

# United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard

# UKWAS

**UNITED KINGDOM WOODLAND ASSURANCE STANDARD**

**(Version 1: 18.01.07)**

## **STANDARD SETTING PROCESS**

### **Introduction**

The UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) is a certification standard which sets out the requirements which woodland owners and managers and certification authorities can use to certify woodland management in the United Kingdom. The standard is the product of an inclusive and transparent process which has involved a balanced representation from the UK forestry and environmental community. It has been designed to ensure that it reflects the requirements of the UK Government's UK Forestry Standard (and through this the guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki in 1993 and Lisbon in 1998) and the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship.

This is a consolidating document which defines the existing standard setting process and procedures.

### **Scope**

The document defines the procedures and process requirements for the development, maintenance and revision of the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard.

The procedures have been developed to ensure alignment with the requirements of the FSC and PEFC forest certification schemes. To ensure their continued alignment, these procedures should be subject to review, as a minimum, a year prior to the commencement of a formal revision of the UKWAS standard.

### **Purpose**

This standard setting document defines the roles, responsibilities and authorities of the UKWAS Steering Group in relation to the delivery of the national forest certification standard for the UK.

### **Effective date**

18 January 2007

### **References**

- UKWAS - Memorandum of Association (Amended 25 November 2002)
- UKWAS - Articles of Association (Adopted 25 November 2002)
- UKWAS – Steering Group Rules (Version 1: adopted 15 December 2003)
- Forestry Commission: The UK Forestry Standard (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2004)
- FSC – FSC International Standard - Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship (FSC-STD-01-001) (April 2004)
- FSC – Process Requirements for the Development of National or Sub-national Forest Stewardship Standards (FSC-STD-60-006) (Draft 4-1 2006)
- FSC Procedure to Develop a National Standard (FSC-PRO-60-001) (Draft 1-1 2006)

- FSC – Procedures for the Development of National or Sub-national Forest Stewardship Standards (FSC-STD-20-002) (Version 2-1 Approved November 2004, revised in May and October 2005)
- PEFC – PEFC Council Technical Document (27 October 2006)
- PEFC – PEFC Council Annex 2 Rules for Standard Setting (27 October 2006)
- PEFC - PEFC Council Annex 3 Basis for Certification Schemes and their Implementation (27 October 2006)
- ISO/IEC Guide 59:1999 Code of Good Practice for Standardisation
- ISEAL Code of Good Practice for setting Environmental and Social Standards (January 2006)

## **Terms & definitions**

- Certification schemes – the forest certification schemes which have adopted the UK Woodland Assurance Standard as the certification standard in their UK schemes – currently the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC).
- Company – the company known as ‘United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)’ established to own and manage the standard.
- Members – Members of the Company.
- Standard – the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.
- Steering Group – the group established by the Company which is equivalent to an FSC Standards Development Group or a PEFC Forum for Standard Setting.
- Steering Group members – members of the Steering Group.
- United Kingdom – Great Britain & Northern Ireland.

## **A. General Provisions**

### **A1 Independence**

A not-for-profit company, ‘United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)’, was established in 2002 to own and manage the standard. The Company is constituted as a ‘Company Limited by Guarantee And Not Having A Share Capital’ (registered in Scotland: Company Number SC199337). The Company is managed by the Members.

The Company’s Objects are:

*To own, interpret, develop and promote a certification standard for forest management in the United Kingdom on behalf of United Kingdom forestry and environmental communities, and bodies which represent the interests of people working in woods and forests or using them for the purpose of recreation, for the general benefit of people.*

The Company’s Memorandum and Articles of Association do not provide for the Company to undertake certification or accreditation thereby ensuring that the certification standard shall be developed independently from the certification or accreditation processes.

### **A2 Territory**

The standard setting process covers the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

## **B. Participatory Process**

### **B1 Introduction**

The first edition of the standard was the product of an inclusive and transparent process which involved a balanced representation from the UK forestry and environmental community. The standard was designed to reflect the requirements of the UK Government’s ‘UK Forestry Standard’ (and through this the guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki

in 1993 and Lisbon in 1998) and the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship.

All stakeholders were invited to participate in the development of the standard and associations representing the UK's forest and woodland owners and managers were fully supportive of the process and were active participants. The standard was published in 1999 and a second revised edition was published in 2006.

The Company's Members appoint a broadly based Steering Group which has responsibility for interpreting the standard and ensuring its periodic revision to take account of experience from its application and new information that arises.

## **B2 Steering Group**

The first edition of the standard was developed by an independent and broadly based Technical Working Group and launched in May 1999 prior to the establishment of the Company.

Articles 38 to 40 of the Company's Articles of Association provide for the establishment of a Steering Group and define its terms of reference and operating procedures:

- Article 39 requires that the Steering Group shall maintain, amend and interpret the standard. A Steering Group was appointed in November 2002.
- Article 38 requires that "Steering Group Rules" shall be adopted (and can be amended from time to time) by Members in a General Meeting. The Steering Group Rules shall regulate, *inter alia*, the number, appointment, retirement and removal of Steering Group members. The Steering Group Rules were adopted in December 2003.

The Steering Group comprises eleven defined constituencies with an agreed maximum representation for each:

Woodland owners (6), forest practitioners (5), state forest enterprises (4), environmental organisations (6), forest user organisations (2), wood processing industry (3), wood products trade (2), forest workforce (2), countryside agencies (2), local government (2), forestry standards setting bodies (3) and an unallocated category.

In addition there is an independent Chair and a Company Secretary.

All decisions are made on the basis of consensus.

## **B3 Transparency**

The publication of this document on the website ensures transparency of process.

The commencement of the standard setting process and information on the development process shall be communicated publicly and stakeholder representatives shall be notified directly. Key documents including this process document and related documents, the consultation drafts and the formal responses to comments received shall be available to all interested parties by publication on the website and direct notification of stakeholder representatives. Steering Group members shall receive all relevant papers and minutes of meetings and shall be responsible for keeping their constituents informed.

No information on the development of the standard shall be withheld unreasonably.

## **B4 Consultation**

The process for developing and revising standards shall include provision for consultation through notifying a wide range of stakeholders and publicising the availability of the following documents as a minimum:

- a) An 'Initial Stakeholder Consultation' - an invitation to comment on the current standard which should identify any areas already identified as requiring review (minimum consultation period of 60 days).
- b) A 'Revision Draft' which should include a summary of the stakeholders' initial comments and clearly identify and explain the proposed changes (minimum consultation period of 60 days).
- c) A 'Pre-approval Draft' which should include a summary of the further stakeholder comments and clearly identify and explain the proposed changes (minimum consultation period of 30 days).

Additional drafts may be issued at the discretion of the Steering Group.

NOTE: The Steering Group may at its discretion adopt a 'fast track' process for adapting the standard for use in limited applications such as small and/or low intensity managed forest areas. In considering what process to adopt, the Steering Group shall take account of the requirements of the certification schemes.

### **B5 Consensus**

Decisions of the Steering Group shall require the unanimous vote of those attending and voting at a duly convened meeting of the Steering Group. Any member attending the meeting but abstaining from voting shall not be counted (Article 40.3).

### **B6 Drafting**

The Steering Group shall be responsible for the drafting of the standard and subsequent revisions and shall make such arrangements as it considers necessary.

### **B7 Records**

The Steering Group shall keep the following records of the standards development process:

- a) List of all consultants or other individuals who have been involved in drafting the standard, together with their affiliations.
- b) List of all forest stakeholders invited to participate in the standards setting process.
- c) List of all forest stakeholders sent specified drafts of the standard and invited to comment.
- d) List of forest stakeholders that have participated in the standards setting process through other means, together with a note of the nature of such participation.
- e) All correspondence in relation to development of the standard.
- f) Copies of each draft of the standard which was prepared during the development process.
- g) Copies of all comments submitted in writing with respect to the specified draft standards.
- h) Summaries of comments on each draft, together with a brief explanation of the way in which those comments were responded to in the draft.

The Steering Group shall provide the certification schemes with a copy of the complete set of records specified above in support of the accreditation processes and shall keep a copy of the records for at least seven years.

## **B8 Forest testing**

The drafting of the first edition of the standard was informed by the results of testing the standard in the forest. In revising the standard, pilot testing and/or experience gained from the application of the standard shall be used to inform the revision process.

## **B9 Regional**

In developing the first edition of the standard, account was taken of accredited standards in neighbouring territories and those with similar geographic or ecological scope and this shall continue to be done when undertaking a revision.

## **C. Governance**

### **C1 General**

The operation of the Company is governed by its Memorandum & Articles of Association together with the Steering Group Rules. These are available on the website.

### **C2 Duties and responsibilities of the Chair**

Article 63 provides for the Members of the Company to appoint a Chair of the Company as recommended by the Steering Group. By convention the Chair shall also chair the Steering Group.

The Chair shall:

- a) Have overall responsibility for ensuring that the documented standards development procedures are implemented.
- b) Have overall responsibility for ensuring that the views of all stakeholder groups are properly and fairly represented in the standards development process and in subsequent decision making.
- c) Have overall responsibility for facilitation of meetings and the smooth running of the standards development process.
- d) Represent the overall interests of the standards development process rather than any particular stakeholder group.

All decisions are made on the basis of consensus and by convention the Chair shall not cast a vote.

### **C3 Decision making**

The quorum for the transaction of the business of the Steering Group shall be two-fifths of all the persons who at the commencement of the meeting are Steering Group members (Article 40.2).

Decisions of the Steering Group shall require the unanimous vote of those attending and voting at a duly convened meeting of the Steering Group. Any member attending the meeting but abstaining from voting shall not be counted (Article 40.3).

### **C4 Decision to approve the standard**

The Steering Group shall be responsible for approving the standard or any revision thereof.

Approval of the standard by the Steering Group shall require the unanimous vote of those attending and voting at a duly convened meeting of the Steering Group. Any member attending the meeting but abstaining from voting shall not be counted (Article 40.3).

## **C5 Dispute resolution**

Any query relating to the interpretation of the meaning of the standard shall be remitted to an Interpretation Panel which shall be appointed by the Steering Group to provide it and users of the certification standard with advice on its interpretation. The Steering Group shall appoint an independent chair of the Interpretation Panel and shall publish its rules, procedures and advice on the website.

Any grievance relating to the standard setting process should be addressed to the Company Secretary and shall be considered and determined by the Steering Group in accordance with the provisions of Articles 40.2 and 40.3 (see C3 above).

In the event of a complainant wishing to appeal against the Steering Group's determination the matter shall be remitted to the chair of the Interpretation Panel whose decision shall be final.

## **D. Review of the Standard**

### **D1 Revision**

The standard shall be reviewed and revised as necessary on a five year cycle.

### **D2 Participation of certification schemes**

The Steering Group shall invite the certification schemes to participate in the review process by:

- a) Notifying them of its intention to begin a review process and providing a projected time line to be discussed and agreed with them.
- b) Requiring them to confirm that these Standard Setting Procedures will meet their requirements.

### **D3 Elements of the review**

The review process should include as a minimum the steps set out in section B4 and incorporate the following elements:

- a) An Interpretation Review – a consideration of any advice developed by the Interpretation Panel.
- b) A Technical Review – a consideration of any new scientific or technical knowledge.
- c) An International Benchmarking Review – a comparison with any equivalent accredited standards of a similar geographical or ecological scope of application, and an evaluation of whether there are any substantial differences in the overall cost/benefit balance of compliance for similar types of enterprise with similar forest conditions. (To be provided by the certification schemes.)
- d) A Standard Users' Feedback Review - a consideration of feedback from certificate holders and accredited certification authorities. (To be provided by the certification schemes.)
- e) A Review of the Initial Stakeholders' Consultation – a consideration of consultees' comments and responses.
- f) A Small and Low Intensity Managed Woodlands Review – a consideration of the impact and applicability of the standard for small and low intensity operations.

- g) A Certification Schemes' Requirements Review – a consideration of advice (to be provided by the certification schemes) on any new or revised policies, procedures or guidance that is relevant to the revision. National certification schemes should seek advice and guidance from their international body when compiling their advice.

**D4 Amendments induced by certification schemes**

In the event that a certification scheme requires a revision to be made to the standard or the standard setting process prior to the normal revision period, the Steering Group shall consider the requirement and make any such amendment as it considers appropriate.

**UKWAS Support Unit**  
**18 January 2007**