



FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION REPORT

SECTION A: PUBLIC SUMMARY

Project Nr:	6471-GB		
Client:	Forestry Commission GB (Forestry Commission Scotland, Forestry Commission England and Forestry Commission Wales)		
Web Page:	www.forestry.gov.uk		
Address:	Forestry Commission GB HQ office, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT		
Country:	Great Britain (GB - Scotland, England and Wales)		
Certificate Nr.	SGS-FM/COC-000358	Certificate Type:	Forest Stewardship Certification (FSC) Resource Forest Management
Date of Issue	12 November 2009	Date of expiry:	11 November 2014
Forest Zone:	Temperate		
Total Certified Area	1,050,117 ha		
Scope:	Forest Management of the Forestry Commission forests in Great Britain for the production of softwood & hardwood round timber plus venison in Great Britain and Christmas trees in Scotland & England.		
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Evaluation dates:			
Main Evaluation	13,14,15,16 Jul 2009 (FCW) 19,20,24,25,26,27 Aug, 2 Oct 2009 (FES) 7,8,14,15,16,17 Sep, 12 Oct 2009 (FCE)		
Surveillance 1			
Surveillance 2			
Surveillance 3			
Surveillance 4			



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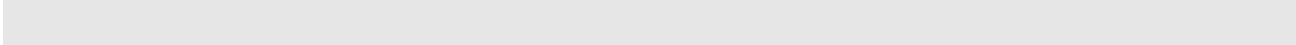
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AD 40:	Stakeholder Reports
	Evaluation team CVs
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Complaints and Disputes

Procedures for submitting complaints, appeals and disputes, and the SGS processing of such are published on www.sgs.com/forestry. This information is also available on request – refer contact details on the first page.



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the evaluation was to evaluate the operations of the forests of the forest enterprise agencies of GB in Scotland (FES), England (FCE) and Wales (FCW) against the requirements of the QUALIFOR Programme, the SGS Group's forest certification programme accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council.

1. SCOPE OF CERTIFICATE

The scope of the certificate falls within the Temperate Forest Zone and includes 25 Forest (District) Management Units (FMUs) plus the National Arboreta as described below. (

This is a multiple site certificate covering the three individual FC countries of GB.

Description of FMUs:				
Description	Ownership	Area (ha)	Longitude E/W	Latitude N/S
FES Head Office, Inverness	State	N/a	04' 09" west	57' 29" north
1. West Argyll Forest District (Lochgilphead District Office)	State	52,173	05' 27" west	56' 04" north
2. Tay Forest District (Inver, Dunkeld District Office)	State	31,057	03' 36" west	56' 37" north
3. Moray and Aberdeenshire Forest District (Huntly District Office)	State	51,627	02' 48" west	57' 30" north
4. North Highland Forest District (Dornoch District Office)	State	48,636	04' 02" west	57' 49" north
5. Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District (Smithton, Inverness District Office)	State	47,992	04' 08" west	57' 29" north
6. Lochaber Forest District (Fort William District Office)	State	23,993	05' 03" west	56' 51" north
7. Cowal & Trossachs Forest District (Aberfoyle District Office)	State	30,427	04' 20" west	56' 14" north
8. Galloway Forest District (Newton Stewart District Office)	State	77,907	04' 32" west	54' 57" north
9. Dumfries & Borders Forest District (Ae District Office)	State	48,524	02' 31" west	55' 28" north
10. Scottish Lowlands Forest District (Carluke District Office)	State	16,310	03' 52" west	55' 39" north
FCE Head Office, Bristol	State	N/a	02' 30" west	51' 24" north

Description of FMUs:				
Description	Ownership	Area (ha)	Longitude E/W	Latitude N/S
11. Sherwood & Lincs Forest District (Mansfield District Office)	State	14,178	01' 12" west	53' 09" north
12. East Anglia Forest District (Santon Downham District Office)	State	25,204	00' 24" east	52' 42" north
13. Northants Forest District (Fineshade District Office)	State	7,522	00' 36" west	52' 30" north
14. North East England (Kielder) Forest District (Hexham District Office)	State	72,467	02' 20" west	54' 57" north
15. North West England Forest District (Grizedale District Office)	State	17,143	03' 06" west	54' 21" north
16. North York Moors Forest District (Pickering District Office)	State	21,225	00' 45" west	54' 10" north
17. South East England Forest District (Farnham District Office)	State	22,087	00' 23" west	51' 07" north
18. New Forest Forest District (Lyndhurst District Office)	State	34,779	01' 37" west	50' 53" north
19. West Midlands Forest District (Rugely District Office)	State	12,491	01' 54" west	52' 51" north
20. Peninsula Forest District (Kennford District Office)	State	15,630	03' 39" west	50' 41" north
21. Forest of Dean Forest District (Coleford District Office)	State	15,900	02' 29" west	51' 45" north
FCW Head Office, Aberystwyth	State	N/a	04' 04" west	52' 24" north
22. Coed y Mynydd Forest District (Dolgellau District Office)	State	38,541	03' 51" west	52' 43" north
23. Coed y Gororau Forest District (Welshpool District Office)	State	22,484	03' 03" west	52' 42" north
24. Llanymddyfri Forest District (Llandovery District Office)	State	34,770	03' 48" west	51' 59" north
25. Coed y Cymoedd Forest District (Resolven District Office)	State	30,409	03' 49" west	51' 48" north
The National Arboreta (Westonbirt & Bedgebury)	State	242	02' 25" west 01' 10" east	51' 26" north 51' 10" north
TOTAL		1,050,117		

Size of FMUs:		
	Nr of FMUs	Area (ha)
Less than 100ha		
100 to 1000 ha in area	1	242
1001 to 10000 ha in area	1	7,522
More than 10000 ha in area	24	1,042,353
Total	26	1,050,117

Total Area in the Scope of the Certificate that is:	
	Area (ha)
Privately managed	
State Managed	1,050,117
Community Managed	

Composition of the Certified Forest(s)	
(For meanings of acronyms, see under 'List of High Conservation Values' below)	Area (ha)
Area of forest protected from commercial harvesting of timber and managed primarily for conservation objectives – Forest SAC, SPA, SSSI, ASNW*, Natural Reserves (as per UKWAS definition, both designated & candidate), (true ASNW*, not inc. PAWS)	92,211
Area of forest protected from commercial harvesting of timber and managed primarily for production of NTFPs or services – n/a	N/a
Area of forest classified as “high conservation value forest” - Forest SAC, SPA, SSSI, ASNW, (true ASNW, not inc. PAWS)	79,169
Area of non-forest managed primarily for conservation objectives – Non-Forest SAC, SPA, SSSI	60,546
Total area of production forest (i.e. forest from which timber may be harvested) – inc. PAWS	716,950
Area of production forest classified as “plantation” – inc. PAWS	708,584
Area of production forest regenerated primarily by replanting – Primarily conifers	623,809
Area of production forest regenerate primarily by natural regeneration – Primarily broadleaves & CCF	72,858

List of High Conservation Values	
Description	Notes
The following are designations under EU conservation laws : SAC = Special Area of Conservation (Habitats & Species Directive) SPA = Special Protected Area (Birds Directive)	
The following is a designation under GB conservation law that offers statutory protection to habitats & species : SSSI = Site of Special Scientific Interest	
The following is not a legal designation but is a well recognised definition within the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) : ASNW = Ancient Semi Natural Woodland Woodland is referred to as ancient woodland when it has been in continuous existence since before 1600 AD in England, Wales and	The term ASNW is used to describe semi-natural*stands on ancient** woodland sites. Semi-natural* woodlands are woodlands which are comprised mainly

List of High Conservation Values	
Description	Notes
Northern Ireland, or since 1750 AD in Scotland.	<p>of locally native trees & shrubs, and have some structural characteristics of natural woodland.</p> <p>Ancient** woodland refers to the site of an ancient woodland irrespective of its current tree cover. Where the native tree cover has been felled (pre-certification) and replaced by planting of tree species not native to the site, it is referred to as a plantation on an ancient woodland site (PAWS).</p>

List of Timber Product Categories				
Product Class	Product Type	Trade Name	Category	Species (inc. potential)
Wood in the rough	Logs of coniferous wood	Sawlogs	Conifer	<i>Larix europaea</i> , <i>Larix leptolepis</i> , <i>Larix x eurolepis</i> , <i>Picea abies</i> , <i>Picea sitchensis</i> , <i>Pinus contorta</i> , <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> , <i>Pinus nigra var.maritima</i> , <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> , <i>Taxus baccata</i> , <i>Thuja plicata</i> , <i>Tsuga heterophylla</i> .
Wood in the rough	Logs of coniferous wood	Fencing logs	Conifer	<i>Larix europaea</i> , <i>Larix leptolepis</i> , <i>Larix x eurolepis</i> , <i>Picea abies</i> , <i>Picea sitchensis</i> , <i>Pinus contorta</i> , <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> , <i>Pinus nigra var.maritima</i> , <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> , <i>Thuja plicata</i> , <i>Tsuga heterophylla</i> .
Wood in the rough	Logs of coniferous wood	Logs for chips	Conifer	<i>Larix europaea</i> , <i>Larix leptolepis</i> , <i>Larix x eurolepis</i> , <i>Picea abies</i> , <i>Picea sitchensis</i> , <i>Pinus contorta</i> , <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> , <i>Pinus nigra var.maritima</i> , <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> , <i>Thuja plicata</i> , <i>Tsuga heterophylla</i> .
Wood in the rough	Logs of coniferous wood	Logs for pulp	Conifer	<i>Picea abies</i> , <i>Picea sitchensis</i> .
Wood in the rough	Logs of coniferous wood	Fuel / Firewood	Conifer	<i>Larix europaea</i> , <i>Larix leptolepis</i> , <i>Larix x eurolepis</i> , <i>Picea abies</i> , <i>Picea sitchensis</i> , <i>Pinus contorta</i> , <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> , <i>Pinus nigra</i>

List of Timber Product Categories				
Product Class	Product Type	Trade Name	Category	Species (inc. potential)
				<i>var.maritima, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla.</i>
Other products of wood	Residue of coniferous wood	Baled brash	Conifer	<i>Picea abies, Picea sitchensis, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pinus nigra var.maritima, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla.</i>
Other products of wood	Residue of coniferous wood	Round wood Stumps for wood fuel market	Conifer	<i>Larix europaea, Larix leptolepis, Larix x eurolepis, Picea abies, Picea sitchensis, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pinus nigra var.maritima, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla.</i>
Wood in the rough	Logs of deciduous broadleaves	Sawlogs	Deciduous (Hardwood)	<i>Acer platanoides, Acer pseudoplatanus, Alnus glutinosa, Betula pendula, Betula pubescens, Fagus sylvatica, Fraxinus excelsior, Prunus avium, Quercus robur, Quercus petraea, Ulmus glabra.</i>
Wood in the rough	Logs of deciduous broadleaves	Fuel / Firewood	Deciduous (Hardwood)	<i>Acer platanoides, Acer pseudoplatanus, Alnus glutinosa, Betula pendula, Betula pubescens, Fagus sylvatica, Fraxinus excelsior, Prunus avium, Quercus robur, Quercus petraea, Ulmus glabra.</i>
Wood in the rough	Logs of deciduous broadleaves	Round wood of small diameter for Coppice market, whose purchasers process into hurdle fencing or charcoal etc.	Deciduous (Hardwood)	<i>Corylus avellana</i>

Annual Timber Production			
Species (botanical name)	Species (common name)	Area (ha)	Maximum Annual Sustainable Yield (m ³)

			Projected	Actual
<i>Larix europaea, Larix leptolepis, Larix x eurolepis, Picea abies, Picea sitchensis, Pinus nigra var.maritima, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla, Acer pseudoplatanus, Fraxinus excelsior, Quercus robur</i>	Larches, Norway Spruce, Sitka spruce, Corsican Pine, Lodgepole Pine, Scots Pine, Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, Western Hemlock, Sycamore, Ash and Oak		5,486,196 +/- 5% over a 5 year period	5,242,213
Totals		1,050,117	5,486,196	5,242,213

Approximate Annual Commercial Production of Non-Timber-Forest-Products				
Product	Species		Unit of measure	Total units
	Botanical Name	Common Name)		
Venison (Deer meat)	Dama dama, Capreolus capreolus, Cervus elaphus, Sika nippon, Muntiacus muntjak	Fallow, Roe, Red, Sika and Muntjac		
			Carcass	30,000

2. COMPANY BACKGROUND

2.1 Ownership

The Forestry Commission (FC) forests are owned by the national governments on behalf of the public with the FC as the land managers.

The Forestry Commission is GB's state forestry organisation which is responsible for both regulation and administration of forestry in GB. (In Northern Ireland this is the responsibility of the Forest Service.)

The enterprise agency of the Forestry Commission also manages the FC's state owned forests. In parallel with political devolution in the UK, it has devolved into each of the three countries constituting Great Britain, as Forestry Commission (Enterprise) Scotland, Forestry Commission (Enterprise) England and Forestry Commission (Enterprise) Wales. The individual country enterprise agencies are now also known as Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES), Forestry Commission England (FES) and Forestry Commission Wales (FCW).

The FC GB head office is in Edinburgh and the respective head offices for the enterprise agencies are located in Inverness (Scotland), Bristol (England) and Aberystwyth (Wales).

The FC's enterprise agencies have a wide range of management objectives including economic, environmental and social benefits for the nations of GB. In addition to the production of timber, they seek to support the rural economy. Environmentally, they are charged with protecting areas of high biodiversity & conservation value including both habitat and species management. Generally, they pursue enhancement of forest environmental values at all levels. Socially, they provide a wide range of recreation opportunities that includes public access to all the FC owned woods. This social aspect has now extended to woodlands in urban environments. Each FC country has refined its own individual management objectives which relate to their respective individual national forestry strategies.

FC Scotland (FCS) is therefore part of the Forestry Commission and serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government and is responsible to Scottish Ministers. Its operating arm in managing the national forest estate of Scotland is Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES).

FES is responsible for managing the public forest estate in Scotland – with an area of more than 660,000 hectares. It is the biggest single producer of raw timber and is also the single largest outdoor recreation provider in Scotland.

FES will contribute to the seven key themes of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS) – ‘Forests for Scotland’, namely :

- Climate Change – Using forestry, and adapting forestry practices, to help reduce the impact of climate change and help Scotland adapt to its changing climate.
- Timber – Maximise economic and productive output from Scotland’s increasing sustainable timber resource.
- Business Development – Strengthening the forestry sector through business development to underpin sustainable forest management and support economic growth and employment across Scotland.
- Community Development – Improving the quality of life and well-being of people by supporting community development across Scotland. Involving communities in the management and ownership of forests in Scotland.
- Access and Health – Making access to, and enjoyment of, woodlands easier for everyone to help improve physical and mental health in Scotland.
- Environmental Quality – Protecting the environmental quality of our natural resources (water, soil and air), contributing to and improving our scenery, and helping to make the most of our unique historic environment.
- Biodiversity – Helping to restore, maintain and enhance Scotland’s biodiversity, and increasing awareness and enjoyment of it.

FC England (FCE) is therefore part of the Forestry Commission and is also part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). FCE serves as the forestry department of the Westminster Parliament, advising on and delivering England’s woodland and forestry policies. FCE’s enterprise agency is responsible for managing the public forest estate in England – with an area of more than 250,000 hectares which includes 19% of England’s woodlands. It is also the single largest outdoor recreation provider in England.

FCE will contribute to the five aims of the English Forestry Strategy – ‘Strategy for England’s Trees, Woods and Forests (ETWF)’, namely :

- Sustainable Resource - To provide and protect a sustainable resource of trees, woods and forests in places where they can contribute most to society.
- Climate Change – to ensure that existing and newly planted trees, woods and forests are resilient to the impacts of climate change, play a role in adapting rural and urban environments to those impacts and contribute to their mitigation.
- Natural Environment – To protect and enhance the environmental resources of water, soil, air, biodiversity and landscapes (both woodland and non-woodland) and the cultural and amenity values of trees and woodlands.
- Quality of Life – To increase the contribution that trees, woods and forests make to the quality of life for those living in, and working in or visiting, England.
- Business and Markets – To improve the competitiveness of woodland businesses and promote the development of new or improved markets for sustainable woodland products and ecosystem services where this will deliver identifiable public benefits, nationally or locally, including the reduction of carbon emissions.

FC Wales (FCW) is therefore part of the Forestry Commission and is the Welsh Assembly Government's Department of forestry directorate and is responsible to Welsh Ministers. Its operating arm in managing the national forest estate of Wales is Forestry Commission Wales (enterprise agency) (FCW).

FCW is responsible for managing the public forest estate in Wales – with an area of more than 125,000 hectares. It is the biggest single producer of raw timber and is also the single largest outdoor recreation provider in Wales.

FCW will contribute to the five key themes of the Welsh Forestry Strategy – 'Woodlands for Wales', namely :

- Welsh woodlands and trees.
- Responding to climate change :- Establishment and silviculture ; Tree protection and health ; Renewable energy.
- Woodlands for people :- Public involvement and enterprise ; Recreation and access ; Woodland based learning and sector skills ; Urban woodlands and trees.
- Developing a competitive and integrated forest sector :- Promotion of timber.
- Improving environmental quality:- Restoration and management of native woodlands and open habitats ; Site based biodiversity, heritage and landscape.

2.2 Company Key Objectives – FC GB country enterprise agencies

Objective	Notes
Economic	
Certification - Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FES's woodland and its forest products.	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
Business – Maintain 3.4 million m3 of timber to market each year – promoting investment and growth in industry ; Develop a more efficient and competitive timber supply chain ; Facilitate the development of markets for forest products ; Other action targets include - plant improved stock to maximise production of quality sawlogs, monitor stocking densities, thinning plans, assist Forest Research in improving tree breeding, develop sea & rail transport, utilise type pressure control systems in timber haulage ; increase the area of broadleaf woodland for hardwood timber production and improve hardwood timber production forecasting, seek to minimise red tape for contractors ; increase the percentage of revenue generated from non-timber sales	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
Partnerships - Facilitate rural business diversification and development ; Revise a marketing strategy for recreation / tourism leisure products ; Increase the contribution of forestry to tourism, inc. increase the area of woodland managed using low impact silvicultural systems ; Support the national Timber Transport Forum ; Other action targets include - continue with forest tourism developments, e.g. 'Go Ape', facilitate the development of adventure and wildlife tourism, capture the full economic potential of mountain biking and develop other world class sporting facilities in forests, support partnerships that contribute to urban greenspace projects,	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
Financial – To manage the public forest estate within an agreed net funding target ; Continue the repositioning programme of land disposals to help support and increase public benefits from the estate ; Further develop Accounting by Objectives, the FES's new accounts management programme.	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
Social	
Certification – Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FES's woodland and its forest products.	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency

Objective	Notes
<p>Public Access, Recreation & Health – Enhance opportunities for health and enjoyment ; Complete the implementation plan for the ‘Forest for people : Access, recreation & tourism framework for the national forest estate’ ; Assist community participation ; identify existing FES woods that are suitable and propose acquisition of land/woodlands in support of the ‘Woods In and around Towns’ (WIAT) initiative ; promote access to woodlands via public transport ; develop a programme of modernisation of key recreation infrastructure ; engage with sport and leisure groups to formulate concordats ; complete the health & safety review of the management of recreation facilities ; work with access authorities and Scottish Natural Heritage on promoting the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and the designation of core paths ; address the Disability Discrimination Act in a prioritised approach ; publish an interpretative strategy ; develop a ‘forest for health’ partnership programme as per the FCS health strategy ; support development of the FCS website to promote physical activity opportunity</p>	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
<p>Local Community Benefits – Facilitate provision of affordable housing ; publish Forest District Strategic Plans showing how each District intends to contribute to local sustainable development, increase the number of community groups involved in owning or managing woodland, support creation of woodland crofts ; develop an over-arching strategy for managing FES forest on islands ; prepare a Gaelic language plan</p>	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
<p>Education, Training & Volunteers – Contribute to growth in learning and skills ; promote continuous improvements to the safety culture in the forestry sector ; provide opportunities for teenage school pupils to learn about forestry and employment opportunities ; contribute to the work of the Forest Education Initiative ; FES staff Training, inc, prepare a workforce development plan ; extend Modern Apprenticeships ; provide placements for students ; provide opportunities for volunteering on the national forest estate ; promote awareness of biodiversity amongst stakeholders and schools.</p>	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
<p>Heritage – Protect and promote the historic environment and cultural heritage ; together with Historic Scotland, develop guidance on planning and management of scheduled monuments and unscheduled monuments ; capture known unscheduled monuments in the FES GIS system and take expert advice on their care ; FES will employ an individual with cultural & heritage expertise to assist staff with management decisions ; provide opportunities for people to engage with the feeling of special places in the Scottish landscape inc. places made known through folklore.</p>	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
Environmental	
<p>Certification - Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FES’s woodland and its forest products.</p>	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
<p>Climate Change – Help to tackle climate change ; Working with the UK’s Forest Research Agency, prepare a climate change action plan for the public forest estate ; Implement developing opportunities for renewable energy on the public forest estate inc. wind farms and small scale hydro-electricity ; Other action targets include – supporting the developing biomass market with raw timber, sustainable office heating, piloting short rotation coppice & short rotation forestry for biomass, review species selection, increase the use of windthrow prediction tools, manage flood risk and slope stability issues, create 2,000 ha of new woodland each year, quantify carbon sequestered for all woodland, specify sustainability in all building tenders.</p>	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
<p>Habitats & Species – Help to protect and enhance biodiversity inc contribute to the delivery of the FCS plan ‘Woods for Nature – Our Biodiversity Programme’ ; Implement the new Practice Guide for Ancient and Native Woodland on the public estate and sustain the programme of PAWS restoration ; ensure that Water Framework Directive objectives are fully considered in the Forest Design Plan</p>	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency

Objective	Notes
process ; identify core areas of non-native invasive plant species and plan their removal ; work in partnership with other bodies to control introduced problem animals ; implement species action plans for capercaillie, black grouse, red squirrel, chequered skipper & pearl bordered fritillary butterflies and juniper ; review the potential of grazing to maintain woodland and open habitats ; expand priority open ground habitats at key locations identify native species stands that may be suitable as sources of native planting stock ; agree management with SNH of designated sites (inc. SSSIs and Natura sites) to assist in the delivery of the Scottish Government's targets for site condition ; take account of adjacent SSSIs and Natura sites in Forest Design Planning ; deliver commitments contained within the FCS publication, the 'Scottish Programme for Protected Woodland Sites' ; work with relevant organisations and neighbours to ensure integrated deer management plans and manage the FES estate to high standards in deer management practice ; develop a standard template for Forest District biodiversity plans and complete for each Forest District ; work closely with SNH on best practice moorland management ; identify important geodiversity sites.	
Tree Health – Continue management responses and working with the Forest Research Agency over the impact and control of Red Band Needle Blight and Great Spruce Bark Beetle, plus monitor Pine Lappet Moth. Develop a contingency plan for serious disease or pest outbreaks, fire or windthrow.	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency
EMS - Continue to monitor purchase of wood & timber to ensure it comes from legal and sustainable sources ; Work towards Environmental Management System (EMS) ISO 14001 certification for energy consumption reduction in buildings and reduce carbon emission from administrative travel. Prepare for external certification in 2010.	FC Scotland (FES) – enterprise agency

Objective	Notes
Economic	
Certification - Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FCE's woodland and its forest products.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Business - Bring 1.4 million m3 of timber to market – promoting investment and growth in industry ; Continue the programme of refurbishment and development of key visitor hubs on the public forest estate and pursue further business opportunities with Forest Holidays to diversify and enhance visitor experiences including new proposals for forest cabin sites.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Partnerships - Continue support for the England Forest Industries Partnership (EFIP) ; Take practical steps to help FCE business partners on the public forest estate through the current economic downturn.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Financial - To manage the public forest estate within an agreed net funding target ; Continue the programme of asset sales to help support and increase public benefits from the estate ; Further develop Accounting by Objectives, the FCE's new accounts management programme.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Review - Complete the study of the long-term sustainable role for the public forest estate, identifying changes to further improve its ability to deliver on the English Forestry Strategy – 'Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests (ETWF) – and other relevant Government objectives.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Social	

Objective	Notes
Certification - Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FCE's woodland and its forest products.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Public Access, Recreation & Health - Continue to improve the amount and quality of accessible woodland close to where people live within disadvantaged areas and encourage the development of public transport links ; Develop a methodology for measuring visits to and engagement with local woodland for quality of life ; Support the creation of an Urban Regeneration and Greenspace Partnership across Government and NGOs to encourage the development and utilisation of best practice and to raise awareness of the value of trees and woodlands in green infrastructure ; Use Active Woods to support the Change4life campaign ; Review cycling facilities on the public forest estate and develop partnerships with key cycling organisations ; Seek Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS) certification for 20 sites.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Education - Deliver the Education and Learning Strategy for the public forest estate ; Achieve the Learning Outside the Classroom quality badge on at least five FCE education sites.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Training & Volunteers - FCE Training – Revise and update the FCE Workforce Plan and continue to roll out Diversity training plus the Management Development Programme ; Develop with EFIP and other partners a pilot for woodland apprenticeships ; Establish a new strategic partnership and development framework to support volunteering on the public forest estate.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Heritage - Report on the condition of heritage assets on the public forest estate and develop a plan to reduce the number of 'at risk' assets.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Environmental	
Certification - Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FCE's woodland and its forest products.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Climate Change - Working with the UK's Forest Research Agency, prepare a climate change action plan for the public forest estate ; In liaison with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), prepare an implementation plan for developing opportunities for wind energy on the public forest estate.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Habitats & Species - Implement the new Practice Guide for Ancient and Native Woodland on the public estate and sustain the programme of PAWS restoration ; Develop a strategy for the restoration of open habitats from woodland on the public forest estate ; Identify priority areas and actions to conserve red squirrels, declining woodland birds and woodland butterflies.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
Tree Health – Continue management responses and working with the Forest Research Agency over the impact of Red Band Needle Blight on Corsican pine and other species.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency
EMS - Continue to monitor purchase of wood & timber to ensure it comes from legal and sustainable sources ; Work towards Environmental Management System (EMS) ISO 14001 certification for energy consumption reduction in buildings and reduce carbon emission from administrative travel. Prepare for external certification in 2010.	FC England (FCE) – enterprise agency

Objective	Notes
Economic	
Certification - Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FCW's woodland and its forest products.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Business – Market 700,000 m3 of timber each year, including	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency

Objective	Notes
making 80,000 m3 of woodfuel available for biofuel energy.	
Partnerships – Support the Wales Forest Business Partnership which aims to develop the timber market in Wales.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Financial – To manage the public forest estate within an agreed net funding target ; Further develop Accounting by Objectives, the FCW's new accounts management programme.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Social	
Certification – Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FCW's woodland and its forest products.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Public Access, Recreation & Health – Continue running 'Plant!', a scheme in partnership with the Woodland Trust for planting a tree for all new babies and adopted children in Wales, maintain recreation sites to a high standard, promote recreation opportunities in an inclusive way, develop an approach to dog walkers, identify how to improve access to woodland close to where people live.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Local Community Benefits – Take forward Pathfinder Projects – exploring the issues surrounding the transfer of management responsibility to community groups through leases or management agreements.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Education, Training & Volunteers – Provide at least 15,000 visits for children each year, provide training for educational professionals, continue to run Forest School programmes, support the FCW foundation modern apprentice scheme for seven apprentices.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Heritage – Contribute to the management of historic landscapes as well as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) and other sites of archaeological importance.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Environmental	
Certification - Continue to manage the public forest estate to the standard required under UKWAS to maintain the independent certification of FCW's woodland and its forest products.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Climate Change – Gradually reduce clear felling and increase thinning, increase species diversity, create 1,500 ha of new woodland over the next three years, develop woodfuel, community wind & hydropower schemes and facilitate the National Forest Estate Windfarm Programme.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Habitats & Species – Prioritise the removal of rhododendron from special sites for conservation, protect FCW woodland from browsing animals and help to develop a strategy for deer, plan and prioritise the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), restoring 1,000 ha to 50% native species over the next three years, update Ancient Woodland inventory information, monitor the condition of native woodlands and fulfil Biodiversity Action Plan reporting requirements, identify open habitats, like peat bogs, and plan their future as open areas, ongoing implementation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Biodiversity Framework, ensure all designated sites are well managed and have management plans in place.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
Tree Health – Continue management responses and working with the Forest Research Agency over the impact and control of Red Band Needle Blight and Great Spruce Bark Beetle, contribute to a strategic review of the health of Welsh trees and woodlands,	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency
EMS - Continue to monitor purchase of wood & timber to ensure it comes from legal and sustainable sources ; Work towards Environmental Management System (EMS) ISO 14001 certification for energy consumption reduction in buildings and reduce carbon emission from administrative travel. Prepare for external certification in 2010.	FC Wales (FCW) – enterprise agency

2.3 Company History

Initially, the FC was one GB wide organisation. The Forestry Commission of GB was established following the First World War in 1919, with the aims of establishing and maintaining adequate reserves of trees and production of timber, and of promoting the interests of British forestry. Due to the extent of deforestation from two world wars, there was an extensive need for re-afforestation with a consequent development, primarily of upland plantation forestry in the UK as the fertile lowlands were required for agricultural production.

More recently, the Forestry Commission GB reported to the Forestry Ministers, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Wales jointly, until July 1999.

In April 2003, the Forestry Commission restructured itself following a wide ranging review of the administrative arrangements for delivering the UK's sustainable forestry policies and international forestry commitments in Scotland, England and Wales. These new arrangements took account of political devolution in the UK, with national government developments such as the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government.

2.4 Organisational Structure

There remains a GB Director General and a GB Board of Commissioners to link the whole structure together in GB terms and deal with GB issues. Similarly, there are shared GB services and support staff such as GIS and Financial Accounting. There are also International Policy and UKWAS staff together with Communications, Safety, Training, Personnel and Business services. There is also a Plant Health unit and the Forest Research Agency.

The existing separate arrangements in Northern Ireland continue under the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARDNI).

The Forest Enterprise Scotland Chief Executive with responsibilities for Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) is based at the headquarters office in Inverness. FES is Scotland's major public sector forestry management organisation that includes the growing of timber but with a modern wide ranging social and environmental remit. Any other public sector forestry management is minor in relative scale and is normally restricted to conservation driven objectives.

As well as the Inverness headquarters there is also a south Scotland management supporting office in Dumfries. Both these management offices have senior management, policy development, timber marketing, management support and administration staff.

There are 10 Forest District offices covering forest management throughout Scotland, each with a district staff and area operations staff responsible for timber harvesting and restocking, together with delivering environmental and social programmes. The districts are referred to as follows : West Argyll ; Tay ; Moray & Aberdeenshire ; North Highland ; Inverness, Ross & Skye ; Lochaber ; Cowal & Trossachs ; Galloway ; Dumfries & Borders ; Scottish Lowlands.

The FC Chief Executive – England, with overall responsibilities for Forestry Commission England (FCE) is based in Bristol. The enterprise agency of FCE is England's major public sector forestry management organisation that includes the growing of timber but with a modern wide ranging social and environmental remit. Any other public sector forestry management is minor in relative scale and is normally restricted to conservation driven objectives.

The head office of the FCE's enterprise agency is also in Bristol in South West England and with a North England management office in York. Both these management offices have senior management, policy development, timber marketing, management support and administration staff. These two offices link together under the direction of the Chief Executive based in Bristol.

There are 11 Forest District offices covering forest management throughout England, each with a district staff responsible for timber harvesting and restocking, together with delivering environmental and social programmes. The districts are referred to as follows : North West England ; West Midlands ; Forest of Dean ; Peninsula ; New Forest ; North East England (Kielder) ; North York Moors ; Sherwood & Lincs ; East Anglia ; Northants ; South East England.

In addition the national arboreta of Westonbirt and Bedgebury are part of FCE's management responsibility.

The Forestry Commission Wales Chief Executive with responsibilities for the enterprise part of Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) is based at the headquarters office in Aberystwyth. FCW is Wales' major public sector forestry management organisation that includes the growing of timber but with a modern wide ranging social and environmental remit. Any other public sector forestry management is minor in relative scale and is normally restricted to conservation driven objectives.

There are 4 Forest District offices covering forest management throughout Wales, each with a district staff and Wales operations staff responsible for timber harvesting (Wales Harvesting and Marketing – WHaM) and restocking/planting (Wales Silvicultural Operations – WSO) covering their area, together with delivering environmental and social programmes. The districts are referred to as follows : Coed y Mynydd ; Coed y Gororau ; Llanymddyfri ; Coed y Cymoedd.

2.5 Ownership and Use Rights

The Forestry Commission (FC) forests are owned by the national governments on behalf of the public with the FC as the land managers. In the case of FES, the government is the Scottish Government. In the case of FCW, the government is the Welsh Assembly Government. In the case of FCE, the government remains the Westminster Parliament, London

The legal access situation has changed relatively recently in all three GB countries. The general thrust is to legally increase the public's opportunities for access subject to following a formalised code of responsible behaviour.

It has been generally accepted in the past in Scotland that the general public is at liberty to walk over any land provided they do so without causing damage to crops, fences and wildlife. This applied to the whole country with the exception of private gardens or grounds that form the curtilage of a dwelling house or other private residence.

The devolved Scottish Government passed part 1 of The Land Reform (Scotland) Act in 2003. This law came into force in 2004 and gives everyone statutory rights of non-motorised access to land and inland water, subject to responsible use and respect for land management practice & employment. The 'Scottish Outdoor Access Code' is the official advice that supports the Act.

FES fully endorses the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and provides extensive public access and facilities throughout its forests.

In England and Wales the public access situation in the past has been complex with many restrictions on public access to private land.

In England and Wales the areas being opened up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 ('CROW') are usually mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land. The new rights cover most recreation activities carried out on foot, including walking, sightseeing, bird watching, climbing and running. Walking dogs must be on a lead in certain situations. The new right of open access does not include cycling, horse riding, driving a vehicle or camping unless already permitted. Gardens, parks and arable land are excluded together with closures and restrictions by farmers and landowners for up to 28 days for any reason or long term if necessary for land management, safety or fire prevention reasons. The "Countryside Code" launched in July 2004 is the official advice that supports the CROW Act.

These new CROW rights came into effect during 2004 / 2005. Some landowners are dedicating areas for permanent open access to which the Statutory Right would not otherwise apply, e.g. dedication of freehold woodland by FCE.

FCW has implemented dedication for permanent open access under the CROW Act.

Therefore, the general public have public access rights to FCE managed land underpinned by statute law and access codes, i.e. Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) / Countryside Code 2004 in England. FCE promote public access and recreation on FCE land in an extensive way.

2.6 Other Land Uses

Other than extensive recreational use by the public, the only other permitted land uses are for deer and game management by lessees, authorised by FES, FCE, FCW or, development with planning approval through the planning law process.

2.7 Non-certified Forests

All FES, FCE and FCW woodlands and forests are certified, there are no non-certified forests.

3. FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

3.1 Bio-physical setting

Britain has a relatively poor native tree flora of 32 species, including only 3 conifers – *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine), *Taxus baccata* (Yew) and *Juniperus communis* (Juniper). In addition, many exotic species have been introduced since Roman times, with large numbers of exotic conifer species introduced for commercial forestry purposes during the twentieth century.

Approximately 10% of Britain's land area carries tree cover (15% of Scotland, compared to 7% in England). This is an increase since the beginning of the 20th century, when forest cover stood at approximately 5%. However, this increase is composed predominantly of recent plantation forests, largely with exotic species. The UK has no remaining natural forests, but ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW) make up approximately 1% of land area. Since 1945 almost 50% of ancient semi-natural woodland has disappeared.

Large areas of degraded upland areas have been established during the last 50 years as even aged plantations of exotic species such as Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). Other exotics managed are Corsican Pine (*Pinus nigra var. maritima*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*), Larches (*Larix europaea*, *Larix leptolepis*, *Larix x eurolepis*), Western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and the true firs (*Abies* spp.). Extensive planting of Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) producing similar even aged plantations has also taken place.

Geography:

FES's, FCE's and FCW's woods and forests are located throughout Scotland, England and Wales mainly on upper to lower ground of limited value to agriculture. Soils tend to be either thin or poorly drained with predominant soil types being podsoles, gleys and peaty gleys with occasional brown forest soils. Given the UK's position on the western seaboard of Europe, the climate is often wet and windy, particularly in the west and north.

Ecology:

The woods and forests of the UK are cool temperate and, apart from relatively small areas of indigenous forest, are derived from plantations created on previously grazed heathlands and grasslands that have remained free of natural forests for several centuries.

Soils:

Geology in the UK is complex and has resulted in a very wide range of soil types. However, most upland forestry is on acidic podsoles, gleys and peats.

3.2 History of use

Britain's forests have been steadily denuded since the Bronze Age through both clearance and use of timber. As a result, by the beginning of the twentieth century very little forest remained. In response to this, the Forestry Commission was established in 1919 with the aims of establishing and maintaining adequate reserves of trees and production of timber, and of promoting the interests of British forestry.

The Forestry Commission had an active policy of reforestation, particularly from 1945 onwards, acquiring land and planting it mainly with exotic plantation species. In addition, it was also responsible for providing incentives for private forestry, aided in the 1970s and 1980s by tax advantages. These factors resulted in the planting of predominantly exotic plantations in both the public and private sector.

By the 1980s there was increasing concern about wider forest goods and services, in particular landscape, recreation and biodiversity. As a result, incentives have been increasingly slanted towards encouraging multiple use forestry and increasing use of native species.

Approximately two-thirds of the UK's woodland resource is privately owned, often as part of mixed estates or farms. Few private ownerships exceed 1000 ha. Most commercial private forestry is based on plantations. In relatively recent decades (before certification), plantation crops of broadleaves or conifers have been established on many ancient woodland sites.

Adjacent land uses primarily include adjacent woods and forests, upland sheep farms, mixed enterprise lowland farms and areas of open moorland, hills and mountains. Deer population density varies dependent upon habitat and neighbouring landowners' deer management objectives.

3.3 Planning process

Permission from the Forestry Commission (regulatory authority) is required for the felling of all trees in Great Britain (with certain limited exceptions). In each country the FC (regulatory authority) now regulates and approves the public sector felling proposals of the FC (enterprise agencies).

Various planning methods are used, depending on factors such as scale, environmental sensitivity and landscape aesthetics. Environmental Impact Assessment appraisals are used to assess large scale afforestation / deforestation proposals where required by the FC. Felling and thinning is regulated by either a Felling Licence (subject to Forestry Act 1967) or combined with a grant contract for the private sector.

The FC frequently requires the production of a forest design plan prior to giving permission for clear felling, restocking and large scale afforestation over a significant time period. The normal method of such approval for the enterprise divisions of each country is via a 'Forest Design Plan' (FDP). FDPs are designed to cover at least a period of 20 years and often extend in outline for much more. FDPs are normally reviewed internally every 5 years and require renewed approval by the FC every 10 years.

The FC regulates felling in private woodlands by granting a licence, approving a plan associated with a grant scheme (generally Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) or new devolved country variants : e.g. in Scotland what was until recently, the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme, which has now been integrated with delivery of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) : e.g. in England now called the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) : e.g. in Wales, the 'Better Woodlands for Wales' (BWW) scheme ; or approving a long-term forest plan for larger forests. New grants will include financial assistance with management planning. Most planting (and re-establishment through replanting and natural regeneration) on private land takes place with the assistance of grants made by the Forestry Commission or DARDNI (also generally of WGS type).

Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS etc.) type country variant contracts identify overall management objectives and include a basic schedule of operations, describing the management activities planned over a 5-year period. Prescriptions are described in general terms for compartments. These documents often form the basis for the management plan.

All FC business planning is reviewed annually but is based on a 3 year business plan cycle linked to a 3 year national Corporate Plan consistent with the 3 year cycle of government funding. This applies to all three GB countries who have their own Corporate Plans and separate budgets.

3.4 Harvest and regeneration

Clear felling followed by restocking via planting is the method generally employed for upland plantation management in Great Britain. Felling coupe size and shape are expected to comply with Forest Landscape Design Guidelines. Low impact and irregular systems via natural regeneration are invariably used in ASNWs.

Mechanised and motor-manual short wood harvesting systems are normal but with pole length and some whole tree methods where appropriate. Mechanised extraction methods include forwarding as normal but also with skidding and cable crane utilised depending on site conditions and topography. Mechanical harvester felling followed by mechanical forwarder extraction is now the norm for most UK conditions.

In general, the aim, for commercial objectives, is to grow crops to age of Maximum Mean Annual Increment (Max MAI) and then to fell. However, restructuring and the establishment of retentions as part of an agreed forest design plan or private sector WGS type contract may involve felling at ages other than Max MAI. Managers use local experience or mensuration techniques to assess yield forecast of thinning or felling before harvesting and thereafter monitor actual yields with compartment or per hectare records being kept for future reference.

A range of silvicultural practices are employed in the UK, including clearfelling, group felling and retention of trees beyond economic rotation age. Continuous cover forestry systems are being used in both semi-natural woodlands and are being increasingly tried in windfirm conifer plantations.

Thinning regimes involve a combination of systematic rack removal and selective thinning to favour better timber quality trees until management options become available such as for continuous cover. Thinning is generally to marginal intensity unless the aim is to restore the ground flora, in which case thinning intensity may be increased.

Restocking and afforestation in the UK is generally by planting. Natural regeneration is employed where realistic and is used more frequently for semi-natural woodland. Ground preparation is often carried out using mounding or scarification. Insect attack and weed competition are mitigated by ground preparation techniques and choice of plant size. Use of chemical insecticides and herbicides are used when required, if there is no realistic non-chemical alternative. UKWAS requires a general policy aim to reduce chemical use in this context. Burning of lop and top following felling is much less common but may be justified on some sites, e.g. for rabbit control.

In the UK the building of new forest roads and quarrying for such roads is governed by Environmental Impact Assessment regulations. This process is administered by the Forestry Commission as part of the familiar forestry operation approval process.

Fencing is often necessary to protect against stock, deer and rabbits, coupled with control of game and pest species by shooting.

Afforestation of new native woodlands on semi-natural degraded sites usually involves planting with low impact ground preparation preferred and associated maintenance.

FES employs all these techniques through engaging contactors or via supervision of staff.

3.5 Monitoring processes

Where a woodland is subject to a felling licence or an approved forest design plan (or WGS type country variant contract in the private sector), implementation of the prescribed management is checked by the Forestry Commission (authority division) at a sample of sites. Other monitoring may be carried out on an *ad hoc* basis by statutory bodies or conservation NGOs where there are particular features of interest.

Internal auditing inc. UKWAS compliance is normally carried out by central office staff with knowledge of certification and experience of audits. In addition, each forest district manager is responsible for monitoring on-going activities on sites under their management.

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

4.1 Social aspects

Number of own staff in FES as a whole organisation (approx. full time equivalents)	735
Number of own staff in FCE as a whole organisation (approx. full time equivalents)	701

Number of own staff in FCW as a whole organisation (approx. full time equivalents)	167
Number of contract workers	Variable, depending upon work loads
Minimum daily wage for agricultural/forestry workers	>UK Legally defined minimum wage
Infant mortality rates (under 5 years)	Extremely low
Proportion of workers employed from the local population (in terms of their living locations).	High

The social conditions in the main commercially productive conifer forest areas of the UK are similar, involving mainly Scotland, Wales, parts of Northern England and Northern Ireland. The rural economy is fragile within them all. Tourism is particularly important and landscape values are correspondingly high in many but not all parts of these areas. Whilst tourism can be important, woodlands in the other areas of the UK are equally important for economic regeneration policies and their amenity and recreational value to nearby urban populations (e.g. Scottish central belt, Southern England).

The UK now has a minimum wage structure and health and education standards are relatively high in global terms and comparable with the rest of Western Europe. Infant mortality is extremely low and literacy rates are very high.

The UK timber production and processing industry is under economic pressure from the relatively high currency value of UK sterling and the impact of timber imports. The increase in UK landfill tax has meant that recycling of paper and card waste products has greatly increased, resulting in less demand for raw timber for these products. To an extent, this is now being offset by an increase in demand for small roundwood for woodfuel. Similarly, market pressure from imports has reduced on a relative basis due to changes in supply conditions within Russia and Scandinavia. However, the overall economic situation referred to as the 'global credit crunch' is affecting the UK economy like others and this is having a serious impact upon UK demand and with a consequent downturn in prices. The UK timber market is still heavily affected by the building trade and any global economic downward pressure which affects building activity translates to the same pressure on timber prices. Whilst the medium to long term outlook is modestly optimistic, such current fluctuations are all representative of the fragility of the UK rural economy where farming is also under serious economic pressure.

Issues relating to amenity, specifically access, and recreation are of major importance in the overall context of rural land management in the UK.

Where Forest Plans are prepared, a "scoping" meeting may be held with statutory consultees and local representatives to discuss proposals and exchange information prior to the preparation of the plan.

It is generally accepted in Scotland that the general public is at liberty to walk over any land provided he or she does so without causing damage to crops, fences and wildlife. This applies to the whole country with the exception of private gardens or grounds that form the curtilage of a dwelling house or other private residence.

In England and Wales the situation is more complex with many restrictions on public access to private land although the situation is currently changing with increasing legislative attention to public access in the countryside.

FES encourages public access on the land that it owns. In addition to recent access legislation brought in during 2003/2004, (Land Reform Act – Scottish Outdoor Access Code etc.), long established public rights of way exist in some woodlands and are fully respected.

FCE encourages public access on the land that it owns. In addition to recent access legislation brought in during 2004/2005 (CROW Act), long established public rights of way exist in some woodlands and are fully respected.

FCW encourages public access on the land that it owns.

The UK population includes large numbers of different nationalities and cultural groups, many of which the UK economy is dependent upon. Generally they are closely and intimately integrated into British society and many families have spent several generations in the UK.

4.2 Environmental aspects

The UK has approximately 2 million hectares of forest of which 575,000 hectares are estimated to be on Ancient woodland sites. Approximately 300,000 hectares of this can be described as Ancient and Semi Natural (ASNW) woodland, the balance having been converted into plantation.

Ancient woodlands are those that have had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD in England and Wales, and since 1750 AD in Scotland. The term ASNW covers all stands of ancient origins that do not obviously originate from planting. This may include stands with naturalised alien species such as sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) or beech (*Fagus sylvatica*).

ASNW represent the least modified semi-natural woodlands in Britain; they represent an unbroken link with the natural forests that developed after the end of the last glaciation, some 8,000 years ago. For example, native pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), or Caledonian pine forests, as they are often called, have been shown to contain several sub-populations of Scots pine that collectively form a genetically and biologically distinct western outlier of the natural distribution of this species. The pine-dominated Caledonian forest may once have covered more than 1.5 million hectares of the Highlands but the present area of native pinewood is now thought to be only 16,000 hectares of which more than half is scattered pine and virtually all of it in Scotland.

Areas within woodlands of particular significance for biological or geological reasons are given statutory designations as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and have statutory protection.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) includes specific guidance and costed targets for a wide range of species and habitats that are the subject of Species Action Plans (SAPs) and Habitat Action Plans (HAPs). Individual local authorities have developed their own Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

The Forestry Commission and the Forest Service have developed the UK Forestry Standard and has published 'Guidelines' for Nature Conservation, Archaeology, Recreation, Landscape Soil and Water.

Forest management is expected to meet the requirements of these guidelines and standards. There are also complex laws relating to the conservation of many species and habitats in the UK (e.g. The Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981).

4.3 Administration, Legislation and Guidelines

The Forestry Commission, separately in Scotland, Wales and England, implements forestry regulation in Great Britain. (Regulation in Northern Ireland is controlled separately through the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARDNI)).

The primary piece of legislation relating to forest management is the Forestry Act 1967. With certain exceptions, mainly relating to non-commercial situations, it is illegal to fell trees in Great Britain without the prior approval of the Forestry Commission (regulatory authority). Permission is granted through a felling licence, normally conditional on regeneration or replanting, or through approval of a plan of operations for the site. The latter is an integral component of grant aid provided under the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS).

Following recent political devolution in the UK the Forestry Commission has similarly devolved its structure and operations. Its role as a regulatory authority remains very similar in each of Scotland, England and Wales.

Approval of grant aid under the WGS is also conditional upon compliance with a range of Forestry Commission environmental guidelines, which aim to ensure that forestry operations are conducted in a manner consistent with the maintenance, protection and/or enhancement of soil, water, landscape, biodiversity and heritage values.

Where felling licences or plans of operations affect areas designated for nature conservation or landscape value, there is an obligation to consult the relevant statutory bodies prior to approval.

The other major aspect of legal control is health and safety. The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations, 1992, enforced in Great Britain by the Health and Safety Executive, regulate this. The required safety standards for forestry operations are contained in a number of Safety Guides, produced by the Arboricultural and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG) to the Health & Safety Executive.

The local standard used for this assessment was the FSC endorsed UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) standard for which the first edition was approved in 1999 and the second in 2006. The UKWAS reflects the FSC UK standard and is now accepted as the forest management certification standard in the UK. The UKWAS was used in conjunction with the SGS QUALIFOR Programme. In addition, the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard were also taken into account.

The UK Forestry Standard, developed by the GB Forestry Commission and the Forest Service, is underpinned by a series of 'Guidelines' covering Archaeology, Landscape, Nature Conservation, Recreation, Soils and Water. Forest Practice Guides Nos. 1-8 also covers guidance for the management of semi-natural woodlands in the UK. It is a requirement of UKWAS that this guidance is adhered to.

Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the UK government became a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Statement on Climatic Change, and adopted the declaration on Sustainable Development and the Statement of Forest Principles. This led to the publication of Sustainable Forestry: the UK Programme and Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan, which committed the UK to the pursuit of sustainable forestry and the conservation of biological diversity.

The UK programme on forestry evolved as European countries signed the resolutions proposed by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe at Helsinki in 1993 (the Helsinki Resolutions). These resolutions provided guidance for countries on sustainable forestry management, conserving biodiversity, co-operating with countries with transitional economies and managing forests in relation to climatic change. The UKWAS adopts the principles and requirements laid down in these international agreements.

The Habitats and Birds Directives provide for a network of protected areas (Natura 2000) in the European Union and require member states to establish such sites and to develop systems to prevent damage to certain endangered species. This legislation is translated into UK law in the 'Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994'. The process of selection and approval of Natura 2000 sites in the UK is now complete. Preceding Natura 2000, the UK Government's policies on nature conservation have been largely implemented through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which established a system of designated sites known as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or (ASSIs in Northern Ireland - Areas of Special Scientific Interest) and provided for the protection and conservation of many UK species and habitats. The UKWAS requires participants to meet all of these requirements.

There are many other laws relating to the protection and welfare of animals. Those of most importance to forest certification concern anti-poaching legislation and close seasons for hunting game species, including the Deer Act Scotland 1996 and the Deer Act England and Wales 1963. Environmental Impact Assessment legislation covers all deforestation, afforestation and road building proposals that might have a significant environmental impact.

The following table lists the key national legislation, regulations, guidelines and codes of best practice that are relevant to forestry in the commercial, environmental and social sectors. This list does not purport to be comprehensive, but indicates information that is key to the forestry sector.

Legislation and regulation	Notes
Forestry Act, 1967	
Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974	
Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations, 1992,	
Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994	UK interpretation of the Habitats and Birds Directives, which provide for a network of protected areas (Natura

	2000) in the European Union and require member states to establish such sites and to develop systems to prevent damage to certain endangered species.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981,	This established a system of designated sites known as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and provided for the protection and conservation of many UK species and habitats. The UKWAS requires participants to meet all of these requirements.
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004	Provision to further the conservation of biodiversity.
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	In essence, every public authority must conserve biodiversity, as per the UN environmental programme on Biological Diversity of 1992.
Deer Act Scotland 1996	
Deer Act England and Wales 1963	
Environmental Impact Assessment	This legislation covers all deforestation, afforestation and road building proposals that might have a significant environmental impact.
Guidelines and Codes of Best Practice	Notes
UK Forestry Standard	Developed by the GB Forestry Commission and the Forest Service of Northern Ireland
Forestry Commission / Forest Service Guidelines covering Archaeology, Landscape, Nature Conservation, Recreation, Soils and Water.	It is a requirement of UKWAS that this guidance is adhered to.
Forest Practice Guides Nos. 1-8 for the management of semi-natural woodlands in the UK.	It is a requirement of UKWAS that this guidance is adhered to.
Safety Guides	Produced by the Arboricultural and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG) to the Health & Safety Executive.
FSC endorsed UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS)	UKWAS standard was approved in 1999 and revised in 2006.

5. CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT, HARVESTING, SILVICULTURE AND MONITORING

The following table shows significant changes that took place in the management, monitoring, harvesting and regeneration practices of the certificate holder over the certificate period.

Description of Change	Notes
SURVEILLANCE 1	
SURVEILLANCE 2	

Description of Change	Notes
SURVEILLANCE 3	
SURVEILLANCE 4	

6. PREPARATION FOR THE EVALUATION

6.1 Schedule

This Assessment follows two previous five-year periods of certification (Main Assessment in June 1999, Re-Assessment in 2004). Previous surveillance assessments, since 1999, have examined the organisation’s management systems and identified any gaps that might affect maintenance of certification. Information from previous assessments was used to plan this assessment. Key stakeholders were identified.

The assessment was carried out during the period 13,14,15,16 Jul 2009 (FCW) 19,20,24,25,26,27 Aug, 2 Oct 2009 (FES) 7,8,14,15,16,17 Sep, 12 Oct 2009 (FCE). Detailed itineraries are available.

6.2 Team

The table below shows the team that conducted the main evaluation and the independent specialist(s) that were selected to review the main evaluation report before certification is considered.

Evaluation Team	Forest Enterprise Scotland
Team Leader & Lead Auditor	Has a BSc degree in forestry and other land management qualifications, over 30 years experience in forestry, mainly in the UK. Has over 400 days FSC auditing experience including overseas. UK & Eire programme manager for SGS forest management certification.
Auditor	Has a Forester’s certificate, a 1 st class honours degree in ecology and a Ph D in wildlife management, with 40 years experience of temperate forest ecology in the UK. Has over 200 days auditing experience including overseas.
Auditor	Has a BSc equivalent degree in biology, over 20 years experience in forestry, mainly in Sweden. Has extensive FSC auditing experience including overseas. Lead auditor for SGS forest management and chain of custody certification in Sweden. Fluent in English. Qualified and experienced ISO 14001 auditor.
Auditor	Has a MSc degree in forestry and other land management qualifications with over 20 years experience in forestry certification in the UK and overseas.
Specialist	Has a MSc degree in forestry and other land management qualifications with over 20 years experience in forestry management in the UK. Trainee auditor with over 20 days experience inc. six previous audits’ shadow attendance experience and working as a specialist (Red Squirrel ecology and ISO 14001 trained).

Evaluation Team	Forestry Commission England
Team Leader & Lead Auditor	Has a BSc degree in forestry and other land management qualifications, over 30 years experience in forestry, mainly in the UK. Has over 400 days FSC auditing experience including overseas. UK & Eire programme manager for SGS forest management certification.
Auditor	Has a Forester’s certificate, a 1 st class honours degree in ecology and a Ph D in wildlife

	management, with 40 years experience of temperate forest ecology in the UK. Has over 200 days auditing experience including overseas.
Auditor	Has a MSc degree in forestry and other land management qualifications with over 20 years experience in forestry certification in the UK and overseas.
Specialist	Has a MSc degree in forestry and other land management qualifications with over 20 years experience in forestry management in the UK. Trainee auditor with 18 days experience inc. six previous audits' shadow attendance experience and working as a specialist (Red Squirrel ecology and ISO 14001 trained).

Evaluation Team	Forestry Commission Wales
Team Leader & Lead Auditor	Has a BSc degree in forestry and other land management qualifications, over 30 years experience in forestry, mainly in the UK. Has over 400 days FSC auditing experience including overseas. UK & Eire programme manager for SGS forest management certification.
Specialist	Has a MSc degree in forestry and other land management qualifications with over 20 years experience in forestry management in the UK. Trainee auditor with over 20 days experience inc. six previous audits' shadow attendance experience and working as a specialist (Red Squirrel ecology and ISO 14001 trained).
Observer	SGS Qualifor Global Programme Manager for Forest Management certification.

6.3 Checklist Preparation

A checklist was prepared that consisted of the documents listed below. This checklist was prepared using the FSC-endorsed national or regional standard.

This re-assessment in 2009 was audited against the second revised version of the UKWAS (pub.2006).

Standard Used in Evaluation	Effective Date	Version Nr	Changes to Standard
FSC Accredited National Standard for the United Kingdom – the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)	1 November 2006	2	1 st edition published 1999. This revised 2 nd edition published 1 Nov 2006.

6.4 Stakeholder notification

A wide range of stakeholders were contacted 4 weeks before the planned evaluation to inform them of the evaluation and ask for their views on relevant forest management issues, These included environmental interest groups, local government agencies and forestry authorities, forest user groups, and workers' unions. Responses received and comments from interviews are recorded at the end of this Public Summary.

7. THE EVALUATION

The Main Evaluation was conducted in the steps outlined below.

7.1 Opening meeting

For FES, an opening meeting was held at Tay District Office, Inver, near Dunkeld.

For FCE, an opening meeting was held at North East England (Kielder) District Office, Hexham.

For FCW, an opening meeting was held at Llanymddyfri District Office, Llandovery.

At each opening meeting, the scope of the evaluation was explained and schedules were determined. Records were kept of all persons that attended these meetings.

7.2 Document review

A review of the main forest management documentation was conducted to evaluate the adequacy of coverage of the QUALIFOR Programme requirements. This involved examination of policies, management plans, systems, procedures, instructions and controls.

7.3 Sampling and Evaluation Approach

A detailed record of the following is available in section B of the evaluation report. This section does not form part of the public summary, but includes information on:

- Sampling methodology and rationale;
- FMUs included in the sample;
- Sites visited during the field evaluation; and
- Man-day allocation.

FES

The three Districts selected for this second RA of FES were Tay (31,057 ha), Cowal & Trossachs (30,427 ha) and West Argyll (52,173 ha). The selection of these Districts achieved a range of District types and wide geographical spread visiting both the west, central and east of Scotland. Therefore it was felt the choice of these Districts was a good one from several aspects and in excess of the minimum required.

Excluding planning, preparation and report writing, sixteen auditor man days were involved for the evaluation including field assessment and office based evaluation inc. stakeholder consultations. Two FM auditors + the specialist involved have worked extensively together. The team leader has worked before with the lead auditor from Sweden who is fluent in English and who has audited the Swedish state forest enterprise. They visited Districts together and evening meetings were held. The team leader has worked before with the CoC auditor. Consistency of observation was thus ensured.

FCE

The three Districts selected for this second RA of FCE were North East England (Kielder), Northants and East Anglia (EA = 25,204 ha). ENGO stakeholder concerns on two general issues (Red Squirrel conservation and management of PAWS) suggested merit in selecting Kielder and Northants. In addition, there was a potentially significant specific stakeholder concern in East Anglia. The selection of these Districts also achieved a wide geographical spread visiting both the north and south of England. Therefore it was felt the choice of Kielder, Northants and East Anglia was a good one from several aspects and in excess of the minimum required.

Excluding planning, preparation and report writing, sixteen auditor man days were involved for the evaluation including field assessment and office based evaluation inc. stakeholder consultations. Both FM auditors + the specialist involved have worked extensively together. They visited Districts together and evening meetings were held. The team leader has worked before with the CoC auditor. Consistency of observation was thus ensured.

FCW

The two Districts selected for this second RA of FCW were Llanymddyfri and Coed y Gororau. The selection of these Districts achieved a range of District types and wide geographical spread visiting both the north-east, central and south of Wales. Therefore it was felt the choice of these Districts was a good one from several aspects and in excess of the minimum required.

Excluding planning, preparation and report writing, eleven auditor man days were involved for the evaluation including field assessment and office based evaluation inc. stakeholder consultations. The team leader auditor + the specialist involved have worked together before. (In addition, the audit was observed by the SGS Global Forest Management Programme Manager.) The auditors visited Districts together

7.4 Field assessments

Field assessments aimed to determine how closely activities in the field complied with documented management systems and QUALIFOR Programme requirements. Interviews with staff, operators and contractors were conducted to determine their familiarity with and their application of policies, procedures and practices that are relevant to their activities. A carefully selected sample of sites was visited to evaluate whether practices met the required performance levels.

7.5 Stakeholder interviews

Meetings or telephone interviews were held with stakeholders as determined by the responses to notification letters and SGS discretion as to key stakeholders that should be interviewed. These aimed to:

- clarify any issues raised and the company’s responses to them;
- obtain additional information where necessary; and
- obtain the views of key stakeholders that did not respond to the written invitation sent out before the evaluation.

Nr of Stakeholders contacted for FC Scotland	Nr of Interviews with		
	NGOs	Government	Other
MAIN EVALUATION			
82	3	3	6
SURVEILLANCE 1			
SURVEILLANCE 2			
SURVEILLANCE 3			
SURVEILLANCE 4			

Nr of Stakeholders contacted for FC England	Nr of Interviews with		
	NGOs	Government	Other
MAIN EVALUATION			
101	4	4	6
SURVEILLANCE 1			
SURVEILLANCE 2			
SURVEILLANCE 3			
SURVEILLANCE 4			

Nr of Stakeholders	Nr of Interviews with		
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	NGOs	Government	Other
MAIN EVALUATION			
82	5	3	5
SURVEILLANCE 1			
SURVEILLANCE 2			
SURVEILLANCE 3			
SURVEILLANCE 4			

Responses received and comments from interviews are recorded under paragraph 13 of this Public Summary.

7.6 Summing up and closing meeting

At the conclusion of the field evaluation, findings were presented to company management at a closing meeting. Any areas of non-conformance with the QUALIFOR Programme were raised as one of two types of Corrective Action Request (CAR):

- Major CARs - which must be addressed and re-assessed before certification can proceed
- Minor CARs - which do not preclude certification, but must be addressed within an agreed time frame, and will be checked at the first surveillance visit

A record was kept of persons that attended this meeting.

8. EVALUATION RESULTS

Detailed evaluation findings are included in Section B of the evaluation report. This does not form part of the public summary. For each QUALIFOR requirement, these show the related findings, and any observations or corrective actions raised. The main issues are discussed below.

8.1 Findings related to the general QUALIFOR Programme

(Acronyms used : FD = Forest District, FDP = Forest Design Plan, OGB = Operational Guidance Booklet)

FES = Forest Enterprise Scotland, C & T FD = Cowal & Trossachs Forest District, WA FD = West Argyll Forest District, SNH = Scottish Natural Heritage, FCE = Forestry Commission England, NEE FD = North East England FD, EA FD = East Anglia FD, NE = Natural England, FCW = Forestry Commission Wales, WHaM = Wales Harvesting and Marketing, WSO = Wales Silvicultural Operations , CCW = Countryside Commission for Wales

PRINCIPLE 1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAW AND FSC PRINCIPLES	
<i>Criterion 1.1 Respect for national and local laws and administrative requirements</i>	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	Compliance with the law was found to be good in all Districts. Changes in legislation are conveyed to FD staff through the FC intranet and regular FDM / FD staff meetings. Re. European law. Recent modifications to the EU Species and Habitats Directives has introduced additional legislation on Protected Species. FES, FCE and FCW have all adopted enhanced operational planning measures that specifically include reference to this new legislation as it affects the UK.

	FD staff were found to be aware of, and complying with the spirit of relevant codes of practice such as recreation, nature conservation and wildlife management. This was evident through examination of the Coupe Record system in England and Wales (in Scotland, the equivalent is called the Work Plan system) that ensures that environmental interests and issues are catered for on a coupe basis through successive operational activities.
Criterion 1.2 Payment of legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	FES, FCE and FCW are committed to payments and taxes required under legal and contractual agreements. Evidence seen of VAT tax payments on invoices. No evidence of non-payment from records sampled.
Criterion 1.3 Respect for provisions of international agreements	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	Dialogue with managers confirms that FES, FCE and FCW are committed to all binding agreements such as CITES, UNCED - Sustainable Development etc. As a consequence, FES is publicly committed to the UK Government's Biodiversity Action Plan and the UK Forestry Standard. Similarly, dialogue with managers confirms FES, FCE and FCW are committed to adherence to European nature conservation law through the Natura 2000 legislation and its UK interpretation through the Habitats Regulations 1994.
Criterion 1.4 Conflicts between laws and regulations, and the FSC P&C	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	No identified conflicts between UK laws and regulations versus compliance with the FSC Principles & Criteria. In this context, there is no evidence of conflict from substantiated outstanding claims of non-compliance related to forest management. In the same context, there is no evidence of conflict from any current legal disputes. Confirmed by sampling of records and stakeholder consultation. The UKWAS Steering Group has appointed an Interpretation Panel in the event of such query.
Criterion 1.5 Protection of forests from illegal activities	
Strengths	At Cowal & Trossachs FD the proactive mitigation measures being put in place to tackle illegal activity and anti-social behaviour were found to be extremely good, this was particularly evident within the East Lomond area. At Chopwell Forest (North-East England Forest District) there was found to be an impressively proactive and extremely positive approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour.
Weaknesses	At the Stang in N.E.E. FD there had been illegal use of a chainsaw and theft of a small amount of firewood. The manager was unaware but immediately instigated an investigation.
Compliance	Debris from fly tipping is a minor ongoing problem in the Districts sampled. Where this occurs debris is removed periodically. Poaching is deterred through the FC wildlife management staff. In FCE at Rendelsham (EA FD) travelling people frequently settle in the forest and sometimes cause litter problems and disturbance to wildlife. FD staff maintain dialogue with the local authority and all legal and acceptable means are applied to minimise adverse impacts. In FCW, occurrence of illegal activity in the forest is rare with the exception of sheep grazing and more recently illegal use of motor vehicles. One of the greatest social forestry challenges FCW faces in south Wales is illegal fire raising. FCW has various publicity and educational strategies to tackle this issue.
Criterion 1.6 Demonstration of a long-term commitment to the FSC P&C	
Strengths	In FCW, at Breidden in Coed y Gororau FD management is made more complex by the leasehold situation but this situation is being particularly well managed by CyG FD.
Weaknesses	FCW need to ensure that for their tenanted woodland they have records of approaching landlords and explaining the requirements for UKWAS compliance re. shooting, conservation and public access.
Compliance	FES have declared their commitment to compliance with the UKWAS standard in promotional materials, general and forestry press publications and on the UK national forestry website (www.forestry.gov.co.uk)

	<p>together with www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland</p> <p>FES are now making some more use of the FSC logo together with associated statements. These are publicly evident commitment to this standard.</p> <p>FCE have declared their commitment to compliance with the UKWAS standard in numerous promotional materials, general and forestry press publications and on the UK national forestry website (www.forestry.gov.co.uk) together with www.forestry.gov.uk/england</p> <p>FCE are now making quite significant use of the FSC logo together with associated statements. These are publicly evident commitment to this standard.</p> <p>Some FDs manage relatively substantial areas of land under leasehold agreements, e.g. Northants FD. There is the potential for lease constraints with regard to delivering the FC objectives (e.g. ecological and social), but examination to date has shown sufficient compliance.</p> <p>FCE have some of their woodland estate under long term lease, often for 99, sometimes 999 years. Many of these leases were provided by landowners who could not themselves afford to re-afforest after the timber depletions of the Second World War but enabled the government through the FCE to do so for the country's strategic benefit. Noted that FCE have a policy of acquiring tenanted woodland of particular social or environmental values, subject to capital funding being available.</p> <p>FCW have declared their commitment to compliance with the UKWAS standard in numerous promotional materials, general and forestry press publications and on the UK national forestry website (www.forestry.gov.co.uk) together with www.forestry.gov.uk/wales and www.forestry.gov.uk/cymru</p> <p>FCW are beginning to increase their use of the FSC logo together with associated statements. These are publicly evident commitment to this standard.</p>
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PRINCIPLE 2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Criterion 2.1 Demonstration of land tenure and forest use rights

Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>FES forests are owned by the Scottish Government as the national government on behalf of the public with FES as the land managers. Legal title documents are held by national office and their solicitors with copies to Land Agents as required. Documentation can be made available to prove ownership under the UK's long established property laws.</p> <p>FCE forests are owned by the Westminster Parliament as the national government on behalf of the public with FCE as the land managers. Legal title documents are held by national office and their solicitors with copies to Land Agents as required. Documentation can be made available to prove ownership under the UK's long established property laws.</p> <p>FCW forests are owned by the Welsh Assembly Government as the national government on behalf of the public with FCW as the land managers. Legal title documents are held by national office and their solicitors with copies to Land Agents as required. Documentation can be made available to prove ownership under the UK's long established property laws.</p> <p>Some FDs manage relatively substantial areas of land under leasehold agreements, e.g. Northants FD, Coed y Gororau FD. There is the potential for lease constraints with regard to delivering the FC objectives (e.g. ecological and social), but examination to date has shown sufficient compliance.</p> <p>FC have some of their woodland estate under long term lease, often for 99, sometimes 999 years. Many of these leases were provided by landowners who could not themselves afford to re-afforest after the timber depletions of the Second World War but enabled the government through the FCE to do so for the country's strategic benefit. Noted that FC have a policy of acquiring tenanted woodland of particular social or environmental values, subject to capital funding being available.</p>

Criterion 2.2 Local communities' legal or customary tenure or use rights

Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>The legal access situation has changed relatively recently in all three GB countries. The general thrust is to legally increase the public's opportunities for access subject to following a formalised code of responsible behaviour.</p> <p>The devolved Scottish Government passed part 1 of The Land Reform (Scotland) Act in 2003. This law came into force in 2004 and gives everyone statutory rights of non-motorised access to land and inland water, subject to responsible use and respect for land management practice & employment. The 'Scottish Outdoor Access Code' is the official advice that supports the Act.</p>

	<p>FES fully endorses the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and provides extensive public access and facilities throughout its forests. This was the case at all sites visited in all FDs.</p> <p>In England and Wales the areas being opened up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) are usually mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land. The new rights cover most recreation activities carried out on foot, including walking, sightseeing, bird watching, climbing and running.</p> <p>Both FCE and FCW have implemented dedication for permanent open access under the CROW Act.</p>
Criterion 2.3 Disputes over tenure claims and use rights	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>Recourse to long established UK property law is available to both sides if required.</p> <p>In Tay FD at Rannoch FES are in a form of land tenure dispute with the neighbouring Dall estate landowner. Interview and file correspondence confirmed that the matter is being diligently pursued by Tay FD who have access to all the relevant copy records of title deeds and land registry information if required. The dispute centres over a planning application for development by Dall Estate. The estate have included FES land in their application without permission.</p> <p>There had been a land tenure boundary dispute between the neighbouring estate landowner to the south and the FCE at The Stang Forest in NEE FD. Interview and file correspondence confirmed that the matter had been resolved with new boundaries agreed.</p> <p>In Coed y Gororau FD lease details are available at the FD office to assist staff in dealing with the estate landlord who has retained shooting rights.</p>
PRINCIPLE 3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS	
Criterion 3.1 Indigenous peoples' control of forest management	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	No indigenous people occupy forest lands in the UK and this section is not applicable.
Criterion 3.2 Maintenance of indigenous peoples' resources or tenure rights	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	No indigenous people occupy forest lands in the UK and this section is not applicable.
Criterion 3.3 Protection of sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	No indigenous people occupy forest lands in the UK and this section is not applicable.
Criterion 3.4 Compensation of indigenous peoples for the application of their traditional knowledge	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	No indigenous people occupy forest lands in the UK and this section is not applicable.
PRINCIPLE 4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKERS RIGHTS	
Criterion 4.1 Employment, training, and other services for local communities	
Strengths	FES is involved with the government sponsored 'Modern Apprentice Scheme' and in all FDs visited FES is participating fully in recruiting forestry apprentices.

	<p>In WA FD the management of mounding contractors recruits was being extremely well done.</p> <p>There were some excellent examples of environmental education being provided by FES. Staff with specialist social skills and training are employed in all the FDs visited.</p> <p>The involvement of the 'Go Ape' tree top' activity courses at the FES visitor centre in C & T FD is astute, not just for its significant economic benefits to FES and its business partner, but also because it brings in a different age group with environmental education / 'promotion of forestry' opportunities.</p> <p>There is excellent co-operation by NEE FD with their partner organisations in the delivery of the Regional Forest strategy for the North East of England. NEE FD demonstrates a high level of pro-active support for the local economy at both strategic and local level. The involvement of NEE in working with public and private sector economic development partners was outstanding.</p> <p>Northants FD similarly devotes much time and energy to this aspect of management. There were also some outstanding examples of environmental education in Northants FD.</p> <p>East Anglia FD contribute significantly to tourism in their area.</p> <p>Despite some past tragic off-road biking accidents, FCE have chosen to continue to pursue the development of this high demand recreation facility on the FCE estate. This decision is vindicated by the rejection of legal claims from the accidents which reassure that good safety management systems are in place. This is a highly commendable decision with regard to social policy delivery inc. recreation, health, tourism and the rural economy. There is now very significant demand for this activity in GB.</p> <p>FCW are putting a lot of staff resource into the Forest Schools project with the FCW Woods for Learning team.</p> <p>FCW are developing the 'Pathfinder Programme' project as recently begun by the Welsh assembly Government. This involves several pilot projects through Wales where interested local community groups can be come involved in woodland management and potentially obtain a lease or a management agreement with FCW.</p>
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>FES, FCE and FCW are contributing to the rural economy and the delivery of several Scottish Government, Westminster and Welsh Assembly Government policies on a wide scale of activities with significant social value.</p> <p>FES, FCE and FCW provide extensive public access and facilities throughout their forests. This was the case at all sites visited in all FDs. There is virtually full open access by foot in all the FDs sampled together with horse riding in certain locations and an increasing range of mountain bike facilities, particularly where terrain conditions lend themselves to suitable bike courses. Extensive evidence of public access provision, inc. footpaths and interpretation, were seen in all FDs visited.</p> <p>Throughout this assessment there was good use of local area based harvesting managers & contractors and / or establishment & maintenance contractors being engaged within all FDs. local area based managers and contractors. The majority of timber is sold to markets in the respective local areas or regions.</p> <p>There is promotion of training of contractors and encouragement of new recruits to the forestry sector by FES, FCE and FCW. Contract and site supervisors effectively 'train' contractors to meet requirements through implementation of contracts, including such aspects as pre-commencement checks and contract stipulation of suitably qualified operators. The significant increase in negotiated long term contracts in relatively recent times gives scope for contractors to invest more in training based on the security and continuity of work.</p> <p>FES, FCE and FCW all provide high quality environmental education for schoolchildren and liaise with the national curriculum of each country.</p>
Criterion 4.2 Compliance with health and safety regulations	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	<p>Operators for FES either do not always have first aid kit available on site or it is too distant from their working position.</p> <p>In C & T FD road construction contractors at the Grodaich roadline site had no first aid kit anywhere on site. In West Argyll FD two chainsaw operators working on the Collaig roadline clearance had no first aid kit on their persons but over 75m distant. In Tay FD a forwarder operator's first aid kit was over 200m distant.</p> <p>FES CAR 05 raised.</p> <p>Some contractors are not complying with manufacturers' guidance on safety equipment.</p> <p>Some contractors' hard hats are too old and contractors are not clear on guidance for replacement.</p> <p>FCE CAR 03 raised.</p> <p>Health and safety requirements were not always being met contrary to well recognised application of</p>

	<p>health and safety practice inc. AFAG codes of practice.</p> <p>At Breidden in Coed y Gororau FD, a fencing contractor was erecting deer fencing. The fencing contractor's assistant was using a chainsaw to clear scrub without having had chainsaw use training. When working, the site first aid kit was approx. 200 metres away off site in their van.</p> <p>At the harvesting site at Moel Famau in Coed y Gororau FD, the manual chainsaw contractor operator supporting the mechanised harvesting contractors had no personal first aid kit to carry on his person while working.</p> <p>FCW CAR 03 raised.</p> <p>Observations (all countries)</p> <p>New UK Health & Safety regulations on first aid training requirements come into effect from October 2009. Preceding this has been a UK forestry industry wide UKWAS compliance driven consensus approach, to reach common understanding of what is reasonable interpretation of requirements under UKWAS where the wording could be clearer. The new H & S regulations assist this process.</p> <p>There is a need for checking just how able NHS ambulances are at reaching remote sites. To deal with treating and the evacuation of a casualty off a harvesting site would be a useful exercise.</p> <p>There are also inconsistencies in emergency planning between FC staffed sites and standing sales with contractors. The AFAG 802 safety guide clearly mentions that a helicopter landing site should be considered</p> <p>This audit also found that there is knowledge not well known concerning the use of emergency phone numbers 112 and 911 by mobile phones. It is understood these may work where 999 will not.</p> <p>Observations (FES)</p> <p>The relevance of clarity on first aid training requirements was confirmed during this audit. At most of the FES sites visited operators had first aid training. However, neither of the chainsaw operators cutting the roadline at Collaig in WA FD in FES had any first aid training.</p> <p>At Grodaich in Glen Finglas (C & T FD) a new forest road was in construction. The location of the fuel bowser used for re-fuelling the heavy plant working on site was located close to two water courses</p> <p>At the same site, the representative for the contractors employed to carry out the construction had a lack of awareness regarding contract documentation and specifically regarding emergency procedure. This is in contrast to what is normally found in interview with harvesting contractors.</p>
Compliance	<p>FDs maintain copies of Health and Safety Codes and AFAG codes of practice. These are made available to all staff and contractors. Risk assessments are compiled for all operations and all operations must comply with current legislation and codes of practice. All operational files and contract documents seen in the FDs sampled were comprehensive and covered these aspects. Site supervision and risk assessment arrangements plus site plans provided overall good contingency planning for any accidents at all sites seen during the assessment.</p> <p>FES, FCE and FCW policies require that all staff and contractors have relevant training in safe working practices and are adequately equipped. They all have a documented safety policy and this filters down into contract requirements.</p> <p>FES, FCE and FCW all have access to the support of the FC GB Health & Safety officer who advises on policy and legal requirements.</p> <p>There is ongoing UK level constructive discussion and correspondence on the issue of first aid provision as part of emergency planning. This is being led by the FC's senior harvesting managers and the FC health & safety officer together with the Health & Safety Executive and the two principal trade associations – UKFPA and ConFor. Proposals being discussed include improvements to risk assessment, first aid training, first aid kit availability and emergency procedures. These discussions are near to conclusion. FC staff are involved and SGS Qualifor is being kept informed of progress.</p> <p>FD staff interviewed in all Districts clearly understood and knew how to implement safety precautions, environmental protection plans and emergency procedures as evidenced from discussion and documentation observed during this assessment.</p>
Criterion 4.3 Workers' rights to organise and negotiate with employers	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>There is no restriction to joining a trade union and time is made available for representatives to attend meetings. In all FDs visited the trades unions are allowed to advertise for recruitment on staff notice boards.</p> <p>FES, FCE and FCW encourage negotiation through Union membership. FC staff are paid at various publicly recognised pay band levels which are well understood by staff.</p> <p>The new FES District management structure for 2009 now consists of 10 larger Districts. Restructuring was achieved without compulsory redundancies. FES trade union representatives were involved in the</p>

	<p>process.</p> <p>The revision of Forest District structure is in line with the Scottish Government's structural review of its land management & administration agencies.</p>
Criterion 4.4 Social impact evaluations and consultation	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	Reference to the FC countries certified status is not particularly clear from their joint website.
Compliance	<p>The FES, FCE and FCW management system for making relevant organisations and interest groups aware of high impact operations is through the Forest Design Planning process. Local people are also consulted at this consultative stage. Once Forest Design Plans are approved, the next stage in this FC management system for making local people aware of high impact operations is through the Coupe Record process (for FES, known as the Work Plan system) and pre-operation checks, both of which are documented. This process enables operational staff and contractors to be made aware of any local concerns. Warning signs are erected in advance of operation such as harvesting and these were evident on all active sites visited in all FDs.</p> <p>In all FDs visited there was evidence of good consultation practice. Suitable stakeholder lists and records / correspondence examples of good consultation with all types of bodies and individuals at all levels were seen in all Districts visited. This was also backed up by stakeholder interviews conducted by SGS in all Districts visited.</p> <p>For all FDs the Forest Design Plan process gives local people the opportunity to identify sites of cultural value. Once mapped, there are clear procedures to safeguard sites. FES has a track record of good liaison with Historic Scotland, FCE have same with English Heritage and also FCW for CADW (Welsh Historic Monuments). Maintenance of Scheduled and non-Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their interpretation is undertaken for the public.</p> <p>Where regional timber transport groups (TTGs) exist FC countries are active members. One of TTGs remits is to seek to mitigate any public concerns over timber traffic, particularly going through rural areas on minor roads.</p>
Criterion 4.5 Resolution of grievances and settlement of compensation claims	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>In all FDs sampled, there is an FD system for dealing with complaints. Any grievances are noted by the FC staff receiving the communication and brought to the immediate attention of the senior manager. If deemed appropriate, it is revisited with discussion at the next management meeting. If it is a potential legal matter, FC solicitors are advised with a view to recourse to the UK legal system for dealing with disputes if required.</p> <p>No outstanding grievances or compensation claims. Interview with FES, FCE and FCW staff stated there were no current complaints. Confirmed by stakeholder consultation and sampling of a wide variety of correspondence files and records.</p> <p>As a state public sector body the maintenance of public liability insurance and employers' insurance cover is effectively in place via normal public sector arrangements. FES, FCE and FCW require sufficient insurance cover from timber harvesting companies and other contractors.</p>
PRINCIPLE 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST	
Criterion 5.1 Economic viability taking full environmental, social, and operational costs into account	
Strengths	Conversely, it can be seen that FES pursue their wide ranging and demanding remit that now includes many significant social and environmental objectives. In all FDs visited there were many examples of well allocated resources, inc.staffing, towards tourism, environmental education and local community support & development.
Weaknesses	<p>With FES there were some field examples discussed during the audit where a lack of staff resource or funds had caused implications for management. E.g. deer control and previous restocking, timeous thinning requiring road access.</p> <p>In FCE instances arose during the audit where a lack of resource or cost cutting exercise had resultant implications.</p> <p>Due to lack of bracken spraying resource in East Anglia FD, consequences were that a restock site seen had to be beat up at least once and still with signs of significant browsing impact and possible bracken control required. In Northants FD, the future management and reinstatement of traditional management methods at Ouston Wood is currently not supported by adequate funding. At Bourne Wood in Northants</p>

	FD the old public toilets provided by FCE have been closed due to a national request for cost savings.
Compliance	<p>In FES, FCE and FCW, National Strategic & Corporate Plans and Forest District Strategic Plans present the main vehicles for planning. The Forest Design Plan and the coupe planning process and associated maps and instructions are the tools that facilitate local delivery. The FD planning teams oversee this work at the FD level. Both the FDP and work (coupe) planning process assesses the environmental, social and economic impacts of proposed operations to a satisfactory standard.</p> <p>Suitable financial records and business plan budgets showing expenditure and income including sources of funding were seen at country level and in all Districts.</p>
Criterion 5.2 Optimal use and local processing of forest products	
Strengths	<p>There were some outstanding examples of contributions to the support of the local economy in all FDs visited.</p> <p>In WA FD the development of a supply of locally produced hardwood timber in Lorne for individual or specialist markets is exemplary.</p>
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>All FC countries are contributing to the rural economy and the delivery of several national government policies on a wide scale of activities with significant social value.</p> <p>The majority of timber is sold to markets in the respective local areas or regions. FC countries are supporting the developing biomass woodfuel market with raw small roundwood timber.</p> <p>In FES one of the main Christmas tree growing Districts is North Highland (the majority of this FD was previously Dornoch FD) which grows Lodgepole pine (<i>Pinus contorta</i>) as Christmas trees. These FES produced Christmas trees were FSC certified under the scope of the previous FES certificate.</p> <p>In FCE there was an example of forest matrix harvested commercial Christmas trees within NEE FD. Following inspection of FCE's main Christmas tree site at Dalby Forest in Yorkshire in 2006/07, FCE now sells substantial quantities of own produced FSC certified Christmas trees from FD sales points supplied by Dalby. FCE has also innovatively pursued certification of 'large' Christmas trees, i.e. in excess of 4 metres. These FCE produced Christmas trees were FSC certified under the scope of the previous FES certificate.</p>
Criterion 5.3 Waste minimisation and avoidance of damage to forest resources	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>Timber at most sites visited which had been previously harvested had been harvested efficiently with acceptable loss or damage to residual crops and avoidance of damage to soil and water courses. Overall, there was good use of brash matting to minimise ground impact. Many extraction routes were observed during the course of the audit.</p> <p>In FCE at East Anglia FD lop and top and stumps are removed in areas where stump removal is used to combat the particular problem in this area of <i>Heterobasidion annosum</i> (<i>Fomes</i> - butt rot).</p> <p>FD staff interviewed on this requirement are well aware re. UKWAS compliance not to burn lop & top without a valid justifiable reason.</p> <p>FDs do not normally undertake whole tree harvesting unless for a particular site specific reason.</p> <p>Districts have a District Fire Plan kept at District offices and maintain consistent contact with regional fire brigades. OGB no.17 'Planning for the Unexpected' gives guidance for a series of prevention and control measures related to fire and involving liaison with the Fire Brigade.</p> <p>Districts also have an Emergency Response Plan kept at district offices and maintain consistent contact with regional environmental protection agencies. Plans cover pollution and accidents. In addition, as part of contract management, provision of a risk assessment and completion of a site assessment operational checklist is required of all contractors and supervisors of direct employees. Furthermore, an operational plan is issued to contractors and direct employees detailing the location of any sensitive areas.</p>
Criterion 5.4 Forest management and the local economy	
Strengths	<p>There were some outstanding examples of contributions to the support of the local economy in all FDs visited.</p> <p>In Tay FD the way in which the District has supported the Perthshire 'Big Tree' tourism development legacy has been extremely well done. This is now being taken further with its involvement in the 'ICONIC' rare conifer conservation project. In C & T FD the clear strategy in balancing market support and maintenance of a contractor skill base with commercial benefits for FES by careful timber marketing was impressive.</p> <p>There is excellent co-operation by NEE FD with their partner organisations in the delivery of the Regional</p>

	<p>Forest strategy for the North East of England. NEE FD demonstrates a high level of pro-active support for the local economy at both strategic and local level. The involvement of NEE. in working with public and private sector economic development partners was outstanding. Northants FD similarly devotes much time and energy to this aspect of management. East Anglia FD contribute significantly to tourism in their area.</p> <p>FCW make a significant contribution to the employment within the rural economy through contracting work and sustaining the harvesting, haulage and saw milling industry in Wales. This is well articulated strategically at FD level (e.g. Llanyddyfri FD) and was evident throughout the audit with many examples in both FDs.</p>
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>FES, FCE and FCW are contributing to the rural economy and the delivery of several national government policies on a wide scale of activities with significant social value.</p> <p>Throughout this assessment there was good use of local area based harvesting managers & contractors and / or establishment & maintenance contractors being engaged within FDs. There is an appropriate balance between the purpose of maintaining market stability (to the mutual advantage of the FC countries, the processing industry and the contractor base) and current economic marketing conditions in the use of long term contracts with timber purchasers. The majority of timber is sold to markets in the respective local areas or regions.</p> <p>All three FC countries provision of biking trails and facilities makes an outstanding contribution to local economies throughout each country. These biking facilities make a very significant economic contribution not just to local tourism and employment, but also delivering on national policies for access, health and recreation.</p>
Criterion 5.5 Maintenance of the value of forest services and resources	
Strengths	At East Anglia FD shooting leases are very well managed with good cooperation between estates and wildlife departments. Safeguards for native game species are exceptional.
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>The assessment included random site inspection of harvesting / restocking sites. Most had suitably compliant harvesting with site evidence of restocking carried out or in planning and preparation stage.</p> <p>There was no evidence obtained from this assessment of the FDs sampled to show that restocking programmes are being delayed due to funding pressures. Evidence to date shows adequate following of clearfelling programmes or valid changes in forest management.</p> <p>Records of yield including thinning and felling records where appropriate were checked in all FDs sampled. All were satisfactory or adequate.</p> <p>Apart from Christmas trees in Scotland and England, the only non-timber product is venison. Venison harvesting is based on carefully prepared deer management strategies that relate off take to impacts.</p> <p>In FCE and FCW all shooting tenancies within FDs are subject to a shooting lease that includes a risk assessment and a shoot management plan.</p>
Criterion 5.6 Harvest levels	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>In general, the aim for commercial areas is to grow crops to age of Maximum Mean Annual Increment (Max MAI) and then to fell. However, restructuring and the establishment of retentions as part of an agreed forest design plan may involve felling at ages other than Max MAI. Equally, the decision for the optimum time of felling is balanced with log size maximum diameter requirements of modern timber markets.</p> <p>Annual allowable cut is determined by FES via their Production Forecast at +/- 5% over a 5 year period. Currently this is at 3,235,535 m3 p.a. as a production forecast to be averaged over a 5 year period.</p> <p>Annual allowable cut is determined by FCE via their Production Forecast at +/- 5% over a 5 year period. Currently this is at 1,451,811 m3 p.a. as a production forecast to be averaged over a 5 year period.</p> <p>Annual allowable cut is determined by FCW via their Production Forecast at +/- 5% over a 5 year period. Currently this is at 798,850 m3 p.a. as a production forecast to be averaged over a 5 year period.</p> <p>In each country, the production forecast comes from the collective input of individual forest design plans which are then manipulated, controlled and monitored at Forest District level, together with overall control and monitoring of the production forecast at FC country level.</p> <p>FD management records basic mensurational data in order to provide estimates of future production and control of yield is usually carried out on an appropriate area basis with reconciliation of actual production versus forecast. Records of yield including thinning and felling records where appropriate were checked in all FDs sampled. All were satisfactory or adequate. Harvesting was consistently at a level that did not</p>

	<p>exceed the long term productive potential of the resource.</p> <p>New production forecast software is being developed by FC GB management support services to be made available to each FC country by the end of 2011. This will generate estimates of current growing stock and forecast growing stock based on forest design plans. Therefore, estimates of net increment can be calculated and these forthcoming estimates and measures of increment will be able to be used to inform any assessment in determining the annual allowable cut.</p> <p>Apart from Christmas trees in Scotland and England, the only non-timber product is venison. No instances were encountered where harvesting of venison was at a level which could exceed the long term productive potential of the resource. Sustainable cull records were seen in all Districts in all FC countries.</p> <p>Deer culling, carcass handling and production of venison ready for sale to game dealers is not complex and is well regulated. The CoC larder systems in each country are well bedded in and clearly understood. Each country operation of the Forest Commission (FES, FCE and FCW) is required (by legislation) to cull a suitable number of the deer on their land each year. This figure differs for each forest area but is detailed in their respective country Deer Management Strategies. The strategies set out Deer Management Units (DMUs) which are geographical areas appropriate for modern deer management. Each DMU may have more than one forest within it. Each DMU has its own Deer Management Plan. The entire set of procedures from culling through to carcass invoicing and CoC requirements are documented within a Wildlife Management System (WMS) and a Wild Venison Standard (WVS) that are common to all three countries.</p> <p>The number of animals culled each year is dependent of the total number inhabiting a specific DMU. The total number of animals is established by dung assessments supplemented by visual records and local FC wildlife manager knowledge. The number to be culled is set by deer management formulae that set the optimum number for a given area, dependent upon the deer control objectives. The normal objectives are acceptable habitat grazing pressure on restock sites and conservation areas.</p> <p>Cull levels are independently assessed via different national government agencies with knowledge of deer management. This is augmented by NGOs such as the British Deer Society and the British Association for Shooting & Conservation. FC deer management policy is to join local Deer Management Groups who also monitor each others deer cull numbers. Independent contractors are engaged to assess deer population browsing impacts on young tree growth. By these methods FC countries can establish independently that they do not over cull.</p> <p>Each forest area (usually a forest district) has its own (cold) larder where the deer carcasses are prepared to be left ready for collection by the game dealer.</p> <p>When deer are shot they are bled and gralloched (intestines removed) at point of shot or within one hour of shooting, and transported to the larder as soon as possible. At the larder further carcass preparation is carried out as necessary and the clean carcass in the skin is weighed tagged and hung in the chiller. The uniquely numbered tag attached to the carcass records the sex, time, date & location shot, carcass weight and administration centre, together with the trained hunter declaration of the wildlife manager processing the carcass. The unique tag number and details of each deer shot are recorded and retained in the Forestry Commission Wildlife Management System.</p> <p>This information is recorded in triplicate. One copy is sent to the dealer, one is held on record at the larder and one is sent to the local forest district office where it enters the administration system and the information is passed to central invoicing via the WMS. The carcass is transferred to the chiller unit within the larder to await collection from the game dealer.</p> <p>This information is communicated to the game dealer by fax or e-mail who is contractually obliged to collect the carcasses within a short time period that meets regulatory food hygiene requirements.</p> <p>There are five species of deer culled on Forestry Commission land. These are :</p> <p>Fallow, Roe, Red, Sika and Muntjac</p> <p>Deer larders must meet stringent food hygiene regulations and are therefore relatively expensive to construct and maintain. In the interests of cost effectiveness and neighbour support, some larders are shared with other organisations. Comprehensive legal agreements are in place to maintain the required culling & carcass management standards plus CoC separation.</p>
PRINCIPLE 6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	
<i>Criterion 6.1 Environmental impacts evaluation</i>	
Strengths	<p>Forest design planning and coupe planning in preparation for operations in the complex areas of both East Anglia (e.g. Kings Forest) and Northants FD (e.g. Salcey Forest) requires an eye for detail and is of a very high standard.</p> <p>At NEE FD there was found to be a very high standard of the use and implementation of IT management systems and this included the overall assimilation, extrapolation and implementation of data and information.</p> <p>Despite a significant number of staff changes and job roles, there were examples in Coed y Gorau FD where staff knew their site details very well and had valuable knowledge in ecology and wildlife management re. uncommon flora and EPS species inc. Otter and Dormouse.</p>

	<p>Notwithstanding the CAR 02 re. coupe planning communications between the LAM/WHaM/WSO, other examples of coupe planning had high standards, particularly impressive was the coupe planning assessed at Twyi Forest in Llanymddyfri FD.</p> <p>Similarly, the harvesting contractors at Twyi Forest in Llanymddyfri FD were working to overall very high standards and a credit to the District.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>In FES Assessing and taking into account operational impact is insufficient in Continuous Cover Forestry / Low Impact Silvicultural Systems sites.</p> <p>There were examples of CCF / LISS sites in Tay FD (Black Craig) and Cowal & Trossachs FD (Loch Ard) where no stump treatment with urea was taking place during thinning operations. Stump treatment guidance documentation and staff interview confirmed such sites would be expected to be treated with urea as protection against butt rot infection (<i>Heterobasidion annosum</i> / <i>Fomes</i>).</p> <p>At Cowal & Trossachs FD a significant part of the Loch Ard CCF / LISS site had suffered soil damage from extraction in wet conditions due to recent high rainfall. Staff shortage had contributed to a delay in either stopping work or switching earlier to another drier part of the forest. The job had been planned for summer working in anticipation of dry weather but unfortunately there had been prolonged heavy rainfall.</p> <p>FES CAR 01 raised.</p> <p>(Acknowledged that there was documentary evidence of C & T FD stopping / switching harvesting operations due to water on previous occasions.)</p> <p>For FCE there is a gap in harvesting pre-operational checks when working in areas where there is a good probability that Red Squirrels are present.</p> <p>Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species. There is a recognition throughout the UK that the presence of Red Squirrels must be assessed on site before commencement of high impact forestry operations, when working in areas where there is a good probability that Red Squirrels are present.</p> <p>In legal context, it is understood there are slight differences in conservation law between England and Scotland. In England, the law requires that Red Squirrel dreys (nests) are not intentionally or recklessly destroyed. The national border is adjacent North East England FD, where in Scotland the law requires that Red Squirrels are not disturbed, unless by accident.</p> <p>Within Kielder Forest Park, at Worksburn (North-East England FD), there had been the recent completion of thinning operations within an area of Norway spruce / Scots pine managed under a continuous cover system. Site evidence from cones eaten by squirrels and discussion with FCE staff confirmed there was a good probability that Red Squirrels were present within the area which was subject to the thinning.</p> <p>No pre-operations checks or drey survey of any kind was carried out prior to operations starting. There is no appropriate system in place to check for the presence of Red Squirrel in such situations.</p> <p>FCE CAR 01 raised.</p> <p>(Acknowledged there is evidence of excellent planning and general habitat management for Red Squirrel with a major contribution towards its conservation by FCE in North East England FD. In all other respects, management by FCE for Red Squirrel at Kielder Forest is highly commendable.)</p> <p>FCW's internal communications between different management units do not always result in operations taking into account potential on-site impact.</p> <p>At Canaston in Llanymddyfri FD, the Wales Harvesting and Marketing (WHaM) site supervision was not aware the hardwood site being thinned was a PAWS site. The communications between the Planning of the Local Area Management (LAM) team for the FD and WHaM were not working as they should.</p> <p>At Breidden in Coed y Gororau FD the response to the availability of some spare native broadleaves was to underplant a PAWS site with predominantly Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and a minor amount of Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>). The site was a PAWS with a national vegetation classification for Ash and Oak was not really appropriate. There was no prior assessment as to the appropriate choice of species or checking of seed zone source.</p> <p>FCW CAR 02 raised.</p>
Compliance	<p>FC Forest Design Plans are consulted on in each country with external bodies such as SNH / NE / CCW, Local Authorities, and SEPA / EA and the FC (regulatory authority) through the FC approval process. For any new planting the same consultation mechanism including EIA and environmental regulatory requirements where appropriate, will allow other stakeholders to propose amendments to proposals for each FC country's consideration and FC (regulatory authority) planning approval requirements. Examples of suitable consultation with correspondence seen and stakeholders interviewed.</p> <p>In all Districts sampled there was no evidence of other than obtaining any relevant permission and giving any formal notification required. For example in general terms, all forest design plans in all FDs had been approved by the FC (regulatory authority) and virtually all dealings with SNH / NE / CCW were in order.</p> <p>The FDP and Coupe (Work Plan) Record processes ensure that this is catered for. Virtually all of the forested areas within the FDs sampled are covered by FDPs containing viewpoint photomontages.</p> <p>The Work Plan (Coupe Record) system ensures that all potential impacts are taken account of and special features are protected.</p>

	<p>No completed new planting was encountered in any country. This is not unsurprising given the vast majority of planting activity is restocking. Restocking in all Districts was always preceded by effective work (coupe) planning that ensured that all potential environmental impacts were avoided or mitigated.</p> <p>In FES, Westfield in Tay FD is planned but planting will not start until 2009/2010.</p> <p>There were examples of formal EIAs being undertaken for the large new Loch Katrine native woodland regeneration project by FES and for new forest road building by FES and FCW. .</p> <p>For all FDs the Forest Design Plan process gives local people the opportunity to identify sites of cultural value. Once mapped, there are clear procedures to safeguard sites. FES has a track record of good liaison with Historic Scotland, maintenance of Scheduled and non-Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their interpretation for the public.</p> <p>FCE restocking in all Districts was always preceded by effective coupe planning that ensured that all potential environmental impacts were avoided or mitigated. With the exception of FCE CAR 01 the same evidence applied for coupe planning for harvesting operations in all Districts.</p>
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Criterion 6.2 Protection of rare, threatened and endangered species

Strengths	<p>In C & T FD the Water Vole re-introduction project management was an exemplar of conservation project management.</p> <p>Similarly, in WA FD, the more radical conservation pilot project of beaver reintroduction in Knapdale was also being managed in an exemplary manner.</p> <p>The short and long term management of red squirrel habitats at Craigvinean in Tay FD is exemplary.</p> <p>At Tay FD there was found to be a highly developed level of conservation partnership working.</p> <p>At Tay FD the District is part of the partnership known as the 'ICONIC' project – 'Internationally Threatened Conifers In Our Care'. This aims to help save some of the world's rarest and most remarkable conifer trees. In WA FD there was an excellent example of protection of rare fauna from a site selected at random.</p> <p>For FCE at East Anglia FD there is exceptional co-operation with the British Trust for Ornithology on the conservation of nightjars and woodlarks.</p> <p>For FCW there has been a long and concerted programme of habitat restoration aimed at the survival of the black grouse. .</p> <p>Coed y Gororau FD staff have had a long and productive relationship with Countryside Council of Wales and Forest Research Agency with regard to the conservation of red squirrels at Clocaenog.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>The range and distribution of the water vole within Tay FD is poorly understood and little has been done to address this.</p> <p>In FCE water vole surveys at Lavenham Forest in East Anglia FD have been satisfactorily completed, but there are no plans to conduct similar surveys in other parts of the FD.</p>
Compliance	<p>The Forest Design Plan and Coupe Record (Work Plan) process is the FC management planning system that ensures such sites are protected and the requirements of rare, threatened & endangered (RTE) species also protected with provision for their conservation. This includes constraints checking by GIS tools for designated area boundaries.</p> <p>In all FDs there were excellent examples of good conservation management.</p> <p>Given the relative even age structure of the main Kielder Forest complex, restructuring is the main vehicle by which NEE FD are improving management for biodiversity. Main species to benefit will be Raptors and Red Squirrel plus Black Grouse (both UK BAP species). It is estimated that Kielder Forest is the home for up to 70% of the Red squirrels (UK BAP species) in England.</p> <p>NEE FD work in partnership with the Northumberland Wildlife Trust at Kielder Forest in particular.</p> <p>Red kites have been successfully reintroduced into East England and Northants FD have played an important and significant role in the project. At EA FD and Northants FD there are sound approaches to dormouse monitoring.</p> <p>In both FDs all significant sites sampled have been identified and are marked on FDP maps.</p> <p>FCW have stated in their Corporate Plan (page 17) that they will continue to develop their approach to grey squirrel control, in partnership with others. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) have very recently approved a decision (14 July 2009) that urgent strategic action be taken in these three areas. The 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales' (CPfRSiW) is only just being published but is still not available. Naturally, as the WAG's forest manager, FCW will be required to fulfil their part in this new plan.</p>

	<p>SGS will follow up the outcome of the publication of the 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales' at next audit opportunity.</p> <p>Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species under threat and this will clearly be an ongoing resource challenge for FCW. Conservation of red squirrel is an ENGO stakeholder concern.</p> <p>SGS conclude that FCW were found to be UKWAS compliant over the management of Red squirrel, see stakeholder comments and responses for further details.</p>
Criterion 6.3 Maintenance of ecological functions and values	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	<p>In FCE both East Anglia and Northants FD deadwood policies do not adequately reflect the UKWAS Second Edition. At Kielder Forest the rationale is clearly expressed and focuses on creating deadwood within areas of Continuous Cover Forestry, examples of which were seen. However, it is not clear whether this will achieve the overall quantities mentioned in UKWAS second edition.</p> <p>In Wales WHaM staff and harvesting contractors need to have a clearer understanding of what is required for deadwood management under the UKWAS 2nd edition.</p>
Compliance	<p>Throughout the audit, in all FDs there was tangible pursuit of deadwood management from both site evidence and from staff interview. There were examples of good understanding and application of deadwood management.</p> <p>No game management is carried out by FES in any of the FDs visited. Very little leased game management takes place anywhere on the FES estate. Dialogue with FES staff over other conservation issues generates full confidence that, in such event, safeguards for native game species and woodland ecosystems would be put in place if required.</p> <p>In England game management in EA and Northants FDs is at relatively low intensity.</p>
Criterion 6.4 Protection of representative samples of existing ecosystems	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	<p>At Surveillance 04 in 2008, there was no clear awareness within the Districts that FCE's previously stated stage 2 plan to identify candidate Natural Reserves had been completed, nor that stage 3, the confirmed identification of NRs, had begun.</p> <p>The new FCE Head of Planning has picked up this issue and is treating it as an important requirement. Progress in all FDs has been reviewed and analysed for areas of NR. The process with suitable selection criteria is now clearly laid out in the Head of Planning's paper titled 'Guidelines for the Deployment of Natural Reserves across the FCE estate', dated 9th October 2009. This observation is closed but will continue to be monitored.</p>
Compliance	<p>At least 15% of the analysis of the forest area of each FD showed evidence of primary management for biodiversity conservation, including both Long Term Retentions and Natural Reserves. All FDs have data showing analysis of this requirement and therefore all management planning is now compliant.</p> <p>Noted that FC countries now apply the UKWAS requirement for Natural Reserves at District level and not at whole country level, nor necessarily at Forest Design Plan level. As an area of application for UKWAS 2nd edition compliance this is acceptable (provided there is good qualitative analysis behind the selection).</p> <p>Some individual FDPs are compliant in themselves and can exceed the threshold requirement. Where others do not, there is suitable evidence of an overall qualitative approach taking the FD as a whole.</p> <p>NRs, LTRs and other primary biodiversity conservation areas are marked on maps.</p> <p>In addition, a very good UKWAS Biodiversity Checklist has been developed by FES central planning for inclusion with all FDPs. This will provide clear documentation of the areas and proportions of all conservation areas, PAWS restoration areas and LISS areas.</p> <p>FES have a good track record of taking suitable habitat restoration opportunities and agreeing measures with conservation partner organisations when appropriate. E.g. At Flanders Moss in C & T FD, FES are felling plantation but not restocking as part of an approved bog habitat restoration project. This has been approved by the FC (regulatory authority) and endorsed by SNH. The site was inspected and all work found in order.</p>
Criterion 6.5 Protection against damage to soils, residual forest and water resources during operations	
Strengths	For FES, at C & T FD the use of 'hydro-seed' on the batter slopes of the completed phase 1 of the new

	<p>forest road at Glen Finglas was highly effective and is an impressive method of naturalising the effects of excavation works.</p> <p>WHaM staff and their FCW harvesting and transport operators & contractors should be commended for their ability to cope well with the steep sided terrain often found in Wales and the need to move timber through rural areas with corresponding transport infrastructure. Other parts of the UK can have similar challenges but rarely more so than those often found in Wales.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Some harvesting operations do not conform to Soil and Water Guidelines.</p> <p>At Cowal & Trossachs FD there was significant discolouration in a small watercourse running through the Loch Ard CCF thinning site. Sediment was gaining access to the watercourse from mud coming from the result of operations above. FES staff on site agreed it was of a level requiring action.</p> <p>At West Argyll FD a harvesting site's (Cnoc Dubh, Grogport) pre-commencement clearly stated straw bales would be present on site but none were. Conditions were wet from recent high rainfall and a lot of water was running off the site into a partially blocked roadside ditch. FES staff agreed on site it was of a level requiring action.</p> <p>FES CAR 02 raised.</p> <p>FES Observation</p> <p>At the Cnoc Dubh harvesting site at Grogport forest in WA FD, the forwarder contractor operator had left the site with his machine, leaving the site with less scope to deal with the consequences of heavy rain impact (using the forwarder grab) upon the extraction tracks leading to the roadside ditch which had a blockage and the road itself, a small section of which was under shallow water. Neither the purchasing Forestry Works Manager, nor the forwarder operator himself had thought to check with the FES site supervisor, who was trying hard to mitigate the effects of the high rainfall, before the machine's departure. If this could be incorporated into contracts or pre-commencements as a requirement, this might assist such a situation with potential water problems in high rainfall.</p>
Compliance	<p>Many of the sites inspected were being suitably worked and all relevant guidelines were being complied with including fuel storage.</p> <p>FD staff interviewed on this requirement are well aware re. UKWAS compliance not to burn lop & top without a valid justifiable reason, e.g. for rabbit control or where heavy brash clearance by effective mechanical means is difficult to resource etc.</p> <p>From interview, FD staff in all Districts clearly understood the requirement that all necessary consents (inc.EIA) shall be obtained if appropriate for new roads.</p> <p>Good compliance with guidelines (Water, Soil, Conservation) was evidenced at the active or recently completed sites visited. From interview, FD staff in all Districts clearly understood the requirement of a formal Environmental Impact Assessment if appropriate in such event.</p> <p>On site visits to FDs all harvesting extraction tracks were suitably designed to minimise site impact including diligent pursuit of brash matting techniques for forwarder use where appropriate. There was no evidence from any of the sites visited of drainage problems associated with harvesting.</p> <p>From interview and site observation FD staff are well aware re. UKWAS compliance not to burn lop & top without a valid justifiable reason.</p> <p>For FCE at East Anglia FD lop and top and stumps removed in areas where stump removal is used to combat the particular problem in this area of <i>Heterobasidion annosum</i> (<i>Fomes</i> - butt rot).</p> <p>For FES in C & T FD approval had been obtained for the new road at Glenfinglas. In WA FD approval had been obtained for the new road at Collaig.</p>
Criterion 6.6 Chemical pest management	
Strengths	<p>FES have access to an excellent support tool in the 'Chemical Summary' produced by the Forest Research Agency.</p> <p>There has been a concerted and highly focused effort to reduce use of pesticides (cypermethrins) in weevil control. This includes the FES Hylobius Management Policy of March 2007 and implementation at FD level. Experience and revised techniques have included fallow (5 year periods), timing of top up spraying, buffer spray zones and nematodes.</p> <p>There is evidence of the FC countries' pursuit of non-chemical means of control. A significant proportion of all FC restocking now adopts a fallow strategy that is well developed and approved at national level. FC Managers are aware of potential landscape 'adjacency' issues for coupe felling.</p> <p>In FCE reduction to almost no use of pesticides (pesticides only used to control invasive non-native plants) in Northants FD is exemplary.</p> <p>NEE FD has been the District selected by FCE to trial extensively the use of nematodes as a biological control agent for combating weevil attack of young trees. Results are being recorded and documented in the FD's annual pesticide strategy update.</p> <p>FCE in East Anglia FD have developed a method suitable for lowland sites whereby stump examination can predict with some accuracy the likelihood of weevil attack and therefore has led to a significant</p>

	reduction in the need to use cypermethrin based insecticides. FCE staff involved in its development deserve to be highly commended.
Weaknesses	The GB pesticides record database has been temporarily closed since the beginning of April 2009 for IT maintenance and improvement. FD staff are stockpiling manual and FD electronic pesticide use records for entry once the national database is re-opened. Obviously it is important that records data is not inadvertently lost with staff movement transfers.
Compliance	<p>In FCW pesticide strategy does not demonstrate knowledge of the latest published advice and staff are not fully aware of non-legislative guidance.</p> <p>Wales Silvicultural Operations (WSO) staff are supposed to follow District pesticide strategies. The Coed y Mynydd District pesticide strategy contains information that is significantly out of date.</p> <p>CAR 07 raised - at Surveillance 04 (2008).</p> <p>HQ had reviewed the issue with Wales Silvicultural Operations (WSO) and District staff. District staff had reviewed their Pesticide Strategies.</p> <p>The revised Coed y Mynydd pesticide strategy was seen along with the pesticide strategies for Llanyrddyfri and Coed y Gororau FDs. All were considered adequate and compliant with 5.2.1.</p> <p>WSO staff in both FDs were interviewed and the use of pesticides assessed on site. FCW staff were well aware of the current version of the 'Chemical Summary' in the form of a colour coded spreadsheet, together with the issue of Interim Guidance Note No.6 (update to Operational Guidance Booklet no. 15 'Using chemicals in the forest'. Site assessment confirmed the use of pesticides was satisfactory.</p> <p>CAR 07 closed.</p> <p>Documented pesticide strategies checked in both FDs set out the actions required to minimise chemical use. The main herbicide used is Glyphosate by spot application against weed species. The need for weed control is minimised by rapid establishment of plants, correct species choice, use of genetically improved stock, cultivation and deer control. Herbicides are only used when these other methods have failed.</p> <p>The Large Pine Weevil (<i>Hylobius abietus</i>) can kill large percentages of conifer transplants without protection. Where weevil populations are high, losses can reach 100% if some form of pesticide treatment is not applied. Alpha Cypermethrin insecticide is now used for ElectroDYN treatment. Post-planting with Cypermethrin insecticide sprays are used if weevil populations are high. FCW are continuing to develop the use of the approved biological control agent (nematodes).</p> <p>FCE staff follow the guidance provided in the UK Forest Practice Guide 'Reducing Pesticide Use in Forestry'. They also refer to FC GB Forest Management Memorandum (FMM) no.4 which covers chemical use and contains a decision support chart aimed at ensuring best practice guidance is followed.</p> <p>N.E.E. and East Anglia FDs both demonstrated excellent analysis of pesticide records and could explain trends of use for individual products.</p> <p>As a FD example, the EA FD also work to their internal 'Forest management Instruction on the Use of Pesticides'. Similar internal guidance documentation was seen in NEE FD and Northants FD. The Northants FD guidance documentation contains reference to the need to justify pesticide usage and the reasons for not selecting 'non-chemical methods'.</p> <p>In FCE the East Anglia FD chemical strategy deserves particular mention for their particular circumstances.</p> <p>Special Protection Area (SPA) status protects the habitats of ground nesting birds such as woodlark and nightjar, which are conservation priority species and East Anglia holds very significant components of their UK populations. The FD weed control programme is designed to maintain 'bare' ground that is utilised by the bird species, and chemicals use is therefore less likely to be capable of reduction than in other</p> <p>Following previous application to FSC, FCW now have derogation for Alpha-cypermethrin, Cypermethrin, Aluminium phosphide and Warfarin. Derogation approval has been approved for these products following a final decision from FSC. Conversely, Propyzamide has not been approved and temporary derogation is no longer available.</p>
Criterion 6.7 Use and disposal of chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes	
Strengths	In FCE the Thetford chem store at East Anglia FD was being managed very competently by well qualified staff. In FCW the chem store at the Coed y Gororau FD sub-office was inspected without any prior notice. It was extremely tidy and was being kept to a very high standard with good records available.
Weaknesses	<p>In FES storage of pesticides is not always of the required standard.</p> <p>The chemstore at Glenbranter in Cowal & Trossachs FD contained several herbicide containers of a product that was many years out of date (manufactured 2000). There was a lack of awareness in transferring internal FC pesticide guidance information into practice. Disposal was long overdue. Previous annual inspections had not addressed this item. FC Operational Guidance (OGB) no.15 was not being followed.</p>

	<p>FES CAR 03 raised.</p> <p>Following the field audit visit FES immediately instigated a review of all their chemical stores double checking for out of date products. Documented evidence has already been seen of this process plus specific licensed operator disposal of the material at Glenbranter has already been done (documentation seen). This showed a commendably swift and serious initial response to close out this CAR. It remains open until next surveillance but progress to closure noted.</p> <p>In FCE equipment is not always in place to deal with accidental spillages.</p> <p>The Round Timber Haulage Code of Practice makes clear that timber lorries should carry spillage control kit. Similarly, it is recognised environmental contingency practice that spillage kits are available on operational sites with machinery at all times.</p> <p>FCE CAR 02 raised.</p> <p>FCE Observation</p> <p>At Kielder Forest Park (NEE FD) considerable amounts of disused fence wire was seen to be accumulating, both in larger groups and in smaller amounts. There is actually a lack of reference to dealing with redundant fencing wire in OGB 35.</p> <p>FC all countries Observation</p> <p>There is confusion amongst staff over whether chem stores should have more than just a warning triangle but also words saying 'chem store' or not. Some staff think it increases risk from theft, others think it would be helpful to the Fire Brigade to know for sure what is present that requires a warning sign. It is understood not to be a legal requirement but FC GB national guidance is ambiguous in its advice.</p> <p>FCW Observation</p> <p>From staff interview WHaM say they do not mention to timber hauliers that they are required to carry suitable spillage protection kit in case of diesel or hydraulic fluid leakage. This is referred to in the Round Timber Haulage Code of Practice.</p>
Compliance	<p>FC countries implement a risk assessment procedure for operations involving use of pesticides or biological control agents. This includes storage, transport and disposal of containers plus personal protective equipment, spillage kit and emergency contingency planning. Suitable examples were seen.</p> <p>In addition the FES electrodyne treatment plant at Cairnbaan in WA was also inspected. The facilities in WA FD were in satisfactory order and the chem store at Aberfoyle in C & T FD was adequate.</p> <p>Records and interview confirm that inorganic fertilisers are not often used by any FC country. In the instances where they have, these have only been used to correct nutrient deficiencies on low grade soils in upland plantation conditions.</p> <p>Bio-solids have only been used occasionally in the past by FES involving land restoration projects in the Central Lowlands of Scotland where heavy industry has been a factor. FES are aware that any such use needs to refer to the latest guidance issued in 2007 by the UKWAS Interpretation panel.</p> <p>OGB no.35 on Waste Management gives FES staff guidance on waste disposal. FDs arrange for waste disposal by approved operators and example records were seen. Waste disposal from dressing of deer carcasses is very effective and hygienic. Waste is stored in sealed bins and uplifted regularly by a contractor.</p> <p>During this assessment all FDs demonstrated ability in keeping forest entrances clear of rubbish from fly tipping.</p> <p>FC countries' policy is that the use of biodegradable lubricants should be used wherever practicable and is a normal harvesting contract requirement for use by chainsaws and harvester heads.</p> <p>Harvesting and ground preparation contractors had adequate spillage kit at the active sites.</p>
Criterion 6.8 Use of biological control agents and genetically modified organisms	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>FC countries implement a risk assessment procedure for operations involving use of biological control agents.</p> <p>Use of Biological Control Agents are also documented within the main document of a pesticide strategy, e.g. use of the predator <i>Rhizophagus grandis</i> against outbreaks of Great Spruce Bark Beetle (<i>Dendroctonus micans</i>) in Galloway FD, FES. Records are kept of use.</p> <p>In FCE NEE FD has been the District selected to trial extensively the use of nematodes as a biological control agent for combating weevil attack of young trees. Results are being recorded and documented in the FD's annual pesticide strategy update.</p> <p>In FCE East Anglia FD make good use of the biological control agent, the fungus <i>Phlebiopsis</i> as a stump treatment against butt rot. This is instead of the previously conventional application of urea which is</p>

	<p>technically a pesticide and rich in nitrogen.</p> <p>FCW have in the past made use of the biological control agent <i>Rhizophagus grandis</i> as a means of control of <i>Dendroctonus micans</i> (Great Spruce Bark Beetle) which is a potentially serious pest species. In such situations, FCW have involved the assistance of the FC Forest Research Agency when operating a release programme. These control measures using <i>Rhizophagus</i> were successfully used against this pest many years ago without negative environmental impact.</p> <p>FCW are continuing with the use of (indigenous) nematodes as a means of biological control to combat weevil attack on young trees at replanting. Forest Research states the nematodes only move a few centimetres after application around the stump. Although common in woodland soil, they are not present under dense conifer crops. The type of nematode used is also commonly used to fight pests in horticulture and domestic gardens. This is now a well recognised method of weevil control in the UK.</p> <p>FD records and interview with FD staff confirm that GMOs are not used. There is no evidence to the contrary.</p>
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Criterion 6.9 The use of exotic species

Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>FES are preparing for the use of the biological control agent <i>Rhizophagus grandis</i> as a potential means of control of <i>Dendroctonus micans</i> (Great Spruce Bark Beetle) where this serious pest species has very recently been detected in Galloway FD. The FC Forest Research Agency is working with district staff about a release programme.</p> <p>Similar control measures using <i>Rhizophagus</i> were successfully used against this pest in Wales many years ago without negative environmental impact.</p> <p>Apart from <i>Rhizophagus</i> FES have declared there is no introduction of any such species and no other instances of such introductions have been encountered during the assessment.</p> <p>FCE have declared there is no introduction of any such species and no instances of such introductions have been encountered during the assessment.</p> <p>However, if required, NEE FD will make use of the non-native <i>Rhizophagus grandis</i> predator insect as an effective and well tried method of combating outbreaks of Spruce Bark Beetle. An outbreak has recently occurred in south-west Scotland (near the border with England).</p> <p>FCW have in the past made use of the biological control agent <i>Rhizophagus grandis</i> as a means of control of <i>Dendroctonus micans</i> (Great Spruce Bark Beetle) which is a potentially serious pest species.</p>

Criterion 6.10 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses

Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>No natural forests or woodland with areas and features of particular significance for biodiversity, including sites important for endangered but mobile species and natural processes in critical situations have been converted to plantation or non-forested land.</p> <p>In Tay FD, the Barracks area of Rannoch, there is a sound approach to restoration of blanket bog adjacent to a NNR. This has the approval of SNH. In C & T FD there is a significant scale bog restoration project taking place at Flanders Moss. Site inspection confirmed good project management and records confirm suitable consultation and regulatory approval.</p> <p>The Scottish government has set a target of generating a significant proportion of its primary energy needs from renewable sources by 2020. Therefore FES as the major government landowner has the potential to make a significant contribution via leasing land to windfarm developers.</p> <p>As with any development of this nature, all windfarm proposals are subject to an extensive planning approval legal process. This includes an Environmental Impact Assessment process that allows comments from social and environmental stakeholders including local people and NGOs. Some windfarms with planning approval are currently being developed on land leased by FES, others are in the planning process.</p> <p>Two windfarm sites on FES land were assessed inspected and considered UKWAS compliant.</p> <p>The Westminster government in London has set a target of generating 15% of its primary energy needs from renewable sources by 2020. Therefore FCE as the major government landowner has the potential to make a significant contribution via leasing land to windfarm developers.</p> <p>From interview with Senior FCE managers it is confirmed that FCE will only allow 'keyhole' type windfarm development in FCE forests. Consequently, there are no significant habitat conversion issues. As with any development of this nature, all windfarm proposals are subject to an extensive planning approval legal process. This includes an Environmental Impact Assessment process that allows comments from social</p>

	<p>and environmental stakeholders including local people and ENGOS.</p> <p>No windfarms have yet been established on FCE land to date but there is development interest in N.E.E., Peninsula, West Midlands and Sherwood FDs.</p> <p>FCW is undertaking UK BAP habitat restoration involving felling without restocking in agreement with CCW. E.g. bog restoration at North Alwens.</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government has set a target of generating a significant proportion of its primary energy needs from renewable sources in the foreseeable future. Therefore FCW as the major government land manager has the potential to make a significant contribution via leasing land to windfarm developers.</p> <p>Windfarms have begun to be established on FCW land and there is further development interest as part of the National Forest Estate Windfarm Programme which contributes to the Welsh Assembly Government's renewable energy policies. UKWAS 2nd edition compliance requirements inc. the UKWAS Interpretation Panel's guidance of October 2008 were discussed with senior and project management FCW staff at Llanymddyfri FD office. The site of a possible development at Brechfa in the FD was viewed but it is still going through the proposal / initial planning stage.</p>
PRINCIPLE 7: MANAGEMENT PLAN	
<i>Criterion 7.1 Management plan requirements</i>	
Strengths	<p>The overall approach to planning in Tay FD is very well done. In C & T FD the work planning system (as the replacement system for the coupe plan) is managed to a very high standard.</p> <p>In WA FD, several examples of excellent restocking levels with Sitka spruce were seen, e.g. Grogport, Torintuik forests. WA FD has won a public award for its management approach to the Atlantic Oak woods at Strone. Tay FD has been one of the leaders in the restoration of native pinewoods such as its activities at Rannoch.</p> <p>At Northants FD, the Bourne Wood Management Plan was of a very high standard. From inspection of several sites and interviews, the management of Hamsterley Forest in N.E.E is being done to an overall very high standard of management. The East Anglia FD planning team operate to very high standards.</p>
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>Strategic planning documentation is now consistent between FDs and all FDs sampled had well presented District Strategic Plans that link clearly to their National Forest Estate Strategic / Corporate Plan, and both in turn link clearly to the delivery of their national governments' Forestry Strategies.</p> <p>The FES national Strategic Plan 2009-2013 demonstrates very clear reference to policy, including international and global issues, e.g. climate change. This filters down to clear and well presented declaration and explanation of what FES will do to deliver the national strategy with reference to priorities and monitoring indicators for FES, ref. Appendices 1 and 2, pages 80 and 90.</p> <p>The FCE Corporate Plan 2009-2012 demonstrates very clear reference to policy, including international and global issues, e.g. climate change. This filters down to clear and well presented objectives and key performance indicators for FCE. Strategic planning documentation varies between FDs but all FDs sampled had well developed District Strategic Planning documentation.</p> <p>The FCW Corporate 2009-2012 demonstrates very clear reference to policy, including international and global issues, e.g. climate change. This filters down to clear and well presented declaration and explanation of FCW's purpose and direction for what FCW will do to deliver the national strategy with reference to objectives and corporate programmes plus monitoring indicators for FCW, ref. Appendix 1, page 36 'Performance measures'.</p> <p>The FC-GB Operational Guidance Booklet (OGB) no. 36 on Forest Design Planning is now well embedded with FC planning staff (introduced June 2007). It is intended as a FDP project management guide but also draws frequent attention for the need for UKWAS compliance within its text. Mention of UKWAS criteria are throughout OGB 36 but table 4.2 under section 4.4.5 'The impact of UKWAS and UKFS' is a key reference.</p> <p>All FDs had built programmes in their business plans to ensure full Forest Design Plan (FDP coverage by the end of March 2009. All FDPs sampled in each District had plans that achieved compliance with UKWAS 2.1.1 requirements a) to k). Whole District FDP renewal programmes were checked in each District and all showed a satisfactorily managed programme of transition between existing approvals and renewal requirements.</p> <p>The FC Coupe Record (Work Plan) system is an effective tool that enables a continuous appraisal of environmental sensitivities, in accordance with FC regulatory guidelines, throughout the planning, felling and restocking processes.</p> <p>Special characteristics are identified in the Coupe Record system for those coupes approaching felling or thinning. Forest Design Plans (FDPs) contain further details of special characteristics.</p> <p>Clearfelling is often appropriate given upland plantation situations with clear commercial objectives. Within all FDs sampled thinning was being actively undertaken or pursued experimentally dependent upon</p>

	<p>crop quality and site conditions. Equally, restocking by planting where appropriate was being undertaken at suitable stocking densities with appropriate modern techniques for preparation and maintenance of planting.</p> <p>Planting for timber objectives is not limited only to conifers. In line with the modern FC policy on broadleaves (hardwoods) planting for timber as a primary objective is developing in FES, e.g. at Westfield in Tay FD. Natural regeneration is also well utilised, particularly for native pine and native broadleaf areas with primarily conservation and amenity objectives.</p> <p>Kielder Forest Scale & Complexity. Noted for context that within NEE FD, the main Kielder Forest unit totals approx. 62,000 ha and is the largest plantation forest in Europe. There are many complex management issues which NEE FD staff have to deal with, including - restructuring, wind throw, weevil insect attack to replanting, timber transportation on rural roads, red squirrel refuge and public access. Forest design planning is therefore complex as a consequence.</p> <p>Re. Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF), Alternatives to Clearfell (ATC) or Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS) : Tay FD has assisted with the general resurgence of CCF / LISS silviculture in Scotland via providing site venues and sharing of experience gained such as for Faskally and Craiginvean.</p> <p>Re. Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF), Alternatives to Clearfell (ATC) or Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS) - In EA FD, several areas are already being managed under continuous cover and more have been identified as having potential. FCE are pursuing a programme to achieve 10% of the whole FCE woodland estate that is Windthrow Hazard Class 1 to 3 being managed under Continuous Cover Forestry silviculture. Site visits during this audit confirms suitable opportunities are being taken in each District.</p> <p>The development and implementation of Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS) as a policy is being pursued in a committed but realistic and pragmatic way. E.g. whilst clearly starting implementation, there is ongoing appraisal of silvicultural scope and in more depth of timber production consequences for FCW business and operational planning plus timber industry supplies. This is strategically sound and consistent with environmental impact assessment principles, covering economic as well as environmental and social stakeholder considerations.</p> <p>Evidence from site visits for all districts sampled found adequate separation of adjacent felling coupes in terms of age / height in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard (termed internally within FC as 'adjacency issues'. In all FDs sampled all site visits plus dialogue with staff provided good evidence.</p> <p>Throughout FDs there are some situations where felling coupes are in excess of 20 ha but in all cases assessed to date there have been adequate felling design plans incorporating FC (regulatory authority) approval.</p> <p>FC internal guidance clearly advocates lower impact systems and any felling is in accordance with the specific guidance for that type of native woodland in the relevant Forestry Commission (regulatory authority) Forest Practice Guide.</p> <p>No evidence of felling or thinning of native woodlands - other than for restoration purposes (removal of exotic conifers) - was encountered in the FDs sampled. Within such guidelines, FDs may contemplate operations involving native species if thought beneficial for conservation reasons or to cater for local and specialist markets to support the local economy or for social value reasons such as firewood.</p>
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Criterion 7.2 Management plan revision

Strengths	In Coed y Gororau FD in Wales there were examples of mid-term review that were of a particularly high standard.
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>It is an FC management system requirement that FDPs are reviewed every 5 years for their proportions of open ground and broadleaves to monitor for UKWAS diversity compliance. There is also an informal review of the whole FDP by the District planning teams at the 5 year stage wherein the need for any amendments or approval extensions before a future formal review is identified. Under FC OGB 36 'Forest Design Planning' there must be a formal 10 year review of each FDP. FC FDPs are usually sophisticated plans covering what is normally a large area in UK terms and requiring extensive consultation with relevant organisations and local communities. Therefore the structure of informal 5 year reviews with 10 year formal ones is entirely appropriate. Examples of 5 year reviews were selected at random from FDP files in Districts. These were checked and all found in order.</p> <p>Conifer stocking density assessments (SDAs) for restocked coupes (or new planting) must be formally undertaken at year 1 and year 5 as a standard FES procedure. Example SDAs were checked in each District and all found in order.</p> <p>Implementation of work at sites visited was either well in accordance with plans or being suitably addressed during this assessment to maintain implementation. This applied to all sites visited.</p> <p>For long term forest planning approvals each FC country follows the normal approach taken to agreeing with the Forestry Commission (regulatory authority) division in each country the procedure to be adopted in the event of any proposed deviations from approved FDPs. A table of 'tolerances' that are acceptable to the FC (ra) in the following conditions; not requiring approval, requiring approval by exchange of information, and approval requiring formal FDP amendment, is appended to FDPs.</p>

Criterion 7.3 Training and supervision of forest workers	
Strengths	<p>There were several examples of FCE supporting its staff in their further education. Staff have received time off to study for diplomas and degrees together with fees & expenses paid. This represents outstanding support as an organisation to employees.</p> <p>At EA FD Wildlife Ranger trainees working outside the FCE are being provided with training by a retired (FCE) and highly skilled Wildlife Ranger. This represents an altruistic and commendable provision of training that will continue to improve standards in the forest industry.</p> <p>Notwithstanding FCW CAR 02 re.coupe planning communications, there were examples of site supervision being undertaken to very high overall standards. E.g. By WSO at Brechfa and by WHaM at Canaston and Moel Famau.</p>
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>FES policy is only to engage adequately qualified staff and contractors with appropriate levels of supervision. Nothing to the contrary was in evidence throughout the assessment of the FDs sampled.</p> <p>Staff are also kept up to date on FSC and UKWAS and other new forestry management developments through - internal training and information dissemination / mentoring / professional development via the Institute of Chartered Foresters and general dissemination via partners meetings etc. Generally, staff were found to be aware of, and complying with the spirit and application of relevant codes of practice.</p> <p>Site monitoring was always in evidence in all FDs sampled via site inspection records linked to job planning and contracts, e.g. harvesting, restocking, felling to recycle, road building. Completed harvesting operations are analysed for actual yield and actual areas harvested are recorded ready for restocking purposes. Restocking progress is recorded once establishment levels are reached. This recording process is being developed into GIS format. There is also maintenance of coupe records and review of forest design plans.</p> <p>Contract files for work at the sites visited were examined in detail and demonstrated good records of site visits. Interviews with the management supervisors further confirmed that such monitoring was being suitably undertaken.</p>
Criterion 7.4 Public availability of the management plan elements	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	<p>Although there is clear documented evidence inc. signatures that in Northants FD, the Bourne Wood Forest Design Plan has been shown in the past to local people, it would possibly help the ongoing communications with the local community if a copy were permanently available, given the level of interest. From interview locals acknowledge good to adequate levels of communication but requested more advance knowledge of operations.</p>
Compliance	<p>FDPs in Districts were also available to the public at District offices. A summary of management plan issues and proposed operations are often on permanent display at forests with high visitor numbers.</p> <p>There was record of FDPs having been made available to the public and to ENGOs and neighbours.</p> <p>All woodland neighbours are invited to Forest Design Plan consultations and at these presentations owners of adjoining woodlands are made aware of proposals and are able to make comment to the FC (regulatory authority) if any amendments to concerns over restructuring cannot be agreed. No complaints from neighbouring woodland owners were received from stakeholder consultation.</p> <p>There was record of FDPs having been made available to the public at Northants FD (e.g. Bourne Wood). There was record of FDPs having been made available to students at NEE FD.</p> <p>Restocking & fallow ground – Discussed with document review and site observations at all Districts. Confirmed that it is possible to show that restocking is keeping pace with felling re. UKWAS requirements.</p>
PRINCIPLE 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATION	
Criterion 8.1 Frequency, intensity and consistency of monitoring	
Strengths	<p>The trial of new software (Conservation Extension) at Northants FD in FCE represents an innovative approach and could lead to significant improvements and efficiency in the recording and monitoring of biodiversity.</p>
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>The FES national Strategic Plan 2009-2013 has clear and well presented declaration and explanation of what FES will do to deliver the national strategy with reference to priorities and monitoring indicators for FES, ref. Appendices 1 and 2, pages 80 and 90. There is national monitoring of FES activities with Climate change impact, Timber production, Business development, Community development, Access and health, Environmental quality, Biodiversity. These subjects correspond with the key (7) themes of the Scottish Forestry Strategy.</p>

	<p>The FCE Corporate Plan 2009-2012 demonstrates very clear reference to policy, including international and global issues, e.g. climate change. This filters down to clear and well presented objectives and key performance indicators for FCE.</p> <p>The FCW national Corporate Plan 2009-2012 has clear and well presented declaration and explanation of what FCW will do to deliver the national strategy with reference to priorities and monitoring indicators for FCW, ref. Appendix 1, page 36. There is national monitoring of FCW activities with the performance measures within the monitoring plan that is Appendix 1. These relate to Responding to Climate Change, Woodlands for People, Developing a Competitive & Integrated Forest Sector, Improving Environmental Quality. These subjects correspond with the key themes of the Welsh Forestry Strategy.</p> <p>The main basis for general monitoring is the FDP cycle (every 5 years). It is an FC/FES management system requirement that FDPs are reviewed every 5 years for their proportions of open ground and broadleaves to monitor for UKWAS diversity compliance.</p> <p>Conifer stocking density assessments (SDAs) for restocked coupes (or new planting) must be formally undertaken at year 1 and year 5 as a standard FC/FES procedure.</p> <p>Annual monitoring also takes place where appropriate, e.g. staff appraisals, staff absence from work, financial review, timber production, restocking, pesticide use, deer populations etc.</p>
Criterion 8.2 Research and data collection for monitoring	
Strengths	<p>At C & T FD in FES the squirrel monitoring measures and recording which are taking place by the Habitats and Conservation team was found to be very effective.</p> <p>In the FDs visited, there were some excellent examples of rare species monitoring, e.g. Dormice, Red Kites, Otters, Woodlark, Nightjar, Red Squirrel, Black Grouse.</p> <p>From analysis figures and graphs seen, N.E.E. Operational managers demonstrated impressive attention to monitoring and yield prediction accuracy, together with innovative use of callipers with electronic download for mensuration data.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>There are FCW gaps in monitoring of UK BAP fauna and SSSI condition statements are not always being monitored at FD level.</p> <p>In Coed y Gororau FD at North Alwens there is commendable conservation management for maintenance and enhancement of Black Grouse (UK BAP species). However, there was no clear monitoring plan for this population and suitable records were not available. North Alwens contains a designated area of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Countryside Commission for Wales (CCW) have overall legal responsibility for SSSIs including their monitoring. This takes the form of CCW condition statements. Although CyG FD staff knew how to access the CCW website to find these statements, analysis and awareness of the CCW status of the SSSIs managed in CyG FD were not being regularly reviewed in a systematic way, and an overall picture of all SSSIs condition was not readily available in the FD at time of audit.</p> <p>Some monitoring records are not being kept in a form which ensures that they are of use over the long term.</p> <p>FCW's sub-compartment data base (SCDB) is not recording details of conifers other than Sitka spruce and neither is it recording details of broadleaves. This information should be recorded in a form that is use over the long term for future reference on performance and adaptability to climate change.</p> <p>In Llanyddyfri FD the initial PAWS field survey data is not being kept in a form that is suitable for future reference. This valuable data should be available to planning, conservation and operational staff to assist them with maintenance and enhancement of remnant features of ancient woodland on PAWS sites, including future reference as sites are restored.</p> <p>FCW CAR 01 raised.</p> <p>Discussion with FES planning staff at HQ indicated that a new sub-compartment database that will show provenance (non-native species) and seed origin (native species) will be operational by the end of 2009.</p> <p>At C & T FD, although records are being maintained regarding the presence and absence recording of red and grey squirrels, it would be appropriate to continue to update the records to cover the previous season - records were only available for review for 2007 during the audit.</p>
Compliance	<p>Re. Surveillance 04 2008</p> <p>Areas of particular significance for biodiversity were are not being adequately monitored and monitoring records are not being kept in a form that ensures they are of use over the long term.</p> <p>Somerset Environmental Records Centre has been commissioned to monitor species and habitats as part of the Naroche Project at Peninsula FD. However, an important system of mires is not being monitored. Additionally, there are no plans to consider how necessary monitoring will continue following the completion of the project and the cessation of funding.</p> <p>FCE CAR 06 raised.</p> <p>HQ had reviewed the issue with District staff. Planning and Conservation staff have reviewed biodiversity monitoring at District level. Peninsula FD has reviewed its biodiversity monitoring including the Naroche</p>

	<p>mire system.</p> <p>At North East England (Kielder) FD a long term system of mire restoration from plantation is in place. Staff were interviewed, site visit made and monitoring records of suitable form for future access and long term use were seen. These areas are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest.</p> <p>FCE CAR 06 closed</p> <p>FC have set up a system for monitoring UKBAP priority habitats across the estate. They have now recorded where all the priority habitats are, and monitor and record changes in open ground inc. bog habitat of conservation value and ancient woodlands through this system.</p> <p>FC's use of GIS is now widespread and includes records of felling, thinning, replanting and fallow, plus records of biodiversity & conservation and heritage data.</p>
<p>Criterion 8.3 Chain of custody</p>	
<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Management of Chain of Custody procedures for venison production and sales at East Anglia and Northants FDs was exemplary.</p> <p>Management of Chain of Custody procedures by WHaM relating to the harvesting operations at Moel Famau in Coed y Gororau FD was very robust and being done very diligently. This includes the use of an electronic PIN to authorise issue to drivers and match the FC system of 'U3b' dispatch notes that identify lorry loads of timber.</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<p>The FC GB Finance and Accounting Services (FAS) invoicing system for timber sales is using an invalid certification code number for chain of custody.</p> <p>A FC GB minor CAR was raised.</p> <p>Customers have been informed by the FC to refer to the individual FC country certificate code numbers meantime. Accounts software enabling use of non pre-printed invoices has been resourced. FC have stated that everything is now ready.</p> <p>Good progress to close out is noted but this CAR remains open until evidence of FC using a valid certification code is seen on actual invoices.</p>
<p>Compliance</p>	<p>The FC system of contract number, dispatch date on timber advice notes (U3b) and load weight tickets plus FC invoices does enable timber to be traced back to the forest of origin.</p> <p>Risk of non-certified timber sources entering the system is extremely low. The FC estate is 100% certified.</p> <p>Examples were checked in Districts.</p> <p>Since the field audit, the GB chain of custody code number 'SGS-COC-0358' has been withdrawn. It had previously been introduced in 2000 during the course of the first certificate only for the purpose of avoiding confusion amongst timber purchasers covering GB, dealing with more than one country and therefore dealing with more than one country FM/COC code number. The present situation is that the individual countries of Wales, England and Scotland are responsible for maintaining their own individual country FM/COC certificate.</p> <p>FC timber can either be sold standing, at roadside to timber purchasers or operations continue to the mill gate of sawmills and small roundwood processors. FC harvesting managers maintain records of U3bs / PINs plus all weight tickets and any measured timber during harvesting operations. This is used as data to raise FC's own sales invoices which also state the timber as 'FSC Pure'.</p> <p>Deer larders were visited and their administration through to invoicing was also assessed. The FC's Wildlife Management System (WMS) and the Wild Venison Standard (WVS) are common to each country.</p> <p>Procedures inc. CoC set out in Wildlife Management System (WMS and Operational Guidance Booklet (OGB) 5 and compliance with relevant Food Safety Legislation.</p> <p>The FC system of carcass tagging and electronic numbering plus FC invoices does enable venison to be traced back to the forest of origin. Risk of non-certified timber venison entering the system is extremely low. All animals culled are derived from the FC estate. FSC Pure carcasses.</p> <p>Not all FDs produce Christmas trees but a site in NEE FD was inspected and FC staff plus a worker interviewed.</p> <p>The FCE system of Christmas tree load advice notes (U3b) and on site counting of loads prior to dispatch does enable Christmas trees to be traced back to the forest of origin. Risk of non-certified timber sources entering the system is low. The FES and FCE estates are 100% certified.</p> <p>The key staff from FC Finance and Accounting Services based at FC GB HQ in Edinburgh were also interviewed regarding the raising of invoices and the system inspected.</p>

Criterion 8.4 Incorporation of monitoring results into the management plan	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>It is an FC management system requirement that Forest Design Plans are reviewed every 5 years for their proportions of open ground and broadleaves to monitor for UKWAS diversity compliance. There is also an informal review of the whole FDP by the District planning teams at the 5 year stage wherein the need for any amendments or approval extensions before a future formal review is identified. This review by District planning teams includes analysis of monitoring data such as FD felling & thinning programmes and restocking programmes & planned fallow periods.</p> <p>From interview and discussion, planning forest managers interviewed well understand the relevance of monitoring for the purpose of analysis, particularly for management plan reviews. Managers monitor and analyse data such as forest diversity in terms of age and species alterations, success of restocking practice, deer control and aspects of conservation, e.g. SAC/SSSI/ASNW condition, PAWS restoration success and management for BAP fauna and flora etc.</p> <p>Examples of such FDP analysis and review were discussed with the planning teams in all FDs visited plus the relevant documentation seen.</p>
Criterion 8.5 Publicly available summary of monitoring	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>FC summarise where appropriate results of their individual Forest Design Plan, District and national monitoring within FDP revisions, District Strategic Plan revisions and their Corporate Plans. FDP revisions are carried out every 5 years. District Strategic Plans are fluid documents which are constantly evolving in response to developing issues but with significant reviews periodically by District Managers. District Strategic Plans are publicly available.</p> <p>There is commitment in each country to government policies on openness and transparency in dealing with information. Non-confidential information is publicly and readily available where appropriate and reasonably requested.</p> <p>In all FDs visited monitoring records on GIS and sub compartment databases are readily available to provide summaries at any time they are required.</p> <p>When management plans have been due for review, assessment confirms that managers consider and analyse where appropriate such monitoring data with a view to assisting the plan review. This monitoring data is also publicly available if requested. E.g. of requests being met for students in NEE FD.</p>
PRINCIPLE 9: HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS	
Criterion 9.1 Evaluation to determine high conservation value attributes	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>In common with other UK forest managers, FC have determined through consultation with national stakeholders (FC regulatory authority and Scottish Natural Heritage / Natural England / CCW that designated Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protected Areas (SPAs), Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) shall be classed as High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF). FC have then reviewed all woods and forests under their management for the presence of such woodland sites and incorporated special measures into the relevant management plans. Measures include identification of boundaries and mapping plus agreement with stakeholders how such sites should be managed to maintain and enhance their HCVF status.</p> <p>The Forest Design Plan and Coupe Record process is the FC management planning system that ensures such sites are protected and the requirements of rare, threatened & endangered (RTE) species also protected with provision for their conservation.</p> <p>Throughout the audit sites were known to FC managers, identified & mapped within management plan documentation and protective measures agreed with Scottish Natural Heritage / Natural England / CCW as the conservation stakeholders involved. All site visits confirmed such sites were being appropriately managed accordingly.</p> <p>In addition, at least 15% of the forest areas of sites visited showed evidence of primary management for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, even if they did not contain HCVF, demonstrating an UKWAS compliant approach to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity by FES. All Management Plans seen included a table showing planned progress toward achieving UKWAS compliance and FC Management Plans are now compliant.</p>

Criterion 9.2 Consultation process	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	There was evidence of the normal Forest Design Plan process working. This process requires approval by the Forestry Commission (regulatory authority) including appropriate levels of consultation under the guidance of the Forestry Commission. SACs, SPAs, SSSIs and ASNW are regarded within the UK as HCVPs by all statutory consultees. Copies of consultation correspondence, stakeholder lists, maps and FC approved plans were available.
Criterion 9.3 Measures to maintain and enhance high conservation value attributes	
Strengths	In C & T FD there is a very large scale native woodland development project, which when completed will become the largest area of native woodland in Scotland. Most SSSIs in NEE, EA and Northants FDs are now in either 'Favourable' or 'Unfavourable Recovering' condition. This is a considerable achievement and a credit to FCE. At North East England FD the FCE written management plans applicable to the SSSIs visited were found to be of an extremely high standard.
Weaknesses	
Compliance	In all FDs designated sites are the subjects of agreed management plans (within Forest Design Plans). Examples of endorsements by SNH / NE / CCW and records of correspondence were checked. On page 35 of the FCW Corporate Plan 2009-2012, it states that FCW will, for SACs and SSSIs on the national woodland estate managed by FCW, update with relevant actions all the management agreements in the CCW special sites project action database, and begin to implement those actions. FC advice clearly advocates lower impact systems and any felling is in accordance with the specific guidance for that type of native woodland in the relevant Forestry Commission Forest Practice Guide. In all FDs ASNW Inventory maps have been identified in a GIS database and are marked on maps. Management of ASNW and PAWS are referred to in FD Strategic planning documents and each FD visited has a restoration programme and/or management rationale for the categories of different PAWS type categories relative to their quality and quantity of ancient remnants. Throughout all FDs the removal of non-native species including both exotic tree species and <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> is a common conservation project. Northants FD happens to have 24% of the FCE's ASNW. Accordingly, FCE developed the Northants Ancient Woods Project (AWP) in 1989 based on advice by the eminent forest ecologist, George Peterken. AWP advice clearly advocates lower impact systems and any felling is in accordance with the specific guidance for that type of native woodland in the relevant Forestry Commission Forest Practice Guide.
Criterion 9.4 Monitoring to assess effectiveness	
Strengths	Red Squirrel monitoring in Tay and C & T FDs is excellent. Water Vole monitoring in C & T FD is exceptionally good. FES in WA FD work closely with their conservation project partners, the Scottish Wildlife Trust, in monitoring the re-introduction of beavers at Knapdale.
Weaknesses	
Compliance	HCVP conservation monitoring at the FDs visited is thorough and effective, in each case being overseen by a dedicated ecologist. To determine whether SSSIs are in suitable condition, they must be subject to formal condition monitoring by Scottish Natural Heritage / Natural England / CCW. It is from this data that the effectiveness of the FC's management of its SSSIs is objectively monitored. FC Wildlife Rangers in each country maintain annual monitoring of rare species such as rare birds of prey and rare woodland grouse. Rangers report more often than just annually to their district management as to their maintenance or enhancement. Another example is the monitoring of PAWS restoration where effectiveness of the measures being used are assessed for success in achieving natural tree regeneration and maintenance of associated rare ground flora.
PRINCIPLE 10: PLANTATIONS	
Criterion 10.1 Statement of objectives in the management plan	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	

Compliance	<p>Strategic planning documentation is now consistent between FDs and all FDs sampled had well presented District Strategic Plans that link clearly to their National Forest Estate Strategic / Corporate Plan, and both in turn link clearly to the delivery of their national governments' Forestry Strategies.</p> <p>The FES national Strategic Plan 2009-2013 demonstrates very clear reference to policy, including international and global issues, e.g. climate change. This filters down to clear and well presented declaration and explanation of what FES will do to deliver the national strategy with reference to priorities and monitoring indicators for FES, ref. Appendices 1 and 2, pages 80 and 90.</p> <p>The FCE Corporate Plan 2009-2012 demonstrates very clear reference to policy, including international and global issues, e.g. climate change. This filters down to clear and well presented objectives and key performance indicators for FCE. Strategic planning documentation varies between FDs but all FDs sampled had well developed District Strategic Planning documentation.</p> <p>The FCW Corporate 2009-2012 demonstrates very clear reference to policy, including international and global issues, e.g. climate change. This filters down to clear and well presented declaration and explanation of FCW's purpose and direction for what FCW will do to deliver the national strategy with reference to objectives and corporate programmes plus monitoring indicators for FCW, ref. Appendix 1, page 36 'Performance measures'.</p> <p>The FC-GB Operational Guidance Booklet (OGB) no. 36 on Forest Design Planning is now well embedded with FC planning staff (introduced June 2007). It is intended as a FDP project management guide but also draws frequent attention for the need for UKWAS compliance within its text. Mention of UKWAS criteria are throughout OGB 36 but table 4.2 under section 4.4.5 'The impact of UKWAS and UKFS' is a key reference.</p> <p>All FDs had built programmes in their business plans to ensure full Forest Design Plan (FDP coverage by the end of March 2009. All FDPs sampled in each District had plans that achieved compliance with UKWAS 2.1.1 requirements a) to k). Whole District FDP renewal programmes were checked in each District and all showed a satisfactorily managed programme of transition between existing approvals and renewal requirements.</p>
<i>Criterion 10.2 Plantation design and layout</i>	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>There is planning and site evidence of restructuring taking place in all the Districts and operational sites visited during this assessment. Even aged conifer plantations were being (or planning to be) partially felled and restocked over at least 20 periods of time with resultant diversity. All FDs visited were planning felling and restocking coupes for compliance with the concept of 'adjacency', as per the UK Forestry Standard requiring '2 metres / 7 years' etc. between coupes to achieve improved landscape diversity, replanting will be phased over time to newly designed, more windfirm boundaries. This will avoid replicating large areas of even aged plantation.</p> <p>There were good examples of such restructuring taking place in all FDs.</p> <p>There were very few examples of new planting within the Districts sampled where the focus is much more on restocking consistent with most FDs. However, in Tay FD, FES, the proposed new community woodland at Westfield, near Alyth, will enhance the visual and ecological value of the wider landscape.</p> <p>FES has quite recently taken a policy decision to become more involved in Urban and Community forestry projects. This will manifest itself particularly in the central belt of Scotland where the vast majority of the Scottish population is located. New planting will likely be more common in this situation.</p> <p>FCE has taken a national policy decision to become more involved in Urban and Community forestry projects. Within the districts sampled this is manifesting itself by such projects as involvement in the Thames Chase Community Forest development by East Anglia FD.</p> <p>FCW has taken a policy decision to become more involved in Urban and Community forestry projects, e.g. in the densely populated south Wales valleys and around the cities of Cardiff, Swansea etc. which are located along the south Wales coast. The aim is to improve the environment and accessibility of these areas inc. new planting on derelict land. New planting will likely be more common in these urban situations.</p>
<i>Criterion 10.3 Diversity in composition</i>	
Strengths	In Tay FD, the proposed new community woodland at Westfield, near Alyth, has had a very high level of input in producing what will be a very diverse woodland including a high proportion of native broadleaves.
Weaknesses	At The Stang Forest in North East England FD, there was browsing pressure on broadleaves from deer, rabbits, sheep, cattle and grey squirrel. FCE are trying to address these pressures with some degree of success but it is important for species diversity requirement for UKWAS that they are able to find the resources to properly succeed.
Compliance	It is an FC management system requirement that FDPs are reviewed every 5 years for their proportions of open space and broadleaves to monitor for UKWAS diversity compliance.

	<p>Often considerably greater areas of open space and native woodland are present. However, all forests assessed complied with this requirement from analysis of management plans and maps together with site verification.</p> <p>All forests assessed complied with this criterion from analysis of management plans (FDPs) and maps together with site verification. All FDPs seen in all Districts were able to demonstrate UKWAS species percentages compliance with this requirement. This is usually by way of analysis of the current growing stock into percentages by area and comparing with projected species in 20 years in the format of pie charts. Site visits backed up this analysis of compliance.</p> <p>New planting will likely be more common in these urban situations, as per Thames Chase Community Forest development by East Anglia FD in FCE. Interview with EA FD staff confirms that a wide range of species inc. a high proportion of broadleaves will be used.</p> <p>The major impact of Red Band Needle Blight will significantly affect the species make up of much of central and southern England for the FCE estate. Corsican pine will be used much less with alternative use of Douglas fir, Larch and Scots pine.</p> <p>The NEE FD target for the Kielder Forest is 7% to 8% native broadleaves by 20 years time in equivalent area applied over the whole forest complex.</p>
Criterion 10.4 Species selection	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	<p>From interview with District staff there is some disparity in views over plant supply. Operational staff interviewed confirm there is discussion between operational managers and the FES nurseries as to what is appropriate planting stock for the sites' requirements. The position is similar in England and Wales. It must be borne in mind that there is normally a 3 year growth period in the nursery between advance order and delivery. Matching supply with operational fluctuations in yearly demand will be an ongoing challenge.</p>
Compliance	<p>All sites visited complied with this criterion based on management plan rationale, dialogue with managers and site observation. The normal range of conifer and broadleaves used in UK forestry management was encountered. From discussions with managers and the site evidence seen, the use of non-native North American conifers and European conifers and broadleaves was suitably balanced for plantations. Where site conditions are suitable, particularly in the higher rainfall conditions of the West of the country, the North American Sitka Spruce is favoured for its growth performance and the market requirements of timber production. Similarly, the more site demanding Douglas Fir is also grown for quality timber purposes wherever soil conditions permit. In the drier East of the country, Scots Pine of plantation origin is used for timber objectives despite its slower growth performance where Spruce and Firs can be less suited for lower quality dry soil site conditions.</p> <p>Equally, there were several examples of native species being used (inc. via natural regeneration) where appropriate to the objectives, e.g. Oak and other native broadleaves in the Atlantic Oak woods of Strone and Collaig in WA FD. Tay FD has used native Caledonian Scots Pine to naturally regenerate their native Pinewoods, e.g. at Rannoch.</p> <p>Equally for FCW, there were several examples of native species being used (inc. via natural regeneration) where appropriate to the objectives, e.g. Oak and other native broadleaves in the Wye valley of Llany FD plus natural regeneration of Ash at Bontuchel in CyG FD. The Forest Research Agency is producing guidance on species selection in response to forecast climate change impact on forestry in the UK. From interview and provision of the guidance documents, FCW staff have access to this well produced information.</p>
Criterion 10.5 Restoration of natural forest (PAWS = Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site)	
Strengths	<p>In Tay FD native woodland restoration follows an exemplary approach and practice.</p> <p>It is commendable that FCW are planning on undertaking PAWS resurvey work to aim for consistency in all FDs with their planning prescriptions and operational management for PAWS.</p> <p>All FC countries consult the UK Forest Research Agency (who are carrying out scientific research on PAWS) as they revise and further develop their PAWS practice.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Site assessments of the PAWS within West Argyll District are insufficiently advanced.</p> <p>Only approx. 33% of the PAWS sites in West Argyll have been assessed. Although there was no site evidence of damage to ground flora from this audit, where pre-operational checks are made before work begins on PAWS sites in West Argyll, there is a lack of systematic consideration for possible ground flora protection requirements.</p> <p>FES CAR 04 raised.</p> <p>In WA FD reliance upon the rolling programme of FDP reviews may be too long a period in some circumstances. Acknowledged that this District has a high proportion of PAWS and there are examples of other outstanding conservation work, but in the absence of assessment data for PAWS, there is no analysis that this conservation work has been prioritised relative to site quality.</p>

	<p>In East Anglia and Northants FDs a further challenge is the monitoring of restoration of ancient woodland indicator plants. N.E.E. conservation staff do monitor for ground flora but this should be explicitly specified in their monitoring document template.</p> <p>Some FCE surveyors prefer to undertake PAWS site survey assessments in the autumn when the bracken is down and tree regeneration is more easily seen. It is very important that surveys attempt to include assessment of ground flora as well. In the autumn fungi will obviously be evident but surveys must also be done in the Spring to assess for ground flora.</p> <p>There is a need to ensure that PAWS sites planned for clearfell pre-UKWAS 2nd edition are reviewed. Felling may or may not still be appropriate. E.g. examples seen in East Anglia FD.</p>
Compliance	<p>Interview with FC in all FDs at all levels – planning, conservation, operations demonstrates a high awareness of the need for PAWS management, including protection of remnant features, restoration and monitoring. There was also evidence of PAWS survey data, reference to site plans within FDPs and operational practice in all FDs visited.</p> <p>Re. Surveillance 04 2008</p> <p>Existing PAWS field survey notes were not available to operational staff to assist them with maintenance and enhancement of remnant features of ancient woodland on PAWS sites.</p> <p>FCE CAR 07 raised.</p> <p>HQ had reviewed the issue with District staff. District Planning and Conservation staff checked availability of such PAWS survey records.</p> <p>Randomly selected PAWS survey records were seen in North East England (Kielder), East Anglia and Northants FDs.</p> <p>FCE CAR 07 closed</p> <p>FCE are currently undertaking a further review of its Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs) 3 and 22 on operational management for Ancient Woodlands for District staff and confirm the views of the Forest Research Agency are consistent with their content. FCE hope to combine into one OGN by the end of the year if possible. FCE senior management have had further discussion and correspondence with the ENGO, The Woodland Trust, over their views on PAWS restoration practice by FCE and the WT's views on OGNs 3 and 22. FCE intend to continue the dialogue with the WT. In the interim, before any published guidance by the FCE working group, FCE had issued (2nd April 2009) basic guidance to Districts in that managers must assess each PAWS site on its individual merits in determining whether thinning, felling or a combination of the two is the most suitable prescription. If managers have any doubts, they are recommended to consult the Forest Research Agency.</p> <p>Re. Surveillance 04 2008</p> <p>Management prescriptions do not ensure that operations are implemented in a manner that does not adversely affect remnant features of ancient woodland.</p> <p>On a FCW PAWS, ground preparation for restocking had caused damage to Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) remnant features.</p> <p>At Wentwood Forest in Llanyddyfri District, two recently restocked PAWS areas showed clear evidence that significant remnant features had been damaged, e.g. holly (<i>Ilex</i>) saplings and seedlings had been uprooted and swept into windrows during site preparation for replanting.</p> <p>FCW CAR 08 raised under UKWAS 6.3.2 d) – at Surveillance 04 (2008)</p> <p>HQ had reviewed the issue with WSO and District staff.</p> <p>WSO staff interview and site evidence showed that WSO staff were aware ground preparation must be carefully considered on restocking of PAWS sites and there was no site evidence of inappropriate ground preparation or damage to remnant features on PAWS sites during the audit.</p> <p>FCW CAR 08 closed.</p> <p>On page 33 of the FCW Corporate Plan 2009-2012, FCW state that they will continue to plan and prioritise restoration of all their restorable PAWS. A target over the next three years of restoring 1,000 ha to 50% native species has been set.</p> <p>FCW have a revised steer on PAWS policy from the very recently published (May 2009) new Welsh Forestry Strategy – 'Woodlands for Wales' by the Ministry of Rural Affairs of the Welsh Assembly Government. Senior FCW policy staff have advised that implementation of the new national strategy will mean that all restorable PAWS must be prioritised and then restored using best practice. There is now a FCW Policy Implementation Group formed on the 9th July for PAWS restoration by FCW.</p> <p>FCW are now reviewing those PAWS previously proposed for felling and replanting. There is published (June 2009) internal guidance for FDs reviewing PAWS coupes previously planned for felling. FCW is being supported by a senior scientist from the Forest Research Agency who attended the PAWS Monitoring, Reporting & Prioritising meeting of 18 May 2009.</p>

	Evidence from all FC PAWS sites visited confirmed overall compliance.
Criterion 10.6 Impacts on soil and water	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	See FES CAR 02 raised under 4.2.1.
Compliance	<p>The FC Coupe Record system is an effective tool that enables a continuous appraisal of environmental sensitivities, in accordance with FC regulatory guidelines, throughout the planning, felling and restocking processes. The Coupe Record system ensures that all potential impacts are taken account of and special features are protected.</p> <p>Many of the sites inspected were being suitably worked and all relevant guidelines were being complied with.</p> <p>From interview, FD staff in all Districts clearly understood the requirement that for new roads, all necessary consents shall be obtained (inc.EIA) if appropriate.</p> <p>For FES, in C & T FD approval had been obtained for the new road at Glenfinglas. In WA FD approval had been obtained for the new road at Collaig.</p> <p>Where water discharge had become a problem at Llanllawddog, WHaM managers had responded and taken appropriate mitigating action to maintain compliance with water guidelines. Confirmed by examination of site diaries, site visit and WHaM correspondence.</p> <p>On site visits to FDs all harvesting extraction tracks were suitably designed to minimise site impact including diligent pursuit of brush matting techniques for forwarder use where appropriate. There was no evidence from any of the sites visited of drainage problems associated with harvesting.</p>
Criterion 10.7 Pests and diseases	
Strengths	<p>In WA FD, FES, documented evidence of sophisticated and systematic monitoring of grazing impact from deer browsing was seen. An excellent example of well designed and implemented monitoring for management purposes. Deer management in Tay FD, FES, is exemplary.</p> <p>Deer management is exceptionally effective in Kielder District. In EA FD the Deer Management Strategy is exemplary.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Deer management at Lavenham Forest in East Anglia FD, FCE, is based on a measurement of impacts. However, in spite of plans to make use of enclosure cages no measurements of impacts are being made. At Harling Forest in East Anglia FD extreme damage from rabbits had required replanting, which had subsequently suffered a second heavy impact. An appraisal of the situation is required in order to effect preventative measures.</p>
Compliance	<p>The Forest Design Plan and Work Plan (Coupe Record) process ensures that planning takes account of such risks. Restructuring is leading to a more diverse age structure with improvements in the creation of future windfirm edges for coupes as previous large areas of a single age class are broken up with felling. Annual forest health days are used to inform FC staff of forest disease issues.</p> <p>A more diverse forest structure will reduce the speed of fire movement. It will also allow more natural forest climate conditions inc. passage of air and incomplete canopy connection, both of which should make for less suitable conditions for the swift spread of pests and disease. There was visible evidence of increasing structural diversity from site inspection.</p> <p>In East Anglia FD, FCE, Red Band Needle Blight has become a serious disease problem in Corsican Pine (CP) areas. There is ongoing liaison and monitoring with the Forest Research Agency.</p> <p>At NEE staff were equally well aware of the potential threat from Spruce Bark beetle, given the recent outbreak in south-west Scotland. The use of the biological control agent, <i>Rhizophagus grandis</i> is well established in the UK and has been successful in the past. NEE FD would use it accordingly if required.</p> <p>FC Forest Management Memorandum (FMM) no.4 outlines standards for assessing stocking density. Visits to sites are recorded.</p> <p>Deer management in all FDs is based on the FC system of Deer Management Plans (DMP). This includes a policy statement, objectives, targets and actions. Deer populations are managed in separate Deer Management Units and each of these has its own plan. Cull requirements are related to acceptable deer densities, which are monitored by external contractors. Culling is done by trained staff and through shooting leases.</p> <p>The new FCW wildlife management initiative that is being applied throughout Wales emphasises that fencing against deer will only be used as a last resort.</p> <p>OGB no.5 on Deer Management gives FCW staff guidance on fencing against deer. FCW prefer to avoid deer fencing where feasible and their standard of deer management reflects this policy.</p> <p>The spread of Grey squirrel within Scotland is now considered a serious threat to the survival of the Red</p>

	<p>squirrel.</p> <p>SNH are consulting FES and others on "Protecting Scotland's Red Squirrels – a draft strategy for targeted grey squirrel control". The strategy aims to prevent the continued expansion of grey squirrels moving further northwards and into the remaining stronghold areas of north west, north central and western Scotland, through the 'pinch points' from the major source populations, e.g. Aberdeen. Senior FES staff with responsibility for biodiversity & conservation are liaising closely with the FC Scotland (regulatory authority) Species Policy Adviser.</p> <p>Further south FES is working primarily in partnership with SNH but also private landowners in the Scottish Borders to pursue the Scottish Government's policy of trying to establish a 'cordon sanitaire' control zone through which Grey Squirrels south of the border (and infected with the parapox virus which threatens the Red Squirrel via transmission) will be prevented from migrating north across the border. The numbers of Grey Squirrel already present north of the border in Scotland will similarly be prevented from moving south and interacting with their southern counterparts. It is thought the majority of Greys north of the border are not infected with the virus. FES Wildlife Managers are heavily involved in overall management and liaison with the various Red Squirrel interest groups and ENGOs.</p> <p>The policy & action statement on 'Grey Squirrels and England's Woodlands' was published in 2006 by FCE (Authority) and Defra (the department for environment & rural affairs). A key part of this guidance refers to analysis of 'critical threat'. In such areas and where there is necessary co-operation from neighbouring landowners, FCE will consider controlling Grey Squirrel.</p> <p>Examples of active FCE control of Grey Squirrel were in evidence in NEE FD. FCE's Kielder Forest provides the largest red squirrel reserve in the UK. Natural England, FCE and the Red Squirrel Survival Trust are working together on two joint projects.</p> <p>FCW have stated in their Corporate Plan (page 17) that they will continue to develop their approach to grey squirrel control, in partnership with others. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) have very recently approved a decision (14 July 2009) that urgent strategic action be taken in these three areas. The 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales' (CPFRSiW) is only just being published but is still not available. Naturally, as the WAG's forest manager, FCW will be required to fulfil their part in this new plan.</p>
<i>Criterion 10.8 Monitoring of impacts, species testing and tenure rights</i>	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>For all the sites visited, site inspection records are maintained within forest management files. The plans for all the sites visited, all identify the requirement for monitoring. Site inspection records are kept for all woodlands. The management planning documentation reviewed and the staff interviewed both confirm a commitment to make use of monitoring data. All managers interviewed understood the purpose and value of suitable monitoring for incorporating its analysis into revised management strategy and management plan reviews, including any impacts from plantation silviculture or exotic species.</p> <p>Given the centuries long established legal system of property law in the UK including rural land, monitoring of tenure rights in the UK does not relate to the development of plantation forestry itself, but only applies to minor boundary disputes from existing plantations. New plantation forestry in the UK is a minority activity in comparison to the existing plantations of woods and forests, many of which are well into their second rotation.</p>
<i>Criterion 10.9 Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994</i>	
Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Compliance	<p>No natural forests or woodland with areas and features of particular significance for biodiversity, including sites important for endangered but mobile species and natural processes in critical situations have been converted to plantation or non-forested land after November 1994.</p> <p>In all FDs ASNW Inventory maps have been identified in a GIS database and are marked on maps. Management of ASNW and PAWS are referred to in FD Strategic planning documents and each FD visited has a restoration programme and/or management rationale for the categories of different PAWS type categories relative to their quality and quantity of ancient remnants.</p>

9. CERTIFICATION DECISION

SGS considers that FC forest management in GB of its woods and forests in Scotland, England and Wales can be certified as:

- i. There are no outstanding Major Corrective Action Requests
- ii. The outstanding Minor Corrective Action Requests do not preclude certification, but the three FC countries in GB are required to take the agreed actions before surveillance. These will be verified by SGS QUALIFOR at the first surveillance to be carried out about 12 months from the date of the issuance of the certificate. If satisfactory actions have been taken, the CARs will be 'closed out'; otherwise, Minor CARs will be raised to Major CARs.
- iii. The management system, if implemented as described, is capable of ensuring that all of the requirements of the applicable standard(s) are met over the whole forest area covered by the scope of the evaluation;
- iv. The certificate holder has demonstrated, subject to the specified corrective actions, that the described system of management is being implemented consistently over the whole forest area covered by the scope of the certificate.

10. MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

During the surveillance evaluation, it is assessed if there is continuing compliance with the requirements of the Qualifor Programme. Any areas of non-conformance with the QUALIFOR Programme are raised as one of two types of Corrective Action Request (CAR):

- 01. **Major CARs** - which must be addressed and closed out urgently with an agreed short time frame since the organisation is already a QUALIFOR certified organisation. Failure to close out within the agreed time frame can lead to suspension of the certificate.
- 02. **Minor CARs** - which must be addressed within an agreed time frame, and will normally be checked at the next surveillance visit

The full record of CARs raised over the certification period is listed under section 11 below.

The table below provides a progressive summary of findings for each surveillance. A complete record of observations demonstrating compliance or non-compliance with each criterion of the Forest Stewardship Council Standard (the UKWAS in the UK) is contained in a separate document that does not form part of the public summary.

MAIN EVALUATION	
Issues that were hard to assess	No issues were hard to assess.
Number of CARs raised	There were no existing Minor CARs for FES, 2 existing for FCE and 2 existing for FCW. No New Major CARs were raised. 5 new Minor CARs for FES, 3 new minor CARs for FCE and 3 new CARs for FCW were raised. Some were raised against the same UKWAS requirement for more than one FC country.
SURVEILLANCE 1	
Issues that were hard to assess	
Number of CARs closed	Outstanding CARs were closed.
Nr of CARs remaining open	Outstanding CARs from previous evaluations were not closed.
New CARs raised	New Major CARs and Minor CARs were raised.
Certification Decision	<p>The forest management of the forests of remains certified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The management system is capable of ensuring that all of the requirements of the applicable standard(s) are met over the whole forest area covered by the scope of the evaluation; and ▪ The certificate holder has demonstrated, subject to the specified corrective actions, that the described system of management is being implemented consistently over the whole forest area covered by the scope of the certificate.

SURVEILLANCE 2	
Issues that were hard to assess	
Number of CARs closed	
Nr of CARs remaining open	
Nr of New CARs raised	
Certification Decision	
SURVEILLANCE 3	
Issues that were hard to assess	
Number of CARs closed	
Nr of CARs remaining open	
Nr of New CARs raised	
Certification Decision	
SURVEILLANCE 4	
Issues that were hard to assess	
Number of CARs closed	
Nr of CARs remaining open	
Nr of New CARs raised	
Certification Decision	

11. RECORD OF CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS (CARs)

FCE 06 2 nd Cert	UKWAS 2.3.3 / 2.3.5	Date Recorded>	8 Sep 2008	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	17 Sep 2009	
		Non-Conformance:						
		Areas of particular significance for biodiversity (see UKWAS 6.1.1) are not being adequately monitored and monitoring records are not being kept in a form that ensures they are of use over the long term.						
		Objective Evidence:						
		Somerset Environmental Records Centre has been commissioned to monitor species and habitats as part of the Naroche Project at Peninsula FD. However, an important system of mires is not being monitored. Additionally, there are no plans to consider how necessary monitoring will continue following the completion of the project and the cessation of funding. FCE CAR 06 raised.						
Close-out evidence:								
HQ had reviewed the issue with District staff. Planning and Conservation staff have reviewed biodiversity monitoring at District level. Peninsula FD has reviewed its biodiversity monitoring including the Naroche mire system. At North East England (Kielder) FD a long term system of mire restoration from plantation is in place. Staff were interviewed, site visit made and monitoring records of suitable form for future access and long term use were seen. These areas are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. FCE CAR 06 closed.								
FCE 07	UKWAS 6.3.2	Date Recorded>	8 Sep 2008	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	17 Sep 2009	
		Non-Conformance:						

2nd Cert		<p>Existing PAWS field survey notes were not available to operational staff to assist them with maintenance and enhancement of remnant features of ancient woodland on PAWS sites.</p> <p>Objective Evidence:</p> <p>PAWS sites in Peninsula FD were surveyed by specialist non-district FC staff some time ago. These field notes describing the PAWS features in detail were delayed in their arrival at PFD and staff changes led to their recording and availability within the district being overlooked. Field managers responsible for PAWS did not know of their existence and so they were not being checked as part of the Operational Site Assessment (OSA). This was the case at Shell Wood in Camel Valley. Whilst there was no evidence of this particular site being compromised, it is accepted by FCE that reference to such survey notes could be valuable information and should be incorporated into any OSA for a PAWS.</p> <p>FCE CAR 07 raised.</p> <p>Close-out evidence:</p> <p>HQ had reviewed the issue with District staff. District Planning and Conservation staff checked availability of such PAWS survey records.</p> <p>Randomly selected PAWS survey records were seen in North East England (Kielder), East Anglia and Northants FDs.</p> <p>FCE CAR 07 closed.</p>
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FCW 07 2nd Cert	UKWAS 5.2.1 / 5.2.2	Date Recorded>	23 Feb 2009	Due Date>		Next assessment		Date Closed>	16 Jul 2009
		Non-Conformance:							
		Pesticide strategy does not demonstrate knowledge of the latest published advice and staff are not fully aware of non-legislative guidance.							
		Objective Evidence:							
		<p>Wales Silvicultural Operations (WSO) staff are supposed to follow District pesticide strategies. The Coed y Mynydd District pesticide strategy contains information that is significantly out of date.</p> <p>E.g. The formulation described as the alpha-cypermethrin used for electrodyne treatment of bare root plants is out of date and this formulation has since been replaced by another ; there is no mention of current cypermethrin products for top up spraying ; one out of date product containing a mixture of active ingredients (all of which should have been mentioned) only has one mentioned ; it refers to guidance from FC Field Book 8 (pub.1995) and Practice Guide 15 (pub.2004), these (both well written and still extremely useful) guides contain references to out of date products and this aspect is not highlighted, yet the beginning of the strategy refers to “many chemicals being removed from the ‘approved’ list. All chemicals ‘available’ have been rigorously tested”. This is confusing to anyone not fully familiar with up to date information.</p> <p>Similarly, not all WSO staff involved in dealing with pesticides were fully aware (at time of audit in the autumn) of the very useful information contained within a Forest Research Agency review earlier in 2008 for pesticides used in FC individual countries. This ‘Chemical Summary’ in the form of a colour coded spreadsheet identifies whether active ingredient products have current UK legal approval status ; EU annex 1 listed ; on the FSC ‘highly hazardous’ list (e.g. 2,4-D, Dicamba, Isoxaben etc.) and not available for use on the certified FCW estate ; or not on the FSC’s ‘HH’ list (e.g. Asulam, Glyphosate, Triclopyr etc.) and therefore are available for use on the FCW estate ; whether FSC derogation has been applied for (e.g. Alpha Cypermethrin, Aluminium Phosphide, Warfarin etc.). This ‘Chemical Summary’ was produced at the beginning of 2008 and was updated in the summer.</p> <p>FCW CAR 07 raised.</p>							
		Close-out evidence:							
		<p>HQ had reviewed the issue with Wales Silvicultural Operations (WSO) and District staff. District staff had reviewed their Pesticide Strategies.</p> <p>The revised Coed y Mynydd pesticide strategy was seen along with the pesticide strategies for Llanymddyfri and Coed y Gororau FDs. All were considered adequate.</p> <p>WSO staff in both FDs were interviewed and the use of pesticides assessed on site. FCW staff were well aware of the current version of the ‘Chemical Summary’ in the form of a colour coded spreadsheet, together with the issue of Interim Guidance Note No.6 (update to Operational Guidance Booklet no. 15 ‘Using chemicals in the forest’. Site assessment confirmed the use of pesticides was satisfactory.</p> <p>FCW CAR 07 closed.</p>							

FCW 08 2 nd Cert	UKWAS 6.3.2 d)	Date Recorded>	23 Feb 2009	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	16 Jul 2009	
		Non-Conformance:						
		Management prescriptions do not ensure that operations are implemented in a manner that does not adversely affect remnant features of ancient woodland.						
		Objective Evidence:						
		On a PAWS, ground preparation for restocking had caused damage to Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) remnant features. At Wentwood Forest in Llanyddyfri District, two recently restocked PAWS areas showed clear evidence that significant remnant features had been damaged, e.g. holly (<i>Ilex</i>) saplings and seedlings had been uprooted and swept into windrows during site preparation for replanting. FCW CAR 08 raised.						
		Close-out evidence:						
HQ had reviewed the issue with WSO and District staff. WSO staff interview and site evidence showed that WSO staff were aware ground preparation must be carefully considered on restocking of PAWS sites and there was no site evidence of inappropriate ground preparation or damage to remnant features on PAWS sites during the audit. FCW CAR 08 closed.								

CAR #	Indicator	CAR Detail					
FC GB 01 (FES 01) (FCE 01) (FCW 02)	UKWAS 4.1.1	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	open
		Non-Conformance:					
		For FES assessing and taking into account operational impact is insufficient in Continuous Cover Forestry / Low Impact Silvicultural Systems sites.					
		For FCE there is a gap in harvesting pre-operational checks when working in areas where there is a good probability that Red Squirrels are present.					
FCW's internal communications between different management units do not always result in operations taking into account potential on-site impact.							
Objective Evidence:							

CAR #	Indicator	CAR Detail												
		<p>There were examples of CCF / LISS sites in Tay FD (Black Craig) and Cowal & Trossachs FD (Loch Ard) where no stump treatment with urea was taking place during thinning operations. Stump treatment guidance documentation and staff interview confirmed such sites would be expected to be treated with urea as protection against butt rot infection (<i>Heterobasidion annosum</i> / 'Fomes').</p> <p>At Cowal & Trossachs FD a significant part of the Loch Ard CCF / LISS site had suffered soil damage from extraction in wet conditions due to recent high rainfall. Staff shortage had contributed to a delay in either stopping work or switching earlier to another drier part of the forest. The job had been planned for summer working in anticipation of dry weather but unfortunately there had been prolonged heavy rainfall.</p> <p>Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species. There is a recognition throughout the UK that the presence of Red Squirrels must be assessed on site before commencement of high impact forestry operations, when working in areas where there is a good probability that Red Squirrels are present.</p> <p>In legal context, it is understood there are slight differences in conservation law between England and Scotland. In England, the law requires that Red Squirrel dreys (nests) are not intentionally or recklessly destroyed. The national border is adjacent North East England FD, where in Scotland the law requires that Red Squirrels are not disturbed, unless by accident.</p> <p>Within Kielder Forest Park, at Warksburn (North-East England FD), there had been the recent completion of thinning operations within an area of Norway spruce / Scots pine managed under a continuous cover system. Site evidence from cones eaten by squirrels and discussion with FCE staff confirmed there was a good probability that Red Squirrels were present within the area which was subject to the thinning.</p> <p>No pre-operations checks or drey survey of any kind was carried out prior to operations starting. There is no appropriate system in place to check for the presence of Red Squirrel in such situations.</p> <p>At Canaston in Llanymddyfri FD, the Wales Harvesting and Marketing (WHaM) site supervision was not aware the hardwood site being thinned was a PAWS site.</p> <p>At Breidden in Coed y Gororau FD the response to the availability of some spare native broadleaves was to underplant a PAWS site with predominantly Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and a minor amount of Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>). The site was a PAWS with a national vegetation classification for Ash and Oak was not really appropriate. There was no prior assessment as to the appropriate choice of species or checking of seed zone source.</p> <p>CAR 01 raised.</p> <p>(Acknowledged that there was documentary evidence of C & T FD stopping / switching harvesting operations due to water on previous occasions.)</p> <p>(Acknowledged there is evidence of excellent planning and general habitat management for Red Squirrel with a major contribution towards its conservation by FCE in North East England FD. In all other respects, management by FCE for Red Squirrel at Kielder Forest is highly commendable.)</p> <p>Acknowledged that the thinning was well done and actually appropriate for PAWS management but the communications between the Planning of the Local Area Management (LAM) team for the FD and WHaM were not working as they should.</p> <p>Acknowledged that native broadleaves transplants are a scarce resource and the action was well intended so as not to waste them, but any operations on PAWS sites must be carefully assessed.</p> <p>Close-out evidence:</p>												
FC GB 02 (FES 02)	UKWAS 4.2.1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date Recorded></td> <td>02 Oct 2009</td> <td>Due Date></td> <td>Next assessment</td> <td>Date Closed></td> <td>open</td> </tr> </table>	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	open						
Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	open									
		Non-Conformance:												
		Some harvesting operations do not conform to Soil and Water Guidelines.												
		Objective Evidence:												
		At Cowal & Trossachs FD there was significant discolouration in a small watercourse running through the Loch Ard CCF thinning site. Sediment was gaining access to the watercourse from mud coming from the result of operations above. FES staff on site agreed it was of a level requiring action.												
		At West Argyll FD a harvesting site's (Cnoc Dubh, Grogport) pre-commencement clearly stated straw bales would be present on site but none were. Conditions were wet from recent high rainfall and a lot of water was running off the site into a partially blocked roadside ditch. FES staff agreed on site it was of a level requiring action.												
		CAR 02 raised.												

CAR #	Indicator	CAR Detail					
		Close-out evidence:					
FC GB 03 (FES 03)	UKWAS 5.2.3	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	open
		Non-Conformance:					
		Storage of pesticides is not always of the required standard.					
		Objective Evidence:					
		<p>The chemstore at Glenbranter in Cowal & Trossachs FD contained several herbicide containers of a product that was many years out of date (manufactured 2000). Although evidence from old use records clearly confirmed it had not been used since 2004, this was a mixed product 'Broadsword', a minor component of which contained 'Dicamba' which is on the FSC 'highly hazardous' list. Dicamba became a HH product in 2005. There was a lack of awareness in transferring internal FC pesticide guidance information into practice. Disposal was long overdue. Previous annual inspections had not addressed this item. FC Operational Guidance (OGB) no.15 was not being followed. It recommends 2 years storage limits. Some previous spillage and absorption residue within the store had not been cleared up for approx. 3 weeks according to records. Not all knapsack sprayers were off the floor.</p> <p>CAR 03 raised.</p> <p>(Two other FES chem stores were inspected during the audit, both were compliant.)</p>					
Close-out evidence:							
Following the field audit visit FES immediately instigated a review of all their chem stores double checking for out of date products. Documented evidence has already been seen of this process plus specific licensed operator disposal of the material at Glenbranter. This showed a commendably swift and serious initial response to close out this CAR. It remains open until next surveillance but progress to closure noted.							
FC GB 04 (FES 04)	UKWAS 6.3.2	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	open
		Non-Conformance:					
		Site assessments of the PAWS within West Argyll District are insufficiently advanced.					
		Objective Evidence:					
		<p>Only approx. 33% of the PAWS sites in West Argyll have been assessed.</p> <p>Reliance upon the rolling programme of FDP reviews may be too long a period in some circumstances. Acknowledged that this District has a high proportion of PAWS and there are examples of other outstanding conservation work, but in the absence of assessment data for PAWS, there is no analysis that this conservation work has been prioritised relative to site quality.</p> <p>Although there was no site evidence of damage to ground flora from this audit, where pre-operational checks are made before work begins on PAWS sites in West Argyll, there is a lack of systematic consideration for possible ground flora protection requirements.</p> <p>CAR 04 raised.</p>					
Close-out evidence:							
FC GB 05 (FES 05) (FCE 03) (FCW	UKWAS 8.1.1 / 8.1.2	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Due Date>	Next Assessment	Date Closed>	open
		Non-Conformance:					
		<p>Health and safety requirements were not always being met and operators either do not always have first aid kit available on site or it is too distant from their working position.</p> <p>Some contractors are not complying with manufacturers' guidance on safety equipment.</p>					
		Objective Evidence:					

CAR #	Indicator	CAR Detail					
03)		<p>In Cowal & Trossachs FD road construction contractors at the Grodaich roadline site had no first aid kit anywhere on site. In West Argyll FD two chainsaw operators working on the Collaig roadline clearance had no first aid kit on their persons but over 75m distant. In Tay FD a forwarder operator's first aid kit was over 200m distant.</p> <p>Some contractors' hard hats are too old and contractors are not clear on guidance for replacement.</p> <p>At Braceborough Forest in Northants FD one forwarder operator had no hard hat on site at all. At the same site the harvester operator's was kept under other equipment in the back of his vehicle and not in his cab. At the same site a lorry driver's hard hat was manufactured in 1996 and heavily worn.</p> <p>At Croxton Forest in East Anglia FD two machine operators' hard hats were manufactured in 2003 and 2005 respectively. The operators were interviewed independently, one thought they should be replaced every 2 years, the other thought every 3 years. Both agreed they should be replaced.</p> <p>At the harvesting site at Moel Famau in Coed y Gororau FD, the manual chainsaw contractor operator supporting the mechanised harvesting contractors had no personal first aid kit to carry on his person while working. Acknowledged that there was a first aid kit on site brought by the machine operators but this was too distant for when the chainsaw operator was working.</p> <p>At Breidden in Coed y Gororau FD, a fencing contractor was erecting deer fencing. The main contractor was highly experienced but his assistant was not. Although the main contractor was nearby, the assistant was using a chainsaw to clear scrub without having had chainsaw use training. Acknowledged that when the assistant was requested to return from the van he appeared in full safety kit but without a personal first aid kit. When working, the site first aid kit was approx. 200 metres away off site in their van. The above are contrary to well recognised application of health and safety practice inc. AFAG codes of practice.</p> <p>CAR 05 raised.</p> <p>Close-out evidence:</p> <p></p> <p>Close-out evidence:</p>					
FC GB 06 (FCE 02)	UKWAS 5.5.3	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	open
Non-Conformance:							
Equipment is not always in place to deal with accidental spillages.							
Objective Evidence:							
The Round Timber Haulage Code of Practice makes clear that timber lorries should carry spillage control kit. Similarly, it is recognised environmental contingency practice that spillage kits are available on operational sites with machinery at all times.							
At Croxton Forest in East Anglia FD the only timber lorry present had no spillage kit. At Braceborough Forest in Northants FD the only timber lorry present had no spillage kit and the driver was not aware one was required. At Braceborough the harvesting contractors' spillage kit had been removed from site.							
CAR 06 raised.							
Close-out evidence:							
FC GB 07 (FCW 01)	UKWAS 2.3.2 / 2.3.3	Date Recorded>	16 Jul 2009	Due Date>	Next assessment	Date Closed>	open
Non-Conformance:							
Some monitoring records are not being kept in a form which ensures that they are of use over the long term. There are gaps in monitoring of UK BAP fauna and SSSI condition statements are not always being monitored at FD level.							
Objective Evidence:							

CAR #	Indicator	CAR Detail											
		<p>FCW's sub-compartment data base (SCDB) is not recording details of conifers other than Sitka spruce and neither is it recording details of broadleaves. This information should be recorded in a form that is use over the long term for future reference on performance and adaptability to climate change.</p> <p>In Llanymddyfri FD the initial PAWS field survey data is not being kept in a form that is suitable for future reference. This valuable data should be available to planning, conservation and operational staff to assist them with maintenance and enhancement of remnant features of ancient woodland on PAWS sites, including future reference as sites are restored.</p> <p>In Coed y Gororau FD at North Alwens there is commendable conservation management for maintenance and enhancement of Black Grouse (UK BAP species). However, there was no clear monitoring plan for this population and suitable records were not available. North Alwens contains a designated area of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Countryside Commission for Wales (CCW) have overall legal responsibility for SSSIs including their monitoring. This takes the form of CCW condition statements. Although CyG FD staff knew how to access the CCW website to find these statements, analysis and awareness of the CCW status of the SSSIs managed in CyG FD were not being regularly reviewed in a systematic way, and an overall picture of all SSSIs condition was not readily available in the FD at time of audit.</p> <p>CAR 07 raised.</p> <p>Close-out evidence:</p>											
FC GB 08	UKWAS 2.2.4	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Date Recorded></th> <td data-bbox="646 833 798 902">09 Nov 2009</td> <th>Due Date></th> <td data-bbox="798 833 949 902">30 Nov 2009</td> <th>Date Closed></th> <td data-bbox="949 833 1476 902">open</td> </tr> </table>	Date Recorded>	09 Nov 2009	Due Date>	30 Nov 2009	Date Closed>	open					
Date Recorded>	09 Nov 2009	Due Date>	30 Nov 2009	Date Closed>	open								
		<p>Non-Conformance:</p>											
		<p>The FC GB Finance and Accounting Services (FAS) invoicing system for timber sales is using an invalid certification code number for chain of custody.</p>											
		<p>Objective Evidence:</p>											
		<p>When FAS produce an invoice, the contract number, date of dispatch, U3b number, weight ticket number, weight, price per tonne etc are shown. Thus each load can accurately and reliably be traced back to its forest of origin.</p> <p>However, FC GB invoices for timber sales continue to show the code number SGS-CoC-0358 on pre-printed invoices. The code number has recently (October) had to be withdrawn to comply with FSC CoC requirements. Given the problem of pre-printed invoices and a complex bespoke software system, FAS could not simply change an electronic invoice template at the press of a button.</p> <p>Maintenance of FC FSC certification status has been via their existing individual country FM/CoC certificates. These have always been the main certification vehicle, with the FC GB CoC certificate functioning just as an over arching single code for simplicity to benefit the CoC of the customer market. Several large organisation customers buy timber from two or even three FC countries.</p> <p>Confirmed by visit to FC GB and audit of FAS on 9th Nov 2009.</p> <p>It must be borne in mind that the situation is not of the FC's own doing but is an issue that has developed in order to comply with CoC rule requirements.</p> <p>FC have done what they can in a short space of time to mitigate the situation and pursue a CoC solution.</p> <p>In an effort to fulfil the spirit of the CoC rules, customers were written to informing that SGS-CoC-0358 was no longer technically valid and that customers should read any reference to it on invoices as relating to the individual FC country FM/CoC certificate codes which were shown in the letter.</p> <p>Good progress to close out is noted but this CAR remains open until evidence of FC using a valid certification code is seen on actual invoices. However, SGS is of the conclusion that everything is ready.</p>											
		<p>Close-out evidence:</p>											

12. RECORD OF OBSERVATIONS

FES 01	UKWAS 2.2.1	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Investment – Resources			
		There were some field examples discussed during the audit where a lack of staff resource or funds had caused implications for management. At Tay FD sub-standard restocking levels adjacent the harvesting site at Black Craig were considered due to a past shortage of deer control resources. Similarly, at Rannoch Lodge wood in Tay FD, past thinning opportunities over an area had probably been lost silviculturally due to previous lack of funding for road access which has now recently been installed.			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FES 02	UKWAS 2.3.3	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Monitoring Records – Use over the long term			
		At Cowal & Trossachs FD, although records are being maintained regarding the presence and absence recording of red and grey squirrels, it would be appropriate to continue to update the records to cover the previous season - records were only available for review for 2007 during the audit. Discussion with FES planning staff at HQ indicated that a new sub-compartment database that will show provenance (non-native species) and seed origin (native species) will be operational by the end of 2009.			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FES 03	UKWAS 3.3.1	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Species suited to site and objectives - Plant supply			
		From interview with District staff there is some disparity in views over plant supply. Some local staff feel they have to take what they are given by the FES nurseries without quibble. This includes a perception that there is insufficient nursery supply of genetically improved (by vegetative propagation) Sitka Spruce (SS VP). Also, that they are not made aware if the Douglas Fir they are given is the most suitable for their FD conditions. Operational staff interviewed confirm there is discussion between operational managers and the FES nurseries as to what is required. It must be borne in mind that there is normally a 3 year growth period in the nursery between advance order and delivery. Matching supply with operational fluctuations in yearly demand will be an ongoing challenge. However, there is perhaps a need for further communication with beat foresters and their operational managers to clarify supply and demand issues.			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FES 04	UKWAS 4.2.1	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Harvesting operations – Conformation with water guidelines			
		At the Cnoc Dubh harvesting site at Grogport forest in WA FD, the forwarder contractor operator had left the site with his machine, leaving the site with less scope to deal with the consequences of heavy rain impact (using the forwarder grab) upon the extraction tracks leading to the roadside ditch which had a blockage and the road itself, a small section of which was under shallow water. Neither the purchasing Forestry Works Manager, nor the forwarder operator himself had thought to check with the FES site supervisor, who was trying hard to mitigate the effects of the high rainfall, before the machine's departure. If this could be incorporated into contracts or pre-commencements as a requirement, this might assist such a situation with potential water problems in high rainfall.			
		Follow-up evidence:			

FES 05	UKWAS 5.1.6	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Safety precautions, environmental protection plans & emergency procedures – Clear understanding by contractors			
		<p>At Grodaich in Glen Finglas (Cowal & Trossachs FD) a new forest road was in construction. The location of the fuel bowser used for re-fuelling the heavy plant working on site was located close to two water courses. Although these water course are fairly small in size, they were evidently fairly mobile and carry significant amounts of water during periods of heavy rain, they also flow directly into the Glen Finglas water reservoir. In addition, although the EIA and contract documentation identifies that all fuel storage should be in accordance with designated buffer zones from water courses, the buffer zone demarcation was not readily available for auditor review during the audit.</p> <p>At the same site, the foreman, as representative for the contractors employed to carry out the construction, was interviewed and even although, from interview, he was found to be compliant regarding general knowledge on health and safety and emergency procedures, he had a lack of awareness regarding contract documentation and specifically regarding emergency procedure. He could not readily find the applicable detail in his site files and was not really sure of what he was looking for. This is in contrast to what is normally found in interview with harvesting contractors. See also this site's contribution to the minor CAR raised under UKWAS 8.1.1 re. absence of first aid kit on site.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FES 06	UKWAS 5.2.2	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Pesticide records – GB Database overhaul and storage warning signs			
		<p>The GB pesticides record database has been temporarily closed since the beginning of April 2009 for IT maintenance and improvement. FD staff are stockpiling manual and FD electronic pesticide use records for entry once the national database is re-opened. Obviously it is important that records data is not inadvertently lost with staff movement transfers.</p> <p>There is confusion amongst staff over whether chem stores should have more than just a warning triangle but also words saying 'chem store' or not. Some staff think it increases risk from theft, others think it would be helpful to the Fire Brigade to know for sure what is present that requires a warning sign. It is understood not to be a legal requirement but FC GB national guidance is ambiguous in its advice. Safety should take precedence over security and FES should consider consulting the Fire Brigades for a clear view, as to the merits of specifying in words 'chemicals', in addition to the basic warning triangle sign with a black exclamation mark on a yellow background.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FES 07	UKWAS 6.1.1	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Protection of rare species & habitats - Water Voles			
		<p>The range and distribution of the water vole within Tay FD is poorly understood and little has been done to address this. Plans are in hand to begin surveys in several FDs this autumn, but no strategic plans aimed at detecting and conserving water vole populations are in place for this FD or in most other Scottish FDs.</p> <p>(In C & T FD the Water Vole re-introduction project management was an exemplar of conservation project management.)</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FES 08	UKWAS 8.1.2	Date Recorded>	02 Oct 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Safety training – First aid training and getting ambulance services to site			

		<p>New Health & Safety regulations on first aid training requirements come into effect from October 2009. Preceding this has been a UK forestry industry wide UKWAS compliance driven consensus approach, to reach common understanding of what is reasonable interpretation of UKWAS requirements under 8.1.1 where the wording could be clearer. The new H & S regulations assist this process. FC representatives from all 3 FC countries have been heavily involved and a draft requirement framework for working on hazardous sites was seen by SGS and has been put to the harvesting & contracting companies plus woodland owners' organisations for further consultation. This issue has been referred to in several previous SGS reports for a wide range of clients and grew out of pointing out first aid training inconsistency with other training requirements that are widely accepted for forestry, e.g. machinery, chainsaws, pesticides. Many organisations, public and private, already ensure a high level of first aid training on hazardous sites. The aim of the process is to agree a fair and sensible baseline for UKWAS auditing purposes.</p> <p>The relevance of clarity on first aid training requirements was confirmed during this audit. At most of the FES sites visited operators had first aid training. However, neither of the chainsaw operators cutting the roadline at Collaig in WA FD had any first aid training. Also, see CAR 05 under 8.1.2 re. inadequate access to first aid kit on three sites which obviously links to a training issue as well.</p> <p>There were some examples of Districts holding training exercises with the Mountain Rescue organisations in terms of locating a missing individual, but almost none to date were known of with the National Health Service Ambulance Emergency Services within all the FDs visited. In terms of getting a wheeled ambulance with NHS paramedics to a seriously injured casualty on a harvesting site there was little evidence. Diligent recording of OS grid references by contractors on hazardous sites is usually the case in many UKWAS audits but there is a complete divergence of opinion as to whether people think an ambulance driver could find a remote location using only a grid reference. Some people interviewed are sure they could and some are very doubtful. All agree that a helicopter pilot would, but, whilst helicopter ambulances are increasingly common, wheeled vehicles can still be the service available. There is a need for checking just how able NHS ambulances are at reaching remote sites. To deal with treating and the evacuation of a casualty off a harvesting site would be a useful exercise.</p> <p>There is good anecdotal evidence of a serious but non-fatal accident on a harvesting site in the borders a few years ago where the NHS were given the OS grid reference. It took that particular ambulance some 3 hours to find the site. Such training between forestry organisations and the emergency services is taking place in other parts of the UK, e.g. Northern Ireland, for the reasons outlined.</p> <p>At the Allt Druidhe, Rannoch harvesting site in Tay FD the forwarder operator could not find the OS grid ref in his documentation. It had been provided by FES and was shown in documentation elsewhere.</p> <p>There are also inconsistencies in emergency planning between FES staffed sites and standing sales with contractors. The AFAG 802 safety guide clearly mentions that a helicopter landing site should be considered. It is recognised the pilot will decide for certain whether a landing site is acceptable but this should not prevent its planning as per AFAG 802, some sites are obvious.</p> <p>This audit also found that there is knowledge not well known concerning the use of emergency phone numbers 112 and 911 by mobile phones. It is understood these may work where 999 will not. If this is the case, then this potential assistance should be discussed with the emergency services. Lack of mobile phone signal at remote harvesting sites can be a problem and to date, the only remedy thought available was an expensive satellite phone.</p> <p>All the above issues potentially affect the time taken to administer medical aid. Time often being the critical factor in saving life at accidents, FES should consider these issues.</p>			
FCE	UKWAS	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
01	1.2.1	Observation: Illegal activity – Chainsaw use & firewood theft			

		At the Stang in N.E.E. FD there had been illegal use of a chainsaw and theft of a small amount of firewood. The manager was unaware but immediately instigated an investigation.			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 02	UKWAS 2.1.2	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Management plan public availability – Bourne Wood, Northants FD			
		Although there is clear documented evidence inc. signatures that the Management Plan has been shown in the past to local people, it would possibly help the ongoing communications with the Bourne local community if a copy were permanently available given the level of interest.			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 03	UKWAS 2.2.1	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Investment – Resources			
		Instances arose during the audit where a lack of resource or cost cutting exercise had resultant implications. At East Anglia FD peripheral areas in the District could not always achieve bracken spraying with Asulam by FCE equipment because of the narrow weather window available and the cost of transport from the machinery's FCE base at Thetford. Similarly, in such peripheral areas (e.g. Hevingham Park Forest, well north of Thetford) rabbit browsing was a problem on restocking sites with a perceived lack of wildlife ranger control staff resource and/or money for perimeter fencing. The consequence was that the Hevingham Park restock site seen had to be beat up at least once and still with signs of significant browsing impact and possible bracken control required.			
		(Raised by stakeholder subsequent to audit). The future management and reinstatement of traditional management methods at Ouston Wood is currently not supported by adequate funding. This deficiency should be addressed.			
		At Bourne Wood in Northants FD the old public toilets provided by FCE have been closed due to a national request for cost savings. This has meant that the toilets can no longer be cleaned and kept open. The toilets are in need of replacement and obviously there is a demand for use as seen by visitors being turned away during the audit. FCE have approached the local council for finance but without success.			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 04	UKWAS 2.3.3	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Monitoring Records – Use over the long term			
		Discussion with District staff at East Anglia FD indicated that a new sub-compartment database that will show provenance (non-native species) and seed origin (native species) will be operational by the end of 2009. Staff also commented it would be useful to be able to record whether bare root or containerised plants were used. This issue needs to be clarified as FCE operational staff indicated this would be achieved via database access for District staff to obtain the seed identification number only (from which information on provenance and seed origin can be deduced via separate references).			
		From interview and inspection at Northants FD large amounts of monitoring data are being collected but it is not clear how this will be analysed and applied to future management. The comparison of monitoring records from 2000 and 2008 for Fineshade Forest with new software is an exception to this and demonstrates how valuable an analysis of monitoring data can be.			
		At East Anglia FD a specialist surveyor of bats has not provided data to FD staff. Monitoring data must be made available if it is to inform management.			
		Follow-up evidence:			

FCE 05	UKWAS 3.3.1	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Plant supply			
		<p>From interview with District staff and operational managers there is some disparity in views over plant supply. Some local staff feel they have to take what they are given by the FCE nurseries without quibble. This includes a perception that there is insufficient nursery supply of genetically improved (by vegetative propagation) Sitka Spruce (SS VP). By contrast, operational staff interviewed confirm there is discussion between operational managers and the FCE nurseries as to what is required. There is also a desire to discourage Districts from saving money by ordering the less expensive non SS VP ordinary plants.</p> <p>It must be borne in mind that there is normally a 3 year growth period in the nursery between advance order and delivery. Matching supply with operational fluctuations in yearly demand will be an ongoing challenge. However, there is perhaps a need for further communication with beat foresters and their operational managers to clarify supply and demand issues.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 06	UKWAS 3.3.2	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Grazing pressure – Broadleaf diversity			
		<p>At The Stang Forest in North East England FD, there was browsing pressure on broadleaves from deer, rabbits, sheep, cattle and grey squirrel. FCE are trying to address these pressures with some degree of success but it is important for species diversity requirement for UKWAS that they are able to find the resources to properly succeed.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 07	UKWAS 5.1.2	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Grazing impacts - Deer and Rabbits			
		<p>Deer management at Lavenham Forest in East Anglia FD is based on a measurement of impacts. However, in spite of plans to make use of enclosure cages no measurements of impacts are being made.</p> <p>At Harling Forest in East Anglia FD extreme damage from rabbits had required replanting, which had subsequently suffered a second heavy impact. An appraisal of the situation is required in order to effect preventative measures. See also under 2.2.1 re. resources.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 08	UKWAS 5.2.3	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Pesticide storage – Warning signs			
		<p>There is confusion amongst staff over whether chem stores should have more than just a warning triangle but also words saying 'chem store' or not. Some staff think it increases risk from theft, others think it would be helpful to the Fire Brigade to know for sure what is present that requires a warning sign. It is understood not to be a legal requirement but FCE national guidance is ambiguous in its advice. Safety should take precedence over security and FCE should consider consulting the Fire Brigades for a clear view, as to the merits of specifying in words 'chemicals', in addition to the basic warning triangle sign with a black exclamation mark on a yellow background.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 09	UKWAS 5.5.1	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Waste disposal – Fencing wire			

		<p>At Kielder Forest Park (North-East England FD) considerable amounts of disused fence wire was seen to be accumulating, both in larger groups and in smaller amounts. This waste had evidently been in situ for sometime and could be constituted as a minor hazard, both to wildlife and to members of the public, given the close proximity to areas of public access. The FD takes guidance from Operational Guidance Booklet (OGB) 35 as their Waste Management Strategy. However, given the amount of wire to be removed from throughout the forest, it is required that there be the finalisation and dissemination of the proposed FD Implementation Plan, as identified within the internal Management Guidance Note 18 (updated August 09). There is actually a lack of reference to dealing with redundant fencing wire in OGB 35.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 10	UKWAS 6.1.1	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Protection of Rare Species - Water Voles			
		<p>Water vole surveys at Lavenham Forest in East Anglia FD have been satisfactorily completed, but there are no plans to conduct similar surveys in other parts of the FD, e.g. Thetford and Kings Forests. Reliance on local specialists has been very effective in surveys of other species but this has led to complacency that water voles would have been reported if they are present.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 11	UKWAS 6.2.2	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Maintenance of Biodiversity – Deadwood			
		<p>In both East Anglia and Northants FD deadwood policies do not adequately reflect the UKWAS Second Edition. In Northants FD references to a requirement for ‘three stems/hectare’ remain in the guidance. There is no reference to creating snags in the summary policy or the pictorial guidance given to harvesting operatives. At Kielder Forest the rationale is clearly expressed and focuses on creating deadwood within areas of CCF, examples of which were seen. However, it is not clear whether this will achieve the overall quantities mentioned in UKWAS second edition, i.e. 20 m³/ha across the whole woodland area. Operational staff were not clearly aware of this UKWAS requirement on the target volumes.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 12	UKWAS 6.3.2	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Conservation of semi-natural woodland and PAWS – Monitoring ground flora			
		<p>Huge achievements in the restoration of native tree assemblages on PAWS have been made in both East Anglia and Northants FDs. A further challenge is the monitoring of restoration of ancient woodland indicator plants. N.E.E. conservation staff do monitor for ground flora but this should be explicitly specified in their monitoring document template.</p> <p>Some FCE surveyors prefer to undertake PAWS site survey assessments in the autumn when the bracken is down and tree regeneration is more easily seen. It is very important that surveys attempt to include assessment of ground flora as well. In the autumn fungi will obviously be evident but surveys must also be done in the Spring to assess for ground flora.</p> <p>There is a need to ensure that PAWS sites planned for clearfell pre-UKWAS 2nd edition are reviewed. Felling may or may not still be appropriate. E.g. examples seen in East Anglia FD.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE	UKWAS	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open

		Observation: Stakeholder comments and Public awareness of certification status			
		Reference to FCE's certified status is not particularly clear from its website.			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCE 14	UKWAS	Date Recorded>	17 Sep 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Training – First Aid and Ambulance Services			
		<p>At the Spadeadam active standing sale harvesting site in N.E.E, the contractor forwarder operator was trained in first aid but did not know if the harvester operator was. The harvester operator was appointed the 'Site Safety Co-ordinator' but was not trained in first aid himself, although he did know the forwarder operator was trained. At the active harvesting site at Braceborough in Northants FD, an operator untrained in first aid was unfamiliar with the location of the large wound dressing in his cab's first aid kit.</p> <p>There were several examples of Districts holding training exercises with the Fire Brigades but none to date were known of with the Ambulance Emergency Services within N.E.E, East Anglia or Northants FDs. N.E.E are just about to start some training. Diligent recording of O.S. grid references on site plans is usually the case in UKWAS audits but there is a complete divergence of general opinion as to whether people think an ambulance driver could find a remote location using only a grid reference. Some people interviewed are sure they could and some are very doubtful. All agree that a helicopter pilot would, but, whilst helicopter ambulances are increasingly common, wheeled vehicles are often still the service available. There is a need for checking just how able ambulances are at reaching remote sites and training in evacuation of a casualty off a harvesting site would be a useful exercise.</p> <p>There are inconsistencies in emergency planning between FCE staffed sites and standing sales with contractors. The AFAG 802 safety guide clearly mentions that a helicopter landing site should be considered. At the Spadeadam harvesting site in N.E.E. a contractor operator interviewed was unsure where it was meant to be and a contractor at Croxton in East Anglia had the same lack of clear knowledge in helicopter landing site contingency planning. It is recognised the pilot will decide for certain whether a landing site is acceptable but this should not prevent its planning as per AFAG 802, some sites are obvious.</p> <p>This audit also found that there is knowledge not well known concerning the use of emergency phone numbers 112 and 911 by mobile phones. It is understood these may work where 999 will not. If this is the case, then this potential assistance should be discussed with the emergency services. Lack of mobile phone signal at remote harvesting sites can be a problem and to date, the only remedy thought available was an expensive satellite phone.</p> <p>All the above issues potentially affect the time taken to administer medical aid. Time often being the critical factor in saving life at accidents, FCE should consider these issues.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCW 01	UKWAS 2.1.1	Date Recorded>	16 Jul 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Management planning and Forest Management			
		At Coedy Gororau FD the planning department is currently under resourced. Additional support is being arranged.			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCW 02	UKWAS 3.3.1	Date Recorded>	16 Jul 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Species selection and plant supply			

		<p>From interview with Wales Silvicultural Operations (WSO) staff and operational managers there is some disparity in views over plant supply. Some local supervisory staff feel they have to assume that what they are given by the FCW nurseries will be the right choice for the site. In contrast to the Sitka spruce being used, there were examples of WSO supervisors not knowing clearly what provenance of Douglas fir or Scots pine and what source of Hazel and Cherry was being used. Despite an upland situation it is assumed that the plants being delivered are totally appropriate. They might well be but it is considered not unreasonable that site managers should somehow know which provenance and seed source they are using, i.e. more than just a plant certificate reference number provided by the nursery.</p> <p>By contrast operational staff interviewed confirm there is discussion between operational managers and the FCW nurseries as to what is required. It must be borne in mind that there is normally a 3 year growth period in the nursery between advance order and delivery. Matching supply with operational fluctuations in yearly demand will be an ongoing challenge. However, there is perhaps a need for further communication with WSO beat foresters and their operational managers to clarify supply and demand issues.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCW 03	UKWAS 5.5.3	Date Recorded>	16 Jul 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Pollution control – Spillage kits for timber lorries			
		<p>From staff interview WHaM do not mention to timber hauliers that they are required to carry suitable spillage protection kit in case of diesel or hydraulic fluid leakage. This is referred to in the Round Timber Haulage Code of Practice. Acknowledged that the contractor lorry driver randomly interviewed at Moel Famau did indeed have a good standard of spillage kit readily available.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCW 04	UKWAS 6.2.2	Date Recorded>	16 Jul 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Maintenance of Biodiversity – Deadwood			
		<p>WHaM staff and harvesting contractors need to have a clearer understanding of what is required for deadwood management under the UKWAS 2nd edition. E.g. from interview with WHaM managers and contractors at Moel Famau.</p> <p>It would further assist UKWAS compliance if all FDs took a FDP whole forest approach, and not just by operational staff at harvesting sites, who do not always appreciate the full scope within a whole FDP for identifying areas where deadwood is likely to be of greatest ecological value. A whole FDP approach incorporated with the FDP process by planners would also take more account of the UKWAS requirements for achieving deadwood volumes over time. Then operational staff would have supporting information within FDPs that would assist their site specific application.</p>			
		Follow-up evidence:			
FCW 05	UKWAS 8.1.2	Date Recorded>	16 Jul 2009	Date Closed>	open
		Observation: Safety training – First aid training and getting ambulance services to site			

		<p>New Health & Safety regulations on first aid training requirements come into effect from October 2009. Preceding this has been a UK forestry industry wide UKWAS compliance driven consensus approach, to reach common understanding of what is reasonable interpretation of UKWAS requirements under 8.1.1/8.1.2 where the wording could be clearer. The new H & S regulations assist this process. FC representatives from all 3 FC countries have been heavily involved and a draft requirement framework for working on hazardous sites was seen by SGS and has been put to the harvesting & contracting companies plus woodland owners' organisations for further consultation. This issue has been referred to in several previous SGS reports for a wide range of clients and grew out of pointing out first aid training inconsistency with other training requirements that are widely accepted for forestry, e.g. machinery, chainsaws, pesticides. Many organisations, public and private, already ensure a high level of first aid training on hazardous sites. The aim of the process is to agree a fair and sensible baseline for UKWAS auditing purposes.</p> <p>The relevance of clarity on first aid training requirements was confirmed during this audit. At all the FCW sites visited there were at least some operators who had first aid training. However, see CAR 03 under 8.1.1/8.1.2 re. inadequate access to personal first aid kit for chainsaw use on two sites which obviously links to a training issue as well.</p> <p>There were no known examples to the WHaM staff interviewed during the audit of Districts holding training exercises with the Ambulance Emergency Services. Diligent recording of OS grid references is usually the case in many UKWAS audits but there is a complete divergence of opinion as to whether people think an ambulance driver could find a remote location using only a grid reference. Some people interviewed are sure they could and some are very doubtful. All agree that a helicopter pilot would, but, whilst helicopter ambulances are increasingly common, wheeled vehicles are often still the service available. There is a need for checking just how able ambulances are at reaching remote sites and training in evacuation of a casualty off a harvesting site would be a useful exercise.</p> <p>There are inconsistencies in emergency planning on standing sales sites with contractors. The AFAG 802 safety guide clearly mentions that a helicopter landing site should be considered. At the Moel Famau harvesting site in CyG FD an operator interviewed made a reasonable guess at the most appropriate site but there had been no planning. WHaM staff interviewed were unsure whether it was a standard part of emergency planning. Moel Famau happened to be an accessible site near a good public road where an ambulance could have got reasonable access but there are many remote harvesting sites being managed by FCW (and the private sector) where an ambulance would struggle to reach without 4WD. It is recognised the pilot will decide for certain whether a landing site is acceptable but this should not prevent its planning as per AFAG 802, some sites are obvious.</p> <p>This audit also found that there is knowledge not well known concerning the use of emergency phone numbers 112 and 911 by mobile phones. It is understood these may work where 999 will not. If this is the case, then this potential assistance should be discussed with the emergency services. Lack of mobile phone signal at remote harvesting sites can be a problem and to date, the only remedy thought available was an expensive satellite phone.</p> <p>All the above issues potentially affect the time taken to administer medical aid. Time often being the critical factor in saving life at accidents, FCW should consider these issues.</p>
		<p>Follow-up evidence:</p>

13. RECORD OF STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS AND INTERVIEWS

Nr	Comment	Response
	Main Evaluation	

Nr	Comment	Response
FE S 1	<p>NGO (European Squirrel Initiative) :</p> <p>Comment 1) Unaware of any FC pest management plan other than for deer. Does the FC have a grey squirrel management plan ? Is there a national plan ? Are they public documents ?</p>	<p>Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species. SGS included a forest management specialist with knowledge of squirrel ecology as part of the audit team. The specialist has been secretary of a red squirrel group and has been commissioned several times to conduct pre-operational surveys for red squirrel dreys.</p> <p>Grey squirrels are not restricted to south of the border with England, there are existing populations of greys found, not just in the borders region itself but also near Aberdeen and elsewhere.</p> <p>SNH are consulting FES and others on "Protecting Scotland's Red Squirrels – a draft strategy for targeted grey squirrel control". The strategy aims to prevent the continued expansion of grey squirrels moving further northwards and into the remaining stronghold areas of north west, north central and western Scotland, through the 'pinch points' from the major source populations, e.g. Aberdeen. Senior FES staff with responsibility for biodiversity & conservation are liaising closely with the FC Scotland (regulatory authority) Species Policy Adviser to develop further FES planning and budgeting on this issue in conjunction with SNH, as the Scottish government's nature conservation agency with overall responsibility.</p> <p>Therefore, there are proposed targeted control areas for Moray & Aberdeenshire, Tay and Cowal & Trossachs FDs. FES are estimating the budget impact for the cost of further grey squirrel control in these areas (based on the methods being used for the South of Scotland area where FES fund 4 grey squirrel control officers, in partnership with SNH who fund another 4).</p> <p>Further south FES is working primarily in partnership with SNH but also private landowners in the Scottish Borders to pursue the Scottish Government's policy of trying to establish a 'cordon sanitaire' control zone through which Grey Squirrels south of the border (and infected with the parapox virus which threatens the Red Squirrel via transmission) will be prevented from migrating north across the border. The numbers of Grey Squirrel already present north of the border in Scotland will similarly be prevented from moving south and interacting with their southern counterparts. It is thought the majority of Greys north of the border are not infected with the virus. These northern populations will be assessed and monitored accordingly. A team of Squirrel control officers have been recruited and their costs funded by both FES and SNH. FES Wildlife Managers are heavily involved in overall management and liaison with the various Red Squirrel interest groups and ENGOs.</p> <p>FES have a wide ranging remit for many other environmental objectives which would obviously benefit with increased funding. The cost of full time grey squirrel control officers is relatively significant, particularly when all budgets are under more pressure than even normal in a current financial climate trying to recover from the global 'credit crunch'.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species under threat and, although there is evidence of an existing response, this will clearly be an ongoing resource challenge for FES.</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
1	<p>Comment 2) Contact with neighbours, before thinning or felling, is rarely, if ever, made by the FC and can lead to displacement of grey squirrels onto neighbours land.</p> <p>Comment 3) The (native) red squirrel is endangered and it is well known that the presence of (non-native) grey squirrels is very detrimental to them. Maintaining and enhancing red squirrels clearly implies a need actively to control greys and, ideally, to eradicate them.</p> <p>Comment 4) Grey squirrel management co-ordinated with neighbours is rarely, if ever, undertaken by the FC.</p>	<p>The FES's Forest Design Plan process will mean that neighbours are always invited to comment on proposed FDPs and that issues such as Squirrels should be raised. Following through the process, they will be advised of any thinning or felling approved by the FC regulatory authority and the FDP will be available for consultation at any time at the District Office.</p> <p>In Tay FD sympatric populations of red and grey squirrels occur in parts of the FD. The parapox virus, which appears to be transmitted by grey squirrels and is important in the decline of red squirrels, does not appear to occur in Scotland as widely as in England. The co-existence in some areas of reds and greys does not appear to have caused a decline in red squirrels in Perth and Stirlingshire and the lack of the virus may contribute to this stability.</p> <p>There were suitable examples of grey squirrel control being undertaken in Moray & Aberdeenshire, Cowal & Trossachs and Tay FDs. Existing FES control of grey squirrel in the Dee and Don river valleys has been undertaken for a number of years by a FES contractor. This is designed to help prevent the greys from spreading out from Aberdeen city. In C & T FD (humane) traps are being deployed in selected areas. Tay FD has been carrying out grey control at Tentsmuir Forest in Fife.</p> <p>Management by FES for Red Squirrel in Tay is exemplary and is also of a very high standard in Cowal & Trossachs FD.</p> <p>This issue as a whole to be followed up at future audit opportunities.</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
FES 2	<p>NGO (The Woodland Trust :</p> <p>In terms of the auditing process we are concerned that a sufficient sample of sites are audited to pick up a consistent approach to PAWS practice across the estate. An appropriate intensity of auditing is fundamental to ensuring compliance with the standard and we feel this has not been the case in the past.</p> <p>We note that it appears SGS Qualifor have used the same lead assessor for this certificate over the last 10 years and potentially will be over the next 5 years. From our own experience auditing personnel have been changed to ensure a fresh perspective on a certificate and wonder how this is being addressed in the case of this certificate.</p> <p>Consistent advanced notice of surveillance audits would be appreciated as would timely responses to stakeholder issues and the communication of the outcomes of audits.</p>	<p>SGS Qualifor discussed these issues at a meeting opportunity with a senior national representative of The Woodland Trust.</p> <p>SGS carefully considers the sampling intensity for every audit of FES and all Districts are covered during the course of the certificate.</p> <p>SGS fully recognises the importance of PAWS within the UKWAS and has checked PAWS compliance each yearly audit accordingly.</p> <p>SGS has always responded to WT concerns in the stakeholder comments section of any public summary report for other certificate holders. This is the first time that WT have raised stakeholder issues in connection with FE Scotland.</p> <p>Apart from the one minor CAR raised during this audit, SGS has found FES to be UKWAS compliant. During FES's first certificate SGS raised a minor CAR on PAWS (lack of implementation of recently introduced PAWS strategy). During their second certificate SGS raised a minor CAR on PAWS (insufficient survey of PAWS sites in Cowal & Trossachs FD). Both CARS were closed out. SGS have also made an observation of commendation on PAWS in this re-assessment - PAWS restoration and monitoring in Tay FD is exemplary.</p> <p>It is not the case that SGS have used the same lead auditor for this certificate over the last 10 years. The team leader has been the same since 2003 but in that time has closely involved another highly experienced senior lead auditor, working together very much as a team. This team member is an eminent forest ecologist with extensive UK and international ecology and forestry experience and who has often been given responsibility for assessing FES's UKWAS compliance on PAWS. Nevertheless, it has been an SGS intention for some time to recruit more auditors and vary audit teams and change team leaders for the FC. This has already begun, bringing in another lead auditor from abroad and undertaking training for another lead auditor.</p> <p>This already happens. The record will show that several WT staff are consistently contacted in advance of surveillance audits. Similarly, previous reports will show responses to WT stakeholder issues and communication of the outcomes of audits.</p> <p>WT declared they found it very helpful to have the discussion about feedback on site specific examples of good practice or areas of concern. SGS reiterated their view that it was entirely appropriate to have any site specific concerns drawn to SGS' attention, which they would readily investigate at suitable opportunity during audits.</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
<p>FES</p> <p>3</p>	<p>NGO (representative of The Woodland Trust Scotland) :</p> <p>WT stated in writing in August 2009 via the senior GB national representative from stakeholder consultation by SGS in July that 'they were very concerned and knew of several cases where development has occurred or been proposed in FES' woods of high conservation value. Specific cases can be made available on request. In our (WT) opinion this on-going practice is contrary to several UKWAS requirements.'</p> <p>1. Dunloskin, Cowal, Argyll (Cowal & Trossachs Forest District)</p> <p>FES and private sector owners needed to transport timber from a large plantation area. Felling licence application was made to the FC (regulatory authority) which involved building a section of new forest road through the Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) of Dunloskin in the Cowal peninsula. WTS commented that they understood it was a very difficult decision for the FC regulatory authority as there were many other variables, particularly the impact of lorry traffic through Dunoon. A decision was made by the FC regulatory authority not to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).</p>	<p>SGS raised this with the senior GB representative who advised SGS to request details of the specific cases directly from WT Scotland. WTS replied that there were three cases they were aware of which related to this statement. See opposite. Details in writing were then requested but not received as anticipated. SGS reminded WTS of this request on 26 Oct and the details opposite were received on 29 Oct 2009.</p> <p>1. In the short time available SGS has investigated this issue by phone and sight of additional documentation to that provided by WTS. The planning issue for this road occurred in 2006/2007 and the road has since been built. The road was funded by the Scottish Timber Transport Fund, set up by the Scottish Government to assist difficulties in timber transport through rural areas without existing adequate roads, primarily to relieve pressure on local communities and fragile infrastructure. Argyll is a mountainous west coast area of Scotland and Cowal conforms to this type of landscape. The applicants inc.FES produced a screening report which considered 6 options inc the route adopted. Most of the road passes through conifer plantations and open hill. There is a section of road 4 to 10 metres wide whose equivalent total area is approx. 1ha that passes through Dunloskin ASNW which is 48 ha in size. It is not a designated protected site as it is not considered of sufficient conservation quality by SNH to be an SSSI.</p> <p>The Argyll Timber Transport Group commissioned an ecological survey and statement report relevant to the proposed route. Previous research information established that there were 1,520 ha of semi-natural woodland in Cowal (1.5% of the land area). Recommendations were made in the ecological report to the ATTG to avoid impact upon the area of Alder Carr wet woodland and to avoid large 'granny' Oak trees. These were taken on board and the ecologist has since seen the result which is considered satisfactory. The visual impact has been reliably reported as minimal.</p> <p>Whilst it is regrettable environmentally that the area of 1 ha of ASNW has been lost, this has to be weighed up environmentally and socially that the route has meant timber traffic can avoid going through Dunoon. There was no significant objection to the proposal by the local community.</p> <p>SGS will continue to follow up and visit the site at next opportunity but the evidence to date does not indicate a non-compliance against UKWAS, given the balance of environmental and social benefits versus losses.</p> <p>WTS were asked if any WTS member of staff had visited the site and were told it had been relayed to WTS by phone and correspondence.</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
FES 3	<p>2. Kiln Hill Wood, near Nairn, Moray (Moray & Aberdeenshire Forest District)</p> <p>An outline planning application was made by FES to obtain planning approval for 32 'eco-homes' in a woodland environment. WTS state that the woodland is on the Ancient Woodland Inventory as a PAWS site (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site). Although not an existing ASNW, WTS considered the wood to possess significant conservation value and would have objected formally to the application.</p> <p>3. Dall, Rannoch (Tay Forest District)</p> <p>A neighbouring private landowner has submitted a planning application to provide a hotel development with two golf courses and associated housing. This application includes FES land at Rannoch, which is understood includes ancient woodland (ASNW), plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) and ordinary plantation. Significant areas of woodland felling and development are proposed. WTS state 160 ha of ASNW and 240 ha of associated woodland.</p>	<p>This issue occurred in 2008. FES had conducted their own ecological survey and differed in their opinion with WTS as to its level of conservation value.</p> <p>WTS commended FES for exploring the principle of sustainable woodland living but not at Kiln Hill.</p> <p>The outline application has since been withdrawn by FES.</p> <p>SGS therefore consider the matter closed.</p> <p>FES are also against this proposal as it stands. It is understood that under Scots Law a planning application can be made that includes another property owner's land without their consent. This remarkable Scots planning law position has meant that Dall Estate has legally made this proposal entirely without FES' consent.</p> <p>Dall Estate acquired the well known old Rannoch private school which was a significant local employer in a very fragile local rural economy. To begin with FES did not want to dismiss initial ideas that might generate local employment without consulting the local community. The developer was told at the outset that he had to gain local support and that only ordinary plantation might be available, high conservation value woodland was definitely not. Nevertheless, the developer did not consult the local community adequately and did not advise FES in advance of the current planning application.</p> <p>Rannoch Forest contains conservation rich Native pinewood and FES' Forest Design Plan for Rannoch plans for its maintenance and proposed enhancement. WTS have submitted a highly articulate and well prepared six page objection to Perth and Kinross Council Planning Department, dated 24th August 2009.</p> <p>FES Tay FD pro-actively drew this to the attention of SGS and an initial site visit was made during this audit. It is perfectly clear from interview that FES will not countenance anything as currently proposed that will lead to such woodland loss. Scots planning law which they can not do anything about has put them in an unenviable position. The matter is now in the hands of the local planning department, in effect the Scottish Government.</p> <p>From initial assessment, SGS is of the subjective view that it is a reasonable interim conclusion that this planning application stands little chance of success in its current form. Were FES to have supported it, it would almost certainly have been a non compliance against the UKWAS. But FES do not support it, they too have objected to the proposals. Therefore, given this position, SGS does not consider FES to be non-compliant. SGS will continue to follow up by monitoring the result of the neighbouring landowner developer's planning application.</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
FE S 4	Government (nature conservation officer for Scottish Natural Heritage) : Reported a good relationship and a very high level of cooperation and professionalism with FES at West Argyll FD. Particularly impressed with an example of rare fauna protection during harvesting operations.	Noted.
FE S 5	Government (Road transport officer) : FES are responsible users of the rural road infrastructure and consult well through the Forest design Plan process and involvement with regional timber transport groups. Pleased to hear that they are trying to encourage the haulage industry to adopt tyre pressure control system equipped timber lorries.	Noted.
FE S 6	Government (heritage protection) : Good co-operation, no issues of concern.	Noted.
FE S 7	Other (an organisation also involved with forestry and land management in Scotland) : Not aware of any significant issues.	Noted.
FE S 8	Other (an organisation also involved with forestry management in Scotland) : Difference in opinion in the interpretation and application of deadwood requirements compared to FES.	Noted. Deadwood was assessed throughout the audit and FES found compliant. National forest practice (not FES internal) guidance on this issue is still awaited and would be helpful to all concerned. SGS to make reference to the UKWAS organisation in current consultation for UKWAS 3 rd edition. Follow up at next opportunity.
FE S 9	Other (an organisation also involved with forestry management in Scotland) : Able to work well in partnership situations with FES.	Noted.
FE S 10	Other (an organisation involved with harvesting and marketing of timber) : Good provision of mensuration information and pre-planning procedure. Good support of the timber market.	Noted.
FE S 11	Other (Forestry contractor) : FES manage to provide an acceptable continuity of work.	Noted.
FE S 12	Other (Forestry contractor) : FES are good to work with, supervisors have good knowledgeable of operations.	Noted.
FE S 13	Other (Wind Farm company ecologist) : FES follow up closely on how the planning authority / government conservation agency approved habitat management plan is implemented and monitored.	Noted.

Nr	Comment	Response
	Surveillance 1	
	Surveillance 2	
	Surveillance 3	
	Surveillance 4	

Nr	Comment	Response
	Main Evaluation	
FC E 1	<p>NGO (national representative of the European Squirrel Initiative) :</p> <p>Comment 1) Unaware of any FC pest management plan other than for deer. Does the FC have a grey squirrel management plan ? Is there a national plan ? Are they public documents ?</p> <p>Comment 2) Contact with neighbours, before thinning or felling, is rarely, if ever, made by the FC and can lead to displacement of grey squirrels onto neighbours land.</p> <p>Comment 3) The (native) red squirrel is endangered and it is well known that the presence of (non-native) grey squirrels is very detrimental to them. Maintaining and enhancing red squirrels clearly implies a need actively to control greys and, ideally, to eradicate them.</p>	<p>Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species. SGS included a forest management specialist with knowledge of squirrel ecology as part of the audit team. The specialist has been secretary of a red squirrel group and has been commissioned several times to conduct pre-operational surveys for red squirrel dreys.</p> <p>FCE refer to the national Policy and Action statement on 'Grey Squirrels and England's Woodlands', as published in 2006 by FCE (authority division) and Defra (the department for environment & rural affairs). It is a public document. This guides FCE management of the national estate woodlands as well as the private sector and local FCE (authority division) conservancy offices. A key part of this guidance refers to analysis of 'critical threat'. In these situations, FCE Forest District managers are expected to respond, determine the best course of action and target resources.</p> <p>In North East England (Kielder) FD there is a memo of understanding over management of their red squirrel reserves in north east England with the red squirrel conservation body 'Red Alert'. FCE have declared Kielder Forest a red squirrel reserve and it contains a large proportion of the entire remaining red squirrel population in GB.</p> <p>The FCE's Forest Design Plan process should mean that neighbours are always invited to comment on proposed FDPs and that issues such as Squirrels should be raised. Following through the process, they should be advised of any thinning or felling approved by the FC regulatory authority and the FDP will be available for consultation at any time at the District Office.</p> <p>See also stakeholder comment no. 11 'In FCE South East England Forest District Planning is good, given copy of Local forest Design Plan. Common boundary and kept informed.'</p> <p>On page two of the FCE / Defra statement, it raises the feasibility of eradicating grey squirrels. 'The Working Group on the Government Review of Non-Native Species Policy' in 2002 concluded that grey squirrels will, for the foreseeable future, remain part of the fauna of England (and GB). Grey squirrels are enjoyed by many as part of our wildlife and</p>

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		<p>eradication would require a substantial shift in public attitudes.'</p> <p>It may be that NGOs such as the European Squirrel Initiative' / and the new Red Squirrel Survival Trust will be able to shift public attitudes.</p> <p>The RSST very recently announced two important new joint initiatives with the FC and Natural England. These are a jointly funded mapping project to detail all existing grey squirrel control by all parties. At the same time, NE FC and the RSST are launching a £40,000 grey squirrel control fund to pay for locally led trapping projects in the north of England.</p> <p>One of the declared aims of the 'European Squirrel Initiative' UK based charity organisation is to facilitate development of non-lethal control, e.g. immuno contraception. On page three of the FCE / Defra policy & action statement it says that 'The FC will continue research into improving methods of control. In particular, the FC will support a review of the potential of immuno-contraception, including developing multi-national collaboration.'</p>
FCE 1	<p>Comment 4) Grey squirrel management co-ordinated with neighbours is rarely, if ever, undertaken by the FC.</p>	<p>There were suitable examples of grey squirrel control being undertaken in North East England (Kielder) FD.</p> <p>SGS raised a minor CAR during this assessment in connection with management for red squirrels. Pre-operational checks for red squirrel dreys were not always being carried out in thinned areas where there were visible signs of red squirrel. The law requires that Red Squirrel dreys are not disturbed (unless by accident).</p> <p>In all other respects, management by FCE for Red Squirrel at Kielder Forest is commendable.</p> <p>This issue as a whole to be followed up at future audit opportunities.</p>
FCE 2	<p>NGO (senior national representative of The Woodland Trust) :</p> <p>In terms of the auditing process we are concerned that a sufficient sample of sites are audited to pick up a consistent approach to PAWS practice across the estate. An appropriate intensity of auditing is fundamental to ensuring compliance with the standard and we feel this has not been the case in the past.</p> <p>We note that it appears SGS Qualifor have used the same lead assessor for this certificate over the last 10 years and potentially will be over the next 5 years. From our own experience auditing personnel have been changed to ensure a fresh perspective on a certificate and wonder how this is being addressed in the case of this certificate.</p>	<p>SGS discussed these issues at a face to face meeting opportunity with the senior national representative of The Woodland Trust.</p> <p>SGS carefully considers the sampling intensity for every audit of FCE and all Districts are covered during the course of the certificate.</p> <p>SGS fully recognises the importance of PAWS within the UKWAS and has checked PAWS compliance each yearly audit accordingly.</p> <p>SGS has always responded to WT concerns in the stakeholder comments section of the public summary reports. Apart from the following (closed out) CARs, SGS has found FCE to be UKWAS compliant. During FCE's first certificate SGS raised a major CAR on PAWS (lack of overall strategy). During their second certificate SGS raised a minor CAR on PAWS (not making survey data available to operational staff). SGS have made observations on PAWS in this re-assessment, some of concern for UKWAS compliance, some of commendation.</p> <p>It is not the case that SGS have used the same lead auditor for this certificate over the last 10 years. The team leader has been the same since 2003 but in that time has closely involved another highly experienced senior lead auditor, working together very much as a team. This team member is an eminent forest ecologist with extensive UK and international ecology and forestry experience and who has often been given responsibility for assessing FCE's UKWAS compliance on PAWS. Nevertheless, it has been an SGS intention for some time to recruit more auditors and vary audit teams and change team leaders for the FC. This has already begun, bringing in another lead auditor from abroad and undertaking training for another lead auditor.</p> <p>This already happens. The record will show that several WT</p>

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	<p>Consistent advanced notice of surveillance audits would be appreciated as would timely responses to stakeholder issues and the communication of the outcomes of audits.</p> <p>With regard to PAWS management and guidance, we have had constructive discussions with senior management at FCE HQ and understand that an internal review of practice on FCE's PAWS sites will be concluded this summer.</p> <p>The FCE Operational Guidance Notes numbers 3 and 22 would then be reviewed and finalised in the light of the findings. We welcome this process but would suggest it needs to be concluded quickly since this issue of guidance has now remained open for some considerable time. Setting a firm timetable for its conclusion would seem appropriate.</p>	<p>staff are consistently contacted in advance of surveillance audits. SGS has pro-actively contacted WT and organised joint forest site meetings. Similarly, previous reports will show responses to WT stakeholder issues and communication of the outcomes of audits.</p> <p>During the course of the second certificate, WT have raised several general concerns on strategy and guidance to staff. In particular, the WT has favoured thinning as a default prescription versus felling as a silvicultural response if there are any ancient woodland remnants. The view of the Forest Research Agency is that each site needs to be considered on its own merits. Sometimes felling may be appropriate, sometimes not. Sometimes thinning is appropriate, sometimes not. Sometimes a mixture of felling and thinning may be appropriate. This seems a well founded and UKWAS compliant approach to SGS. Constructive dialogue between senior WT and FCE staff noted. SGS has worked hard over several years to facilitate this.</p> <p>Noted that WT welcome the review process of FCE Operational Guidance Notes numbers 3 and 22. FCE are now going to produce a combined single Operational Guidance Note for PAWS. As shown in the SGS 2008 Surveillance report, FCE have issued an interim guidance measure for Districts until the full FCE Operational Guidance is produced.</p> <p>WT declared they found it very helpful to have the discussion about feedback on site specific examples of good practice or areas of concern. SGS reiterated their view that it was entirely appropriate to have any site specific concerns drawn to SGS' attention, which they would readily investigate at suitable opportunity during audits. There is track record of having done this in response to any comments by WT during the FCE's previous certificate – see stakeholder comments within that report.</p> <p>Throughout this whole issue, the key point within UKWAS 6.3.2 that 'Remnant features should not deteriorate further through a lack of protection and management.', plus the definition of what constitutes a remnant feature (specialist flora, pre-plantation trees and pre-plantation deadwood) is not in question.</p> <p>Debate lies in that the WT consider all species, no matter how few are represented, as remnant features and would apply restoration measures to such woods and forests.</p> <p>An alternative approach by FE, especially where a large proportion of a forest is designated as PAWS, would be to prioritise the areas with 'significant' indicator species of ancient woodland and with a relatively high probability of successful restoration. PAWS sites with very low levels of indicator species and a low probability of restoration could reasonably be restocked with conifers, whilst protecting any</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
		<p>good quality individual remnants, however few.</p> <p>SGS would support this approach as being a reasonable and pragmatic interpretation of UKWAS 6.3.2.</p> <p>However, a key question to achieving consensus on this issue is what constitutes a <u>significant good quality</u> remnant feature, and, by implication, whether application of UKWAS 6.3.2 is fully appropriate or not. The terms 'significant' and 'good quality' are, arguably, implied for practical interpretation, but not specifically stated under 6.3.2. Guidance by UKWAS on this point would be helpful given the level of debate on compliance.</p> <p>SGS therefore take the view that this matter should be referred to the UKWAS for its current review in preparation of the UKWAS 3rd edition due in 2011. SGS will therefore put forward the query 'What constitutes sufficiently significant good quality remnant features, particularly with regard to specialist flora, to require PAWS management as per UKWAS 6.3.2 ?'</p> <p>Meantime, in view of the FRA research and advice, SGS finds FEE's interim guidance on restoration via progressive thinning or clearfelling or a mixture of the two, by careful individual site appraisal of significant good quality remnant features, to be UKWAS compliant.</p>
<p>FC E 2</p>	<p>Whilst acknowledging good work in halo thinning around ancient and veteran trees at Savernake Forest in Forest of Dean Forest District, the WT note, what in their opinion, amounted to unacceptable and avoidable damage to ancient beech tree roots during extraction operations.</p>	<p>FCE hope that the full operational guidance will be produced as soon as realistically possible. There are two significant factors affecting its issue.</p> <p>Firstly, FCE sensibly categorise their PAWS into different levels of ancient woodland remnant presence and potential seed source for native tree species regeneration. Of the 4 categories, it is the last two with least remnants and little prospect of seed source where there is still debate over how best to manage. Without a suitable seed source periodic thinning will not achieve regeneration, etc.</p> <p>Secondly, as a separate but parallel item, FC (Forestry Authority) are in the process of producing an FC Practice Guide on 'Managing Ancient and Native Woodland' for which the publication date was anticipated in the summer of 2009 but has still not been produced. FCE want to ensure that their FCE Ops Guidance instruction is wholly consistent with the final version of this forthcoming FC Practice Guide and are therefore looking to publish the FCE Ops instructions after this point.</p> <p>Further research on PAWS was mentioned between SGS and the WT. The WT is gathering both their past research by the Oxford Forestry Institute and the Forest Research Agency's latest findings on PAWS onto the WT web page. A sample of WT sites across the UK were surveyed in 2001 and a re-survey of these same sites has just been completed in 2009. The WT expect to have the results of this comparison before the end of 2009. SGS has previously pro-actively involved the Forest Research Agency on this PAWS issue.</p> <p>SGS have seen a photo of the Savernake Forest damage and have already discussed the incident with FCE who feel it is an isolated and localised example and not unacceptable. SGS will follow up at next audit opportunity.</p> <p>Since the beginning of the second certificate in 2004, this is the fourth site specific concern put forward by the WT. The previous three were followed up by SGS. For the first, some remnant shrub type species at the edge of the woodland had been inadvertently damaged in an effort to avoid damaging the ride from timber extraction. For the second, felling Western Hemlock and spraying WH regeneration was confirmed as a wholly appropriate prescription by SGS. At the third, there was some concern over felling of PAWS sites</p>

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		<p>within a forest design plan. Not all the PAWS were proposed for felling. FCE explained that they also needed to maintain temporary open habitat for butterfly conservation in that FDP and that they get requested by a Butterfly Conservation ENGO accordingly.</p> <p>Noted, that at the last audit visit to the Forest of Dean Forest District in 2008, SGS made the following observation of commendation from a randomly selected site.</p> <p>'In Forest of Dean FD at Reddings a recently clear-felled stand of Western Hemlock coupled with retention of beech, had transformed into a diverse community of ancient woodland plants with abundant ash regeneration, demonstrating excellent local decision-making and operational management'.</p>
		<p>Throughout this whole PAWS issue, the key point within UKWAS 6.3.2 that 'Remnant features should not deteriorate further through a lack of protection and management.', plus the definition of what constitutes a remnant feature (specialist flora, pre-plantation trees and pre-plantation deadwood) is not in question.</p> <p>Debate lies in that the WT consider all species, no matter how few are represented, as remnant features and would apply restoration measures to such woods and forests.</p> <p>An alternative approach by FCE, especially where a large proportion of a forest is designated as PAWS, would be to prioritise the areas with 'significant' indicator species of ancient woodland and with a relatively high probability of successful restoration. PAWS sites with very low levels of indicator species and a low probability of restoration could reasonably be restocked with conifers, whilst protecting any good quality individual remnants, however few.</p> <p>SGS would support this approach as being a reasonable and pragmatic interpretation of UKWAS 6.3.2.</p> <p>However, a key question to achieving consensus on this issue is what constitutes a <u>significant good quality</u> remnant feature, and, by implication, whether application of UKWAS 6.3.2 is fully appropriate or not. The terms 'significant' and 'good quality' are, arguably, implied for practical interpretation, but not specifically stated under 6.3.2. Guidance by UKWAS on this point would be helpful given the level of debate on compliance.</p> <p>SGS therefore take the view that this matter should be referred to the UKWAS for its current review in preparation of the UKWAS 3rd edition due in 2011. SGS will therefore put forward the query 'What constitutes sufficiently significant good quality remnant features, particularly with regard to specialist flora, to require PAWS management as per UKWAS 6.3.2 ?'</p>
FC E 3	<p>NGO (local representative of The Woodland Trust) :</p> <p>Complained that Northants FD staff are unhelpful, uncommunicative and re-active. There is a lack of cooperation over deer management at Stoke Wood, Brampton Ash. FCE refused permission to the WT contract stalker to shoot deer on FCE land.</p>	<p>This issue came to SGS' attention during the audit of Northants FD. SGS invited the local WT officer to an interview meeting to discuss the issue further. The request for interview was initially accepted and then attendance withdrawn. SGS interviewed the Northants FD staff involved who responded, saying that they had a very good working relationship with the local WT warden at Brampton Ash. They could not permit the WT contract stalker on FCE land due to his lack of qualifications. Due to WT not maintaining their part of the perimeter fence, frequent incursions of deer had occurred and FCE had eventually fenced their area separately (FCE initially fully funded the perimeter fence) and have since diligently maintained it with low numbers of deer.</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
		<p>In search of an independent opinion, Natural England were interviewed by SGS. NE reported awareness of some friction between WT and FE, but reported their own very good relationships with Northants FD (see NE comments below under stakeholder comment no. 4).</p> <p>Although there have been some challenges, Northants FD appear to be managing this woodland to a high standard and the WT officer appears to be overstating the problems</p> <p>Follow up at next audit opportunity.</p>
<p>FC E</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Government (nature conservation officer for Natural England) :</p> <p>Reported a very effective relationship and a very high level of cooperation and professionalism with FCE at Northants FD.</p> <p>All SSSIs in FCE management are now in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable, recovering' condition.</p> <p>There is a concern currently about the availability of funding to continue the important work on habitat management, e.g. Coppice management at Ouston Woods.</p>	<p>Noted. See above re. stakeholder comment no. 3.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted, SGS have raised the following Observation in this report.</p> <p>'The future management and reinstatement of traditional management methods at Ouston Wood is currently not supported by adequate funding. This deficiency should be addressed'.</p>
<p>FC E</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Other (individual with conservation experience) :</p> <p>While not entirely happy with the outcome of previous complaints on this topic and that of environmental impact evaluation, has discussed this with a Government conservation officer and fully understands their position. Prepared to accept their decisions / views on this matter.</p>	<p>An individual stakeholder had previously complained at the last surveillance in 2008 about management practice over rare birds (Woodlark, Nightjar and Stone Curlew) and other nature conservation issues in East Anglia FD. The matter was investigated by SGS during 2008/2009 including further stakeholder consultation. An interim conclusion was reached that determined UKWAS compliance by FCE (see stakeholder comments in the 2008 Surveillance report.) with the caveat that it would be followed up at next audit opportunity.</p> <p>The matter was investigated again during this audit including interview with two other particularly relevant stakeholder organisations – Natural England (NE) and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). It was concluded with NE that there had been some previous minor issues of concern over lack of consultation with conservation staff by other staff involved in recreational development, but these had since been resolved satisfactorily and there were no ongoing issues of any significance. There was overall good opinion by NE on FCE's management for rare species and an acceptance that FCE have to try to take into account demand for public access as well. BTO reported an excellent relationship with FCE in managing for rare bird species particular to the area.</p>
<p>FC E</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Government (nature conservation officer for Natural England) :</p> <p>NE were of the view that there had been some previous minor issues of concern over lack of consultation with conservation staff by other staff involved in recreational development, but these had since been resolved satisfactorily and there were no ongoing issues of any significance. There</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
	was overall good opinion by NE on FCE's management for rare species in East Anglia FD and an acceptance that FCE have to try to take into account demand for public access as well.	
FC E 7	NGO (the British Trust for Ornithology - highly respected for its ornithological expertise) : A valuable and high level of cooperation with FCE on woodlark and nightjar conservation and monitoring in Thetford Forest (East Anglia FD).	Noted.
FC E 8	Other (individual with conservation experience) : In East Anglia FD a load of chips and soil during the construction of a play area at Mildenhall (a County Wildlife Site) were dumped on the site of a nationally scarce plant (Maiden Pink – Dianthus deltoides). This was a joint recreation venture between FCE and Forest Heath District Council. There appears to have been little or no consultation as part of the planning process involving EA FD Recreation and Conservation staff. The site is clearly identified on the East Anglia Conservation layer of the GIS planning system and the detailed locations of the important plants are readily available.	The matter was investigated by SGS and the operation of delivering chips and soil found to be nothing to do with FCE, East Anglia FD, see stakeholder comment 09.
FC E 9	Government (Forest Heath Council officer) : Fully aware of the incident referred to under stakeholder comment 08. True that it is a joint recreation venture with East Anglia FD on FCE land and that FH Council were informed by FCE of the sites conservation value. FH Council had instructed a contractor who, despite good instructions by the Council, had managed to dump the soil and chips in the wrong place. Fortunately, the rare plants were not in flower and remedial action was undertaken swiftly by the Council and the contractor advised of his mistake.	FH Council were well aware of the above incident and had discussed it with the stakeholder. SGS stated the stakeholder concerns no.8 verbatim to the Council. SGS were clearly informed it was nothing to do with FCE but, regretfully, the responsibility of the Council (indirectly) and the fault of their Council instructed contractor.
FC E 10	Other (individual woodland user and member of Friends of Bourne Wood in Northants FD) : Previous concerns over the FCE's potential involvement in selling a small section of Bourne Wood, to facilitate development access inc.a ring road for Bourne. Acknowledged good to adequate levels of communication but requested more advance knowledge of operations. Not seen a copy of the local Forest Design Plan.	These have receded in the context that FCE are no longer involved in discussions and the matter is now solely in the hands of the local authority's planning department. SGS had previous correspondence with Bourne stakeholders in 2008 on the above issue and, despite the withdrawal of FCE from the original planning issue, undertook to follow up at next audit opportunity. SGS raised the following Observation in this report. Although there is clear documented evidence inc. signatures (inc. the stakeholder interviewed) that the Forest Design Plan has been shown in the past to local people, it would possibly help the ongoing

Nr	Comment	Response
	<p>Appreciate the presence of a local member of staff, in that the area wildlife ranger lives locally at Bourne, but would welcome greater levels of communication with the beat forester who has not long been in post.</p> <p>Some members of the local community would still like to see the FCE's now closed public toilets replaced,</p>	<p>communications with the local community if a copy were permanently available, given the level of interest.</p> <p>Noted and passed on to Northants FD. The beat forester has indeed not long been in post and has a demanding work load. Nevertheless, from dialogue, the beat forester intends to follow up with more contact.</p> <p>SGS raised the following Observation in this report.</p> <p>At Bourne Wood in Northants FD the old public toilets provided by FCE have been closed due to a national request for cost savings. This has meant that the toilets can no longer be cleaned and kept open. The toilets are in need of replacement and obviously there is a demand for use as seen by visitors being turned away during the audit. FCE have approached the local council for finance assistance but without success.</p> <p>Whilst members of the local community remain closely connected to Bourne Wood, and would still like to see the FCE's now closed public toilets replaced, there is an overall positive relationship and satisfactory communication between District staff and the whole community, with the wood well used by the public and evidence from site visits of some well managed operations by Northants FD.</p>
FC E 11	<p>Other (an organisation with some land neighbouring with FCE in South East England) :</p> <p>In FCE South East England Forest District Planning is good, given copy of Local forest Design Plan. Common boundary and kept informed. FCE SEE FD maintain their woodland to a high standard using professional contractors and are professional in all matters. New European Protected Species legislation comprehensively brought in to operational planning. PAWS programme on ASNW very comprehensive. FCE SEE FD manages to a high standard. Potentially contentious issues are discussed with stakeholders. They do not employ direct staff from the locality on any real scale and use contractors who are regionally based. Presentations of woodland development plans etc. are thoroughly and professionally communicated. Pro-active in the development of leisure and recreational facilities within local communities. The public interface is a strong point of FCE SEE FD and managers achieve positive results with professional and comprehensive communication.</p>	<p>Re. comment on local employment, this is not altogether surprising. Previous audit of South East England FD in 2004 established that housing and retention of less well paid junior staff is an understandably difficult issue for SEE FD, such is the demand and price levels of property in the relatively prosperous south east of England. (Some longer served staff are locally based though.) The same is therefore likely to apply to contractors, although the contractors interviewed in 2004 were local.</p> <p>Otherwise comments noted as positive.</p>
FC E	<p>Other (an organisation with some land neighbouring with FCE in South West England) :</p> <p>No adverse comments, we have a good</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Nr	Comment	Response
12	working relationship with FCE at a local level.	
FCE 13	Other (Forestry contractor) : FCE manage to provide an acceptable continuity of work.	Noted.
FCE 14	Government (Road transport officer) : FCE are responsible users of the rural road infrastructure and consult well through the Forest design Plan process and involvement with regional timber transport groups. Pleased to hear that they are trying to encourage the haulage industry to adopt tyre pressure control system equipped timber lorries.	Noted. Re. North East England FD.
	Surveillance 1	
	Surveillance 2	
	Surveillance 3	
	Surveillance 4	

<p>FC W 1</p>	<p>There were two areas of Pine. The first was a modest area of (native species but plantation) Scots pine on a steep slope that was difficult to retain during difficult timber extraction and would not have made much difference if retained due to lack of connectivity. This Pine was felled and during the winter when the animals are not rearing young, as is best practice. FCW's planned choice of species for its restocking will improve the habitat for Red squirrel.</p> <p>Stakeholders expressed further concern when another coupe was scheduled for felling which contained (exotic) Lodgepole pine (LP). This site too was proposed for winter felling and pre-ops checks had been undertaken by FCW. Again, it was not deemed individual high quality habitat for Red squirrel. However, a stakeholder reported seeing Red squirrel in this LP area and live trapping results have been reported by stakeholders in an LP area. The felling of this area has been postponed due to stakeholder concern and pending the publication of the 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales'. Dialogue inc.FCW has taken place to date within the group but without a conclusion. SGS has interviewed a representative of the Mid Wales Squirrel Group, CCW and FCW. The matter is clearly sensitive and there are strong opinions amongst the members of the MWSG.</p> <p>The Forest Design Plan was checked by SGS and established that the forest was being managed for a range of objectives but with Red squirrel very much in mind. This was reflected by specific site planning that included appropriate species within the forest and a 'buffer zone' of no large broadleaves around the boundaries.</p> <p>SGS' view is that the areas of Pine being felled were found to be modest and important for design and harvesting considerations (not solely economic). Twyi is a large forest and the Forest Design Plan will clearly maintain a suitable habitat for Red squirrel. Both Pine sites were inspected. The unfelled Lodgepole pine area did not indicate a very high level of Red squirrel presence on that particular individual site. The whole forest indicates a suitable existing habitat for Red squirrel for which FCW's design for the future will improve further.</p> <p>FCW has previously been commended through the UKWAS audit process for its exemplary forest management at Cloecaenog, which has been of suitable benefit for the Red squirrel population present. This was confirmed with a further visit during this audit.</p> <p>SGS conclude that FCW were found to be UKWAS compliant over this issue.</p> <p>SGS will follow up the outcome of the publication of the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales' at next audit opportunity.</p> <p>FCW have a wide ranging remit for many other environmental objectives which would obviously benefit with increased funding. The cost of full time grey squirrel control officers is relatively significant, particularly when all budgets are under more pressure than even normal in a current financial climate trying to recover from the global 'credit crunch'. Nevertheless, Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species under threat and this will clearly be an ongoing resource challenge for FCW. Conservation of red squirrel by control of grey squirrel is clearly an ENGO stakeholder concern.</p>
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Comment 3) The (native) red squirrel is endangered and it is well known that the presence of (non-native) grey squirrels is very detrimental to them. Maintaining and enhancing red squirrels clearly implies a need actively to control greys and, ideally, to eradicate them.

Comment 4) Grey squirrel management co-ordinated with neighbours is rarely, if ever, undertaken by the FC.

<p>FC W</p> <p>2</p>	<p>NGO (senior GB representative of The Woodland Trust) :</p> <p>In terms of the auditing process we are concerned that a sufficient sample of sites are audited to pick up a consistent approach to PAWS practice across the estate. An appropriate intensity of auditing is fundamental to ensuring compliance with the standard and we feel this has not been the case in the past.</p> <p>(WT Wales were consulted prior to this audit but no comments including any site specific commenst were received.)</p> <p>We have made our concerns on PAWS restoration practices very clear during previous audits and recently held a constructive meeting at Wentwood (in Llanymddyfri FD) with the FCW Head of Policy.</p> <p>We note that it appears SGS Qualifor have used the same lead assessor for this certificate over the last 10 years and potentially will be over the next 5 years. From our own experience auditing personnel have been changed to ensure a fresh perspective on a certificate and wonder how this is being addressed in the case of this certificate.</p> <p>Consistent advanced notice of surveillance audits would be appreciated as would timely responses to stakeholder issues and the communication of the outcomes of audits.</p>	<p>SGS Qualifor discussed these issues at a face to face meeting opportunity with the senior national representative of The Woodland Trust.</p> <p>SGS carefully considers the sampling intensity for every audit of FCW and all Districts are covered during the course of the certificate.</p> <p>SGS fully recognises the importance of PAWS within the UKWAS and has checked PAWS compliance each yearly audit accordingly.</p> <p>SGS has always responded to WT concerns in the stakeholder comments section of any public summary report for other certificate holders.</p> <p>SGS has found FCW to be UKWAS compliant. During FCW's first certificate SGS raised a major CAR on PAWS (strategy not taking into account how PAWS will be planned and implemented at a landscape and Forest District scale). During their second certificate SGS raised two minor CARs on PAWS (management guidance & incomplete plans and budgets + damage to remnant features (Holly saplings) from ground preparation). Both CARS were closed out. SGS have also made an observation of commendation on PAWS in this re-assessment - FCW are planning on undertaking PAWS resurvey work to aim for consistency in all FDs with their planning prescriptions and operational management for PAWS. FCW are consulting the UK Forest Research Agency (who are carrying out scientific research on PAWS) as they revise and further develop their PAWS practice.</p> <p>It is not the case that SGS have used the same lead auditor for this certificate over the last 10 years. The team leader has been the same since 2003 but in that time has closely involved another highly experienced senior lead auditor, working together very much as a team. This team member is an eminent forest ecologist with extensive UK and international ecology and forestry experience and who has often been given responsibility for assessing FCW's UKWAS compliance on PAWS. Nevertheless, it has been an SGS intention for some time to recruit more auditors and vary audit teams and change team leaders for the FC. This has already begun, bringing in another lead auditor from abroad and undertaking training for another lead auditor.</p> <p>This already happens. The record will show that several WT staff are consistently contacted in advance of surveillance audits. Similarly, previous reports will show responses to WT stakeholder issues and communication of the outcomes of audits.</p> <p>WT declared they found it very helpful to have the discussion about feedback on site specific examples of good practice or areas of concern. SGS reiterated their view that it was entirely appropriate to have any site specific concerns drawn to SGS' attention, which they would readily investigate at suitable opportunity during audits.</p>
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<p>FC W 3</p>	<p>NGO (Officer representative of a Wildlife Trust) :</p> <p>All comments are in connection with the Mid-Wales Red Squirrel Group (MWSG) and Twyi Forest as managed by FCW.</p> <p>'Arguably Twyi is the most important of the three key populations left in Wales of Red squirrel.'</p> <p>Overall concerns that FCW's management of Twyi Forest does not do enough for Red squirrel conservation, including the felling of uneconomic stands of key species such as Lodgepole pine where Red squirrel has been found. FCW are not undertaking Grey squirrel control in key areas.</p> <p>Acknowledged that FCW's pre-operational checks identify dreys (nests) but this cannot separate Red and Grey squirrels and does not constitute monitoring.</p> <p>The Wildlife Trust concerned supports much of the work undertaken by FCW, such as PAWS restoration.</p>	<p>Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species. SGS included a forest management specialist with knowledge of squirrel ecology as part of the audit team. The specialist has been secretary of a red squirrel group and has been commissioned several times to conduct pre-operational surveys for red squirrel dreys.</p> <p>The increasing population of invasive & exotic Grey squirrels in Wales threatens the native Red Squirrel (UK BAP species) population which has now become scarce. Estimates suggest that as few as 1,000 adult Red squirrels remain in Wales. Greys can exploit certain food resources more effectively than Reds, particularly large seeds found in broadleaf woodland. This leads to young Reds not surviving and so the local population becomes extinct. Impact is exacerbated by squirrel pox virus, an infectious disease fatal to Reds. Greys carry the virus and are unaffected. Contact between populations is therefore disastrous for Reds. Greys are also a threat to the growing of broadleaves for timber due to the potential bark stripping damage they can do.</p> <p>FCW have stated in their Corporate Plan (page 17) that they will continue to develop their approach to grey squirrel control, in partnership with others. FCW perceive the main problem with targeting control on selected Grey squirrel problem areas to be the vacuum effect that is created and then filled again.</p> <p>Within Wales there are three main sites with Red squirrel populations : The island of Anglesey (where they were successfully re-introduced) ; Clocaenog ; and the Twyi valley in mid-Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) have very recently approved a decision (14 July 2009) that urgent strategic action be taken in these three areas. The 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales' (CPfRSiW) is only just being published but is still not available to download from the official website tried as this report was being written. It is reckoned to build on a previous plan produced by CCW several years ago. Naturally, as the WAG's forest manager, FCW will be required to fulfil their part in this new plan. It is not yet known whether the CPfRSiW will make specific recommendations for the Twyi valley where FCW is a major land manager.</p> <p>In particular, stakeholders advised SGS from this audit's pre-departure consultation that they had concerns over Red squirrel conservation at Twyi forest in Llanymddyfri Forest District which has a population of Red squirrel. Stakeholder concern was over felling of some areas of Pine within the forest which it is argued should be specifically retained for squirrel habitat. Members of the Mid-Wales Squirrel Group (MWSG) are advocating that Twyi Forest be designated a Red Squirrel reserve.</p> <p>Both FCW and the Country Commission for Wales(CCW), as the Welsh Assembly Government's conservation agency are organisational members of the MWSG. Other members include the Wildlife Trust, three local authorities, private woodland managers and local volunteers.</p>
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<p>FC W 3</p>	<p>(Continued)</p>	<p>There were two areas of Pine. The first was a modest area of (native species but plantation) Scots pine on a steep slope that was difficult to retain during difficult timber extraction and would not have made much difference if retained due to lack of connectivity. This Pine was felled and during the winter when the animals are not rearing young, as is best practice. FCW's planned choice of species for its restocking will improve the habitat for Red squirrel.</p> <p>Stakeholders expressed further concern when another coupe was scheduled for felling which contained (exotic) Lodgepole pine (LP). This site too was proposed for winter felling and pre-ops checks had been undertaken by FCW. Again, it was not deemed individual high quality habitat for Red squirrel. However, a stakeholder reported seeing Red squirrel in this LP area and live trapping results have been reported by stakeholders in an LP area. The felling of this area has been postponed due to stakeholder concern and pending the publication of the 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales'. Dialogue inc.FCW has taken place to date within the group but without a conclusion. SGS has interviewed a representative of the Mid Wales Squirrel Group, CCW and FCW. The matter is clearly sensitive and there are strong opinions amongst the members of the MWSG.</p> <p>The Forest Design Plan was checked by SGS and established that the forest was being managed for a range of objectives but with Red squirrel very much in mind. This was reflected by specific site planning that included appropriate species within the forest and a 'buffer zone' of no large broadleaves around the boundaries.</p> <p>SGS' view is that the areas of Pine being felled were found to be modest and important for design and harvesting considerations (not solely economic). Twyi is a large forest and the Forest Design Plan will clearly maintain a suitable habitat for Red squirrel. Both Pine sites were inspected. The unfelled Lodgepole pine area did not indicate a very high level of Red squirrel presence on that particular individual site. The whole forest indicates a suitable existing habitat for Red squirrel for which FCW's design for the future will improve further.</p> <p>FCW has previously been commended through the UKWAS audit process for its exemplary forest management at Cloecaenog, which has been of suitable benefit for the Red squirrel population present. This was confirmed with a further visit during this audit.</p> <p>SGS conclude that FCW were found to be UKWAS compliant over this issue. SGS will follow up the outcome of the publication of the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales' at next audit opportunity.</p> <p>FCW have a wide ranging remit for many other environmental objectives which would obviously benefit with increased funding. The cost of full time grey squirrel control officers is relatively significant, particularly when all budgets are under more pressure than even normal in a current financial climate trying to recover from the global 'credit crunch'. Nevertheless, Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species under threat and this will clearly be an ongoing resource challenge for FCW. Conservation of red squirrel by control of grey squirrel is clearly an ENGO stakeholder concern.</p>
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FC W 4	<p>NGO (member representative of the Mid-Wales Red Squirrel Group) :</p> <p>The stakeholder added to the comments expressed by the Wildlife Trust NGO, comment nr 3.</p>	<p>See comments in response to stakeholder nr 1 (NGO (national representative of the European Squirrel Initiative).</p> <p>The issue was investigated by a forest management and Red squirrel specialist with a site visit to Twyi Forest plus stakeholder (MWSG) and FCW interview. The Forest Design Plan was also assessed.</p> <p>Refer to details above re. stakeholder nr 1.</p> <p>In summary, SGS conclude that FCW were found to be UKWAS compliant over this issue.</p> <p>SGS will follow up the outcome of the publication of the 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales' at next audit opportunity and monitor the situation at Twyi.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species under threat and this will clearly be an ongoing resource challenge for FCW. Conservation of red squirrel by control of grey squirrel is clearly an ENGO stakeholder concern.</p>
FC W 5	<p>NGO (Officer representative of a Wildlife Trust) :</p> <p>The stakeholder wished to echo the comments expressed by the other Wildlife Trust NGO, comment nr 3.</p>	<p>Noted, see response to stakeholder comments nr 3.</p>
FC W 6	<p>National Government (involved with general nature conservation) :</p> <p>Aware of the other stakeholder concerns over FCW's management as it affects Red squirrel conservation. Concerned that the Forest Design Plan for Twyi does not cater for Red squirrel as it should re. species composition, arboreal connectivity, felling of Pine. Acknowledged that it is clearly not realistic to retain Pine stands permanently. Wishes to see a plan setting out how the area will be managed as a whole to sustain the Red squirrel population in the long term. Happy to continue to work with FCW to develop conservation plans for the Mid Wales Red squirrel population.</p>	<p>See comments in response to stakeholder nrs 1 and 3.</p> <p>The issue was investigated by a forest management and Red squirrel specialist with a site visit to Twyi Forest plus stakeholder (MWSG) and FCW interview. The Forest Design Plan was also assessed.</p> <p>Refer to details above re. stakeholder nr 1.</p> <p>In summary, SGS conclude that FCW were found to be UKWAS compliant over this issue.</p> <p>SGS will follow up the outcome of the publication of the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales' at next audit opportunity and monitor the situation at Twyi.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Red Squirrel is a UK BAP species under threat and this will clearly be an ongoing resource challenge for FCW.</p>
FC W 8	<p>Local Government (involved with rural conservation and organisational member of the Mid-Wales Squirrel Group) :</p> <p>Primarily, the stakeholder added to the comments expressed by the Wildlife Trust NGO, comment nr 3.</p> <p>Additional concerns were expressed over the FCW's planned felling of conifers on slopes with conversion to broadleaves in Brechfa Forest, plus inappropriate designation of Low Impact Silvicultural Systems on poor soil areas, plus concern over firewood supply. (Similar silvicultural concerns and for firewood were expressed by stakeholder nr 12.)</p>	<p>See comments in response to stakeholder nrs 1 and 3 re. Red squirrel.</p> <p>The stakeholder response was received after the visit to Llanymddyfri FD.</p> <p>Although no significant concerns were identified by the site visit to Brechfa, SGS will follow up at next audit opportunity and seek to interview the stakeholder.</p>

FC W 9	<p>Other (neighbour with forest related environmental business):</p> <p>Mixed story of experiences of living next to a FCW woodland. Hopeful things are improving. There appears to be a willingness to engage at deeper level with local communities on the part of FCW in response to Welsh Assembly Government policy directives. The pace and type of change is apparently limited by staffing and financial constraints under which FCW has to work. Hopeful that the Pathfinder Projects will develop a closer relationship with local communities.</p> <p>The stakeholder expressed various concerns and positive recognitions over FCW's forest management and policies.</p>	<p>This stakeholder comment relates to Coed y Mynydd FD. SGS will follow up at next audit opportunity.</p>
FC W 10	<p>Other (neighbour with keen interest in the FCW wood concerned) :</p>	<p>At Wiston wood in Llanymddyfri FD, although there was documented evidence of consultation with the management plan for the wider local community, an adjacent neighbour had been overlooked. The individual concerned had a high degree of interest in the wood. Although he had had contact with FCW, he had yet to see the management plan. Interviewed during this audit and shown a summary of the plan, FCW intend to provide him with a copy document.</p>

<p>FC W</p> <p>11</p>	<p>Government (involved with woodland management) :</p> <p>In relation to Canaston wood, Llanymddyfri FD.</p> <p>Many aspects of forest management were responded to as 'good', including landscape planning, operations, road building, protection of special sites and water & soil, public access, local partnerships.</p> <p>Concerns were expressed over planning amendments, local employment, mapping or rare and endangered species (not sure that this happens), the previous sale of broadleaf woodland (not sure that this was a good thing), the existing Canaston wood has been identified for restoration to PAWS, and as one of the largest PAWS sites in Wales is considered very important. Concern that more of the woodland will be sold off.</p>	<p>Canaston wood was visited by SGS.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Coupe planning and communications at Canaston contributed to the raising of a minor Corrective Action Request under UKWAS 4.1.1. An area of broadleaves was thinned without the harvesting supervisor knowing it was a PAWS site. In the event, the thinning operation was well done and entirely appropriate for PAWS management. The issue was one of coupe planning and communications as potentially a system fault. Elsewhere at Canaston FCW supervision was aware of PAWS designation. Recording of rare fauna was checked by SGS and confirmed as working well. A rare fauna site was identified on the GIS conservation layer and communicated onto the operational constraints map.</p> <p>The previous partial sale was investigated. An area of broadleaf woodland at Canaston / Slebech/ Penglyn had a restrictive covenant against public access retained by the previous owner. In 2002 a partnership of the previous owner and a developer made a planning application for adjacent farm land for an all weather chalet style holiday village multi million project with several hundred jobs. This was to add to an existing leisure park. The Economic Development minister at the time confirmed that Welsh Development / Tourism agencies were prepared to assist the scheme with similarly large sums of public money. The area of FCW woodland concerned was being acquired to provide an amenity area for the development and was not proposed for any felling. FCW arranged that the sale would contain a limit on use for amenity purposes only, i.e. to safeguard loss of ancient woodland. The sale was legally completed in late 2006. Map evidence shows that the vast majority of the woodland sold was Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) and the minority was actual Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW).</p> <p>Given the current Welsh Assembly Government's policy on PAWS that are capable of being restored, it is unlikely that any further sale will occur.</p> <p>FCW's management of the much larger residual area at Canaston, approx. six times the area sold, is entirely appropriate for ASNW / PAWS. Site visit included an area of ASNW woodland which was also an SSSI and other PAWS restoration sites.</p>
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FC W 12	<p>Other (local community user group member) in the Brechfa Forest area:</p> <p>'Good and bad experiences of working with FCW – and no doubt they would say the same about us. We are aware of the constraints placed upon them, so have tried to be fair in our comments.</p> <p>We will be watching to see what comes out of the Pathfinder Projects process, having seen an early draft of project guidelines, concerned that there is no grievance or appeals process built in.'</p> <p>Forest management comments included concerns over placing of timber loading bays, design planning, employment of local people, Welsh language fluency, mountain biking and firewood.</p> <p>Particular concern was expressed over a potential windfarm at Brechfa.</p> <p>Welsh Assembly Government policy is to bring large scale wind turbine development to the area on FCW land. The development company is dealing with PR but FCW have made no attempt to address the issues with local people.</p>	<p>SGS arranged to meet the stakeholder but unfortunately traffic caused the stakeholder delay and the meeting had to be cancelled.</p> <p>FCW have leased an old forestry building to the group who use it 'primarily for Forest School and community activities relating to biodiversity and health and well being.' The building was inspected and was in good order, obviously being well used.</p> <p>SGS interviewed the FCW project manager for the Pathfinder Project which is in its infancy and still being fully developed. It seeks to involve interested local groups in forest management and consider potential land leasing or management agreements.</p> <p>It is unfortunate the stakeholder could not attend interview to expand upon these issues in more detail.</p> <p>However, no non-compliances were found against the issues mentioned. The group also has some positive comment about the mountain biking.</p> <p>FCW are not the developers, only the potential landlord to a lease arrangement as the stakeholder points out. Under Welsh planning law, it is up to a developer to make planning application and provide an environmental impact assessment (EIA) that will be scrutinised by the planning authority and statutory consultees (e.g. CCW) and should address all pertinent issues or be asked to do so if deficient. The opportunity for local people to make comments upon a planning application are a requirement of the EIA / planning application process.</p> <p>SGS will monitor the wind farm application at Brechfa and seek to re-interview the stakeholder at the next audit opportunity.</p>
FC W 13	<p>Other (Local forestry contractor) :</p> <p>FCW manage to provide an acceptable continuity of work.</p>	Noted.
FC W 14	<p>Other (a commercial organisation also involved with forestry management in Wales) :</p> <p>Not aware of any significant issues.</p>	Noted.
Surveillance 1		
Surveillance 2		
Surveillance 3		
Surveillance 4		

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14. RECORD OF COMPLAINTS

Nr	Detail		
	Complaint:	Date Recorded >	14 Nov 2007
	<p>This complaint relates to the last certificate for which there has been extended and lengthy correspondence. .</p> <p>An individual stakeholder had made a formal complaint that FCW figures on past replanting have not been forthcoming and that he has not received responses to his queries. He was concerned that FCW is not replanting with productive crops (conifers).</p> <p>Objective evidence obtained:</p> <p>It was established unequivocally that FCW staff had made several responses to the stakeholder. The stakeholder has since withdrawn his complaint about not receiving responses to his queries. SGS has assessed the subject of appropriate harvesting and restocking each year.</p> <p>FCW's management objectives as set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). The Woodlands for Wales Strategy (first published in 2001) and now revised in 2009 states clearly that the WAG wishes to see a continuation of increased diversity in conifer plantations (across the whole of Wales, not just the Assembly woodland estate.</p> <p>FCW are required to maintain compliance with the whole UKWAS including modern management planning, modern forestry design & practice and conservation of Ancient Woodland. There has been no significant evidence over the course of FCW's current 5 year certificate that restocking for maintenance of productive potential is in non-compliance with the UKWAS requiring a Corrective Action Request (CAR). This is borne out in practice by many site visits over 5 years.</p>		
	Close-out information:	Date Closed >	23 Feb 2009y
	<p>In the absence of any further new evidence by the stakeholder, SGS Qualifor consider the issue closed.</p>		

End of Public Summary