



Project developer forum notes

Thursday 22 January 2026

Introduction

Susan Szymborski-Welsh, the code's communications officer, provided an overview of the new forum.

It will create a collaborative space to share challenges, ideas, information and resources.

The sessions will take place four times a year and the content and format will be shaped by project developer suggestions.

The meetings won't be recorded but notes will be shared on the Woodland Carbon Code website.

Ecological site classification

Stephen Bathgate from Forest Research gave a [presentation](#) on applying ecological site classification to the Woodland Carbon Code.

He also gave a demonstration of the [new version of the tool](#) which will be launched later this year.

Questions focused on:

- Which underlying climate models to use. Stephen explained that the RCP (Representative Concentration Pathways) 4.5 model gives the most likely climate change scenario and should be used rather than 2.6/6 or 8.5.
- Whether it's best to assess one point within a project or take a more stratified approach. Vicky explained we have updated our guidance on this to say sites should be stratified.
- Will the video archive be available again. Stephen said this will be republished shortly.
- Whether the new version of the tool will include Northern Ireland. Stephen explained the tool won't include Northern Ireland until later in 2026 or 2027. In the meantime, project developers can [contact the Woodland Carbon Code team](#) about projects in Northern Ireland.

Validation and verification - number and timescales

Vicky West, the code's senior development manager, provided an update on the number of projects which have been registered, validated and verified with the code. See more on our [statistics page](#).

Anna Brand, the code's operational manager, shared information on the average time it takes to complete a validation. The time has reduced from 281 working days in 2024 to 209 working days in 2025. This is the result of a larger team and more streamlined processes and forms. Ongoing work, such as the project to develop an online platform with Rethink Carbon, should speed up the process further.

Anna also spoke about issues following the move to a new registry platform. She encouraged anyone who is still having issues to [get in touch](#).

Questions focused on:

- Common causes for delays. Anna explained it helps if projects provide up to date, consistent documents and respond to questions or requests as quickly as possible.
- If there are plans to increase the number of validation and verification bodies and if there is data on the time it takes different validation and verification bodies to complete validation. Vicky said work is ongoing to increase the number of validation and verification bodies. The code doesn't collect data on how long it takes different bodies to complete validations.
- If there is similar data on the time to complete verifications. Anna said she hopes to have some for next time.

Pending Issuance Unit market

Vicky West, the code's senior development manager, shared data on the sales on Pending Issuance Units. She explained that vintage is important for buyers as it indicates when a Pending Issuance Unit is likely to be converted to a Woodland Carbon Unit.

Vicky also highlighted that the UK Government is exploring the creation of a woodland carbon purchase fund. The fund would buy Pending Issuance Units to help landowners generate revenue at an early stage in projects.

Vicky finished by sharing data on the price of Woodland Carbon Code units and encouraging anyone who sold units in 2025 to report them through the Global Carbon Markets Hub. You can do this by logging into your hub account or emailing the hub at hub@ecosystemmarketplace.com.

Questions focused on:

- What factors affect the price of units. Vicky explained that factors such as the location of projects and the vintage of units can influence their price.
- If there is a breakdown of the average price of units by vintage. Vicky said this is something the team could gather with Ecosystem Marketplace.

Clarification to version 3.0

Andy Baker, the code's senior operational manager, provided an overview of a forthcoming clarification to version 3.0 of the code.

The clarification will help project developers and validation and verification bodies interpret the standard.

It sets out the approach to aspects including:

- Documents needed at registration
- Survey map requirements
- Combining nutrient neutrality and carbon projects in England

It will be released at the end of January, with clarifications taking effect immediately.

Close

Susan Szymborski-Welsh invited everyone to get in touch with topics and suggestions for future forum meetings by emailing info@woodlandcarboncode.org.uk