C29.6 which focuses on double counting and corresponding adjustments. There are concerns that this section, as currently worded, could have a strong negative impact on the voluntary carbon market. The group agreed it would be helpful to have clarity on this point.

Bruce Kenndy will be meeting with SBTi on the subject soon. He will provide feedback on the outcome of the discussion.

## **9. Validation and verification bodies**

Pat explained the team has been reviewing options to increase validation and verification body capacity. This would reduce the time it takes to complete validations and verifications. Alex MacKinnon welcomed this work, saying it is important to increase capacity as soon as possible.

Andy Grundy explained that providing a validation and verification service can be expensive. Pat highlighted that the code's current work to streamline administrative and monitoring processes aims to address this issue.

The group discussed other ways to address financial issues around validation and verification, including reviewing accreditation bodies and alternative fee structures.

**Action 2:** Members to continue to discuss ways to reduce the cost around validation and verification.

## **10. Policy updates from countries**

### **Scotland**

Pat highlighted that Scottish Government has released its latest Climate Change plan.

### **Wales**

Fiona Hay highlighted that the Welsh Government has announced its latest round of the Woodland Investment Grant, awarding £3.9 million of funding to 23 projects to restore, enhance and improve accessibility to woodlands in Wales.

### **England**

Mark Broadmeadow was unable to attend.

### **Northern Ireland**

Breandan Mulholland was unable to attend.

## **11. Date of next meeting**



The next advisory board meeting will take place from 9am to 11am on Wednesday 25 February 2026 via Microsoft Teams.