

## **Woodland Carbon Code executive board minutes**

Friday 30 August 2024 via Microsoft Teams

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

**Apologies:** None

### **Actions from last meeting**

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

### **Outstanding actions**

**Action 1:** Vicky to produce a paper on changes to the way the Woodland Carbon Code represents sales of pending issuance units, setting out the proposal and rationale in more detail (by correspondence or next meeting).

**Update:** Ongoing. Vicky is continuing to discuss this with S&P Global.

**Action 2:** Pat to check how public sector schemes are managed under the Biodiversity Net Gains programme and the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market's assessment framework.

**Update:** Outstanding. Mark will consult Biodiversity Net Gain colleagues. Pat will review Integrity Council requirements.

### **Updates on completed actions**

The consultation on integrating greenhouse gas removals in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme has now closed. It is hoped the results will be published in 2025.

Work on highlighting and discussing options for smaller projects is ongoing, with a webinar scheduled for October and the code's Nature Markets Contracts Project Manager looking at crofting legislation.

### **Updates**

#### **Additionality - public sector**

Andy updated the board on work to assess financial and legal additionality for public sector organisations that cannot apply for grant support.

He has reviewed legal additionality and found there is nothing in law which requires public sector bodies to plant woodland. Board members discussed the wording about the legal test on the Woodland Carbon Code website and agreed it should be

reviewed during the next update to the standard to reiterate that the legal assessment is undertaken at project level.

**Action 3:** Vicky to add to the 'request for change' log.

Andy also discussed options to assess financial additionality for public sector projects, including a grant-scheme 'proxy' for public/grant income and a projected budget option. The board were in favour of investigating the 'projected budget' option further.

**Action 4:** Andy to discuss providing business case information with public sector contacts and review options for addressing financial additionality for public sector bodies before the next meeting.

### **Additionality - EY**

Pat provided an update on work to review the code's additionality test. The secretariat is working with EY to evaluate options to enhance the financial additionality test. The project includes stakeholder consultation and will run until mid-November. He asked members to put forward suggestions of anyone who might be interested in taking part.

Mark highlighted that Defra is looking to run a consultation on the financial additionality of nature markets. He hopes to be able to help feed in the findings from the EY work.

Fiona noted it would be important for Defra's consultation to look at nature markets across the UK.

**Action 5:** Members to let Pat know of anyone who might want to be involved in the EY consultation on the code's additionality test.

### **UK Land Carbon Registry re-tender**

Vicky provided an update on the project to retender for a registry provider. The Woodland Carbon Code team has completed a project initiation document and are putting together a project team.

Members were invited to join the project team or put forward suggestions for anyone else who may be suitable.

Mark made a request for the project initiation document and slides to be shared with members.

**Action 6:** Vicky to share the registry retender project initiation document and slides from today's meeting with board members.

### **ICVCM accreditation**

Vicky provided a progress update on work to review the Code against the requirements of the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market and then apply for the code to be assessed. She highlighted areas where improvements are needed to meet the criteria, including updating information on the code's website.

### **UK accreditation service and validating and verification bodies**

Vicky outlined plans formalise the relationship with the UK accreditation service and with the code's validation and verification bodies to help set out responsibilities and expectations.

### **International aviation**

Vicky opened a discussion on whether buyers should be allowed to use Woodland Carbon Code units to compensate for international flights. She explained that the code currently does not permit this, but there may be an opportunity to review this as Scottish Government already includes international aviation in its targets and there are plans to include international aviation in the sixth UK carbon budget.

Fiona highlighted that there could be reputational issues with this.

Mark informed the group that the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero is currently revising the environmental reporting guidelines and members agreed to approach them for guidance on this topic.

**Action 7:** Vicky to contact the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero for guidance on allowing Woodland Carbon Code units to be used to compensate for international flights.

### **Any other business**

Mark raised a question about whether there should be a specialised process for insetting under the code.

Vicky highlighted that BSI and ISO are currently considering insetting as part of work in developing standards.

Members agreed to monitor the BSI and ISO work and review Woodland Carbon Code processes at a later stage.