

**SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
PROVIDED BY WOODLAND
INITIATIVES**

**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO THE
REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF**

**Prepared for The Forestry
Commission and Countryside
Agency
by
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We would like to thank those involved with the Woodland Initiatives for the time given to the study in interviews and in attending the study workshop. We appreciate the difficulties of time spent on 'non-project' work and we are grateful for the very useful information provided.

We have made every effort to record the information in an accurate way. However, in an attempt to achieve a consistent and concise report, we have summarised some of the data and trust that this has not significantly altered the content or meaning.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report forms a supplementary report to the Review of the Effectiveness of Woodland Initiatives, which was prepared by Land Use Consultants for the Forestry Commission and Countryside Agency. It provides a summary of the factual information which was received from Woodland Initiatives during interviews and from published information (e.g. annual reports).
- 1.2. As a collective group, Initiatives undertake many and varied activities. It is the intention of this supplementary report to provide a summary of the range of activities undertaken and to provide examples of Initiatives carrying out these activities. This information has been utilised to provide factual evidence for the findings of the main report. It is not the intention of this report to provide a list of all of the activities undertaken by each Initiative. Consequently, where Initiatives are not mentioned, this is not intended to indicate that they are not active in that particular topic area.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

- 1.3. In January 2002, the Forestry Commission (FC) and Countryside Agency (CA) commissioned Land Use Consultants (LUC) to undertake research to review the effectiveness of Woodland Initiatives. The aim of the research was to determine whether Woodland Initiatives are or could be valuable and cost-effective partners in implementing government forestry policy. The specific aims were:
- to examine the achievements of Woodland Initiatives since the report undertaken in 1995 by ERM/Canopy;
 - to assess the impact of Woodland Initiatives on government multi-purpose forestry objectives (as set out in the England Forestry Strategy and UK Forestry Standard);
 - to identify funding mechanisms most commonly accessed by Woodland Initiatives;

- to determine how initiatives might most cost-effectively be supported in the future.
- 1.4. The research has been undertaken with advice from the Steering Group, comprising representatives from the Forestry Commission (FC), Countryside Agency (CA), Forestry & Timber Association (FTA) and Small Woods Association (SWA).
 - 1.5. The research is intended to feed into a review currently being undertaken by the FC into the priorities for the support of sustainable management of woodland in England.

Methodology

- 1.6. The study has involved interviews with a selection of Woodland Initiatives in England. One of the first stages of the study involved discussions regarding the definition of a Woodland Initiative and consequently the remit for the study.
- 1.7. The list of initiatives to be interviewed was obtained by discussion with the Steering Group, and is set out in Table 1. It was recognised that it was not possible to interview all Woodland Initiatives. Consequently, the Steering Group for the study selected a number of Initiatives in order to provide coverage of both a geographical range and to cover the range of diverse activities undertaken by Initiatives. However, the selected list is not a definitive list of Woodland Initiatives, and omission from this study is not intended as a reflection on the activities of those Initiatives which have not been included.
- 1.8. A structured interview was held with each of the Initiatives during February and March 2002. This was undertaken face-to-face where possible. Telephone interviews were held with those Initiatives which it was not possible to visit. In addition, a workshop was held on 19 March 2002, to which a representative of each of the Initiatives was invited. The workshop was used to feed back the preliminary findings of the study, and obtain clarification and confirmation of the study findings.

Table 1: The Initiatives included in the study

• Anglia Woodnet	• Oxfordshire Woodland Project
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowland Added Value Project • Chiltern Woodlands Project • Cotswold AONB • Cumbria Broadleaves • Forest of Avon Wood Products Coop • Greenwood Trust • Kent Interreg Project • Lincwoods • Marches Woodland Initiative • Mersey Forest • Northwoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Rose Forest • Rockingham Forest Trust • Silvanus Trust • Stroud Touchwood • TWIG • Weald Woodnet • Wessex Coppice Group • Working Woodlands • Wychwood • Yorwoods
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REPORT STRUCTURE

1.9. The main report provides information on the findings of the research. This supplementary report provides factual information on the following topics:

- **Section 2** describes the origins and objectives of Initiatives;
- **Section 3** sets out the diverse activities which are undertaken by Initiatives in order to achieve their objectives;
- **Section 4** covers methods of administration, monitoring and management used by Initiatives;
- **Section 5** examines co-operation and linkages between Initiatives and other agencies;
- **Section 6** describes those funding sources utilised by Initiatives.

2. ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES OF INITIATIVES

ORIGINS OF INITIATIVES

- 2.1. Some of the Initiatives have been in place for a significant length of time (e.g. the Silvanus Trust grew out of the Dartington Amenity Research Trust in 1986 and the Community Forests, Cumbria Broadleaves, the Chiltern Woodland Project and Oxfordshire Woodland Project, all starting in the early 1990s or before). Table 2 outlines the origins of all the Initiatives studied.

LOCATION OF INITIATIVES

- 2.2. Table 3 shows the location of Initiatives and describes their area of coverage.

OBJECTIVES OF INITIATIVES

- 2.3. The published objectives of the Woodland Initiatives examined in this study are summarised in Table 4.
- 2.4. The published objectives of some of the Initiatives encompass a wide range of aims (for example the Chilterns Woodlands Project promotes sustainable woodland management and economic activity, as well as awareness and enjoyment of Chiltern Woods), whereas other Initiatives are focussed on a single aspect (e.g. the Forest of Avon Wood Products Group is focussed on promoting and selling woodland products). In some cases, Initiatives have very general objectives, within which their activities can be focussed and developed over time (e.g. Weald Woodnet which seeks to "*promote the sustainable development of broadleaved woodland in South East England*").
- 2.5. Most of the Initiatives are clearly focused on woodlands (e.g. Lincwoods, Northwoods). There are, however, Initiatives with a wider remit within which woodlands form a part (e.g. Rockingham Forest Trust is concerned with the wider countryside of the Rockingham Forest area).

- 2.6. The twelve Community Forests represent something of a separate and special group of Initiatives. They aim to use multipurpose forestry to improve the countryside around towns and cities by, for example, restoring areas of derelict land, creating sites for recreation and sport, forming new habitats for wildlife and making outdoor classrooms for environmental education. With half of England's population within easy reach of the Community Forests, they are focussed on centres of urban population rather than the woodland resource.
- 2.7. As a result, the Community Forests are more involved than all the other Initiatives in the creation of new woodland within green and brown spaces and in working with local communities. Nevertheless, Community Forests are also seeking to improve the management of existing woodland and to enhance the economic rationale for management. The three Community Forests included in this study were chosen because they were most actively engaged in quantifying their existing woodland resource and matching supply of woodland products with local demand (Red Rose and Mersey Forests) or because of the innovative approach that has been taken to building links in the wood chain (the Forest of Avon Wood Products Co-operative). It should be noted that this study has only examined the activities of these Community Forests as they refer to management of existing woodland and the downstream use of products from these woodlands. As far as the Forest of Avon Community Forest is concerned, only the activity of the Wood Products Co-operative has been considered.

Table 2: Origins of Woodland Initiatives

Initiative	Formed	Origins
Anglia Woodnet	1997	An offshoot of the Anglian Woodland Project (est. 1991) to take advantage of the Objective 5b funding in parts of East Anglia and develop marketing of woodland products.
Bowland AVP	1999	Established to sit alongside the Bowland Initiative, using Objective 5b funds. Developed the work of the Lancashire Woodland Project (est. 1992), which is now taking over the work of AVP following the ending of the Objective 5b programme.
Chilterns Woodlands Project	1989	Set up to continue the work of the Chiltern Society Small Woodlands Project which started in 1983.
Cumbria Broadleaves	1991	Established as a partnership of local authorities, Lake District National Park, the Forestry Commission (FC) and English Nature.
Forest of Avon Wood Products Coop	1999	Created by the Forest of Avon Community Forest following a seminar involving local private sector contractors and buyers.
Greenwood Trust	1984	Established as a national charity to promote the educational, social and commercial use of "green" and small diameter wood.
Kent Interreg	1999	A 2 year project funded by European Union Interreg.
Lincwoods	1999	A 3 year project funded by the Lincolnshire Objective 5b programme established by a partnership lead by ADAS.
Marches WI	1997	A 5 year project funded by the Marches Objective 5b programme established by a partnership lead by the FC and Countryside Agency (CA) (formerly the Countryside Commission).
Mersey Forest	1991	One of the 12 Community Forests set-up by the FC and CA.
Northwoods	1999	A 3 year project funded by the Northumberland and Durham Objective 5b programme established by a partnership lead by Forestry Contracting Association (FCA).
Oxfordshire WP	1991	Grew from the Oxfordshire Woodland Group (est. 1987) which still runs and supplies significant annual funding to the project.
Red Rose Forest	1991	One of the 12 Community Forests set-up by the FC and CA.
Rockingham Forest Trust	1993	The Trust was originally initiated as part of a bid for the National Forest. The bid was not successful, but subsequently (and following local consultation), the Trust was set up with a much wider remit.
Silvanus Trust	1986	Originally part of the Dartington Amenity Research Trust (est. 1967), the Trust was formed in 1986, becoming an independent charity in 1990.
Stroud Touchwood	1998	Arose from the Agenda 21 process in Gloucestershire and the Stroud Community Planning Strategy.
TWIG	1999	A 3 year project funded by European Union Recite II, building on work undertaken by the Chilterns Woodlands Project. The Chilterns Woodland Project is one of the partners of the TWIG project.
Weald Woodnet	1995	There is a long history of Woodland Initiatives in the Weald area, starting from the East Sussex Small Woodland Project in 1984. A new trading company, Esus Forestry and Woodlands Ltd came into being in 1987 (and is still operating). Weald Woodnet commenced in 1995.

Initiative	Formed	Origins
Wessex Coppice Gp	1995	Formed to encourage the economic growth of the hazel coppice industry strongly supported by Hampshire County Council.
Working Woodlands	1991	The Working Woodlands Initiative was created in 1993 by Bow Maurice Ltd as part of their action plan to commercialise the DTI's market development strategy for wood as fuel. To manage this and subsequent development initiatives, Bow Maurice Ltd set up Working Woodlands Holding Limited, a joint public, private company limited by guarantee. In 1996, Silvanus Trust was invited by the Holdings Company to join their development team to strengthen their bid for Objective 5b funding in Devon and Cornwall. In early 2002, the Holdings Company accessed Objective 1 funding to continue its operations in Cornwall.
Wychwood	1997	Like the Oxfordshire Woodland Project, the Wychwood Project developed from the Oxfordshire Woodland Group. It has evolved from a woodland / habitat management project to a more community oriented promotion of the historic Norman hunting forest's landscape and heritage. Covers the whole landscape not only woodland.
Yorwoods	1997	Established by a partnership of organisations lead by the FCA using Objective 5b funding.

Table 3: Location of Woodland Initiatives

Initiative	Location and Coverage
Anglia Woodnet	Located in Swaffham, Norfolk and covering the Eastern Region. Also collaborating with others elsewhere.
Bowland AVP	Located in Preston and covering the Objective 5b area of Bowland.
Chilterns Woodlands Project	Located in Princes Risborough and covering the Chilterns AONB and surrounding areas.
Cumbria Broadleaves	Located in Windermere, Cumbria and covering the county of Cumbria.
Forest of Avon Wood Products Coop	Located in Bristol and covering the Forest of Avon and surrounding area.
Greenwood Trust	Located in Coalbrookdale, Shropshire centring on the West Midlands but attracting trainees from across the UK.
Kent Interreg	Located in Maidstone and covering Kent and Nord pas de Calais.
Lincwoods	Initially set up to over the Objective 5b area of Lincolnshire, but now intending a wider coverage in the Lincolnshire area.
Marches WI	Located near Ludlow and covering the Marches Objective 5 area.
Mersey Forest	Located in Warrington and covering the Mersey Community Forest area.
Northwoods	Based in Rothbury. It was initially set up to cover the objective 5b area of Northumberland and Durham, but now covers the rural areas of north east England.
Oxfordshire WP	Located in Woodstock and covering Oxfordshire.
Red Rose Forest	Located in Manchester and covering the Red Rose Community Forest area.
Rockingham Forest Trust	Located in Oundle and covering the Rockingham Forest area.

Initiative	Location and Coverage
Silvanus Trust	Located in Stoke Climsland, Cornwall and covering Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset.
Stroud Touchwood	Located in Stroud and covering the Stroud Valleys (up to 30 miles from Stroud).
TWIG	The English component of this European partnership covers the same area as the Chilterns Woodland Project (see above).
Weald Woodnet	Located in East Sussex and covering the High Weald AONB and surrounding area.
Wessex Coppice Group	Located in Monkwood, Hampshire with national coverage on coppice management issues.
Working Woodlands	Located in Dartington, Devon and covering the South West Objective 5b area, now reduced to Cornwall (Objective 1).
Wychwood	Located in Woodstock and covering the historic Norman forest of Wychwood in West Oxfordshire.
Yorwoods	Located in Richmond, North Yorkshire. It was initially set up to cover the Yorkshire Objective 5b area, but now covers North and East Yorkshire, and also intend to work in partnership in West Yorkshire.

Table 4: Summary of current published objectives of Woodland Initiatives

Initiative	Objectives
Anglia Woodnet	To improve the vitality, economic, social and environmental value of UK woodlands by providing workable, innovative solutions to enable businesses and organisations to meet the challenges of an ever-changing rural, business and market environment.
Bowland AVP	To encourage woodland owners in the Forest of Bowland to bring their woodlands under sustainable management and to stimulate new woodland planting by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigating the feasibility of taking wood down the added value route; ● Encouraging the local use of local timber; ● Raising the skill levels of local contractors and woodland owners and increasing the general public's awareness of woodland-related issues.
Chiltern Woodlands Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To promote and encourage the sensitive and sustainable management of small woods in the Chiltern Hills to protect and enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the Chiltern Hills; ● To promote a sustainable woodland economy; ● To promote awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Chiltern Woods.
Cumbria Broadleaves	To re-integrate woodlands within the rural economy by stimulating active management that will produce timber, generate jobs, improve landscape and recreational value and enhance conservation. The objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To encourage the active and appropriate management of Cumbrian broadleaved woodlands and to stimulate the management of presently under-managed woods; ● To improve the health and age structure of the broadleaved woodlands so as to assure their long-term future; ● Where appropriate, to encourage the planting of new broadleaved woods; ● To foster the marketing opportunities for timber and wood products from broadleaved woods to generate income for woodland owners; ● To provide woodland management advice to owners and to act as a link between owners and the agencies able to provide grant aid and other assistance; ● To promote appropriate training for woodland owners and contractors.
Forest of Avon WP Coop.	To promote and sell locally produced woodland products from well managed woodlands in and around the Forest of Avon.

Initiative	Objectives
Greenwood Trust	<p>To help save and regenerate our native woodland by developing commercial, educational and aesthetic uses for green small diameter hardwood by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging ecologically sensitive woodland management techniques which enhance biodiversity and are appropriate for the landscape and habitat; • Preserving traditional methods of working unseasoned timber and to encourage the development of new methods of greenwood techniques; • Creating sustainable employment, especially in rural areas by using greenwood as a raw material for construction, manufacture and craft production; • Developing a comprehensive range of education and training programmes, for professionals, craftspeople, schools and colleges, local communities and individuals; • Recording the fragile and disappearing history of woodland crafts; • Exploring methods of converting and adding value to 'low value' greenwood timber; • Promoting good design and aesthetic awareness; • Seeing woodlands as integral to our natural and cultural heritage.
Kent Interreg Project	<p>To extend the knowledge base on woodlands in Kent & Nord-Pas de Calais by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing together existing information on the types of woodland; • Identifying the range of products derived from them.
Lincwoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and improve the sustainable management of woodlands in the Lincolnshire area; • Improve returns to owners whilst maintaining or improving the value of the woodlands; • Employment protection and/or creation.
Marches WI	<p>To expand and improve the management of woodlands in the Marches, in order to develop their economic potential and enhance their environmental value, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing currently under-managed woodland into active management; • Producing additional sustainable timber and creating jobs both directly and indirectly; • Improving the contribution woodlands make to businesses and communities in the area; • Assessing the environmental value of local woodlands and their importance in terms of ecology and conservation.
Mersey Forest	<p>To deliver a wide range of environmental, economic and community benefits through the creation of sustainable landscape improvements to The Mersey Forest area over the 30 year period of the development of the Forest.</p>

Initiative	Objectives
Northwoods	<p>To maintain, extend and enhance the woodlands of Northumbria to provide a sustainable multi-purpose resource which contributes to increased economic activity and a better environment. The objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raise awareness of benefits to be derived from woodlands, hedgerows and trees; ● Provide structured management and business training and demonstration of best practice; ● Undertake specific capital projects to address environmental issues in woodlands; ● Increase market awareness and accessibility by appropriate Initiatives along the full wood chain; ● Provide grant aid to stimulate better woodland management; ● Provide information and training on non-timber benefits of multi-purpose woodland management.
Oxfordshire WP	<p>To ensure that a multi-purpose woodland management approach is adopted to secure the best mix of benefits for the woodland and its owner, now and in the future. Multiple benefits such as wildlife conservation, landscape, amenity and shelter will be generated by nurturing high quality broadleaved timber in high forest and coppice.</p>
Red Rose Forest	<p>To develop well-wooded landscapes for multiple purposes that will improve the quality of life of those living and working within it, create better environments into which businesses will invest and that people will use, cherish and enjoy.</p>
Rockingham Forest Trust	<p>The Trust aims to maintain a thriving countryside in the Rockingham Forest area, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education about the Forest; ● Involving people in conserving the Forest; ● Supporting sustainable development.
Silvanus Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work in partnership with all concerned with woodland in the South West, through joint projects and networking; ● To influence local, regional and national policy concerning sustainable and viable woodland through evidence based case studies, pilots, networking and discussion; ● To provide accessible information, support, advice, education and training for all with an interest in woodland; ● To support or create a sustainable supply chain and value added links from woodland to end use, with particular focus on local economies and social cohesion; ● To develop, maintain and disseminate expertise and technical knowledge of silvicultural management and its effects on environment and communities; ● To inspire and involve local communities in woodland as a local asset.

Initiative	Objectives
Stroud Touchwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To ensure the sustainable development of the local woodland landscape by linking landscape management with other economic and social activity; ● To establish and strengthen the wood chain from woodland owners and managers, to timber suppliers, architects, artists and craftspeople; ● To develop local markets for local wood.
TWIG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capacity building - developing skills to manage woodland and to run small wood based companies; ● Business development and marketing - creating opportunities to promote small enterprises and their products; ● Product development - looking for new ways to utilise woodland products; ● Sustainable woodland management - promoting the management of woodland as a renewable green resource; ● Communication - ensuring the lessons learned are made widely available.
Weald Woodnet	To promote the sustainable development of broadleaved woodland in South East England.
Wessex Coppice Group	To provide marketing and sales support to improve the quality and range of products and service to customers; to develop programmes of training in woodland crafts and business skills; to provide a support network for craftsmen; to act as a focus for the industry; to increase the Public appreciation of the industry; to find markets for low grade hazel coppice and to create sustainable rural economic development.
Working Woodlands	To revitalise the South West's timber and wood products industries by means of 'seed corn' grants and business support activities including market research, market development, branding, QA, promotion, publicity and the development of sales outlets.
Wychwood	<p>To raise awareness of, and appreciation for, the special history and identity of the Wychwood and to conserve and restore the special character of the landscape within the Norman royal hunting forest boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To maintain and enhance a wide range of wildlife habitats (biodiversity); ● To promote and support systems of land management that are economically viable and yet respect the history of the area and its characteristic landscapes and habitats; ● To promote and support woodland management and increase levels of new woodland planting in appropriate locations; ● To encourage and assist all those who work in the area to become involved in this process; ● To sustain the Project's momentum in the longer term.

Initiative	Objectives
Yorwoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise awareness of benefits to be derived from woodlands; • To provide structured management and business training and demonstration of best practice; • To undertake specific projects to address environmental issues of woodland; • To increase market awareness and accessibility by appropriate Initiatives along the full wood chain; • To provide grant aid to stimulate better woodland management; • To provide information and training on non-timber benefits of multi-purpose woodland management.

3. ACTIVITIES OF INITIATIVES

3.1. Initiatives are undertaking diverse activities in order to achieve their stated objectives. The range of activities undertaken by the Initiatives is summarised in Table 5, and is described below, as follows:

- Direct management of woodland;
- Involvement with woodland owners;
- Involvement with wood businesses (contractors and processors);
- Stimulating the demand for wood products;
- Raising public awareness;
- Other activities such as research, lobbying and campaigning.

Direct Management of Woodland

3.2. In general, Initiatives are not involved in ownership or leasehold management of woodlands, as this has not been considered to be an appropriate or necessary activity. Only one of the Initiatives studied owns woodland in its own right (the Rockingham Forest Trust as part of sites incorporating a variety of habitats which were purchased for the purpose of restoration) and another three Initiatives actively manage woodland, doing so for demonstration purposes (Chiltern Woodlands Project, Weald Woodnet and the Oxfordshire Woodland Project, the latter managing two small areas of community woodland).

Involvement with Woodland Owners

3.3. As indicated in Table 5, the majority of the Initiatives interviewed are involved with woodland owners as one of their primary activities. However, as set out below, there are a variety of ways in which this is achieved.

Initiative	Direct management of woodlands	Services to the Wood Chain															Research	Public awareness
		Owner						Contractors		Processors			Stimulating the Market			Networking across the chain		
		Engagement	Advice	Grant aid	Training	Service provision	Certification	Training & QA	Grant aid	Promotion & publicity	Training	Grant aid	Local brands & chain of custody	Direct Marketing	Events			
Anglia Woodnet		●	○		●	●	●	○		○	○		●			●	○	
Bowland AVP		●			●	○		●					●	○		○	●	○
Chiltern WP		●	●		○	○								○		○		●
Cumbria Broadleaves		●	●		●			○										○
Forest of Avon WP Coop		○	○							●			●	●	○	○		●
Greenwood Trust					●			●		●	○		○	○		●		○
Kent Interreg Project					○			●		●				○				○
Lincwoods		●	●	●	○			○	●			●			○	○		○
Marches WI		●	●	●	●			●	●	○	○	●				○	○	○
Mersey Forest		●	●	●	○			○	○	●	●	●	○		●	○	○	●
Northwoods		●	●	● ⁽¹⁾	●			○	● ⁽¹⁾			●				●		○
Oxfordshire WP	○	●	●		○	○				●						○		○
Red Rose Forest		●	●		○			○		○			○		●	○	○	●
Rockingham Forest Trust	○							○			○		○	○	○			
Silvanus Trust		●	●	●	●	○		●	●	●	●	●	●		○	●		●
Stroud Touchwood		○						●		●	○		○		○	●		○
TWIG					○			○		○	○					○	○	○
Weald Woodnet	○				○	●		○		●						●	●	●
Wessex Coppice Group		○			●			●		●	●		○	○	●	○		○
Working Woodlands		●	○	●	○			○	●	●	○	●	●		●	●		●
Wychwood		●	●					○							○	○		●
Yorwoods		●	●	● ⁽¹⁾	●			●	● ⁽¹⁾	○					○	○		○

Table 5: Summary of the main activities of Woodland Initiatives

Key: ● Primary activity of Initiatives ○ Other activities undertaken by Initiatives.

⁽¹⁾ These activities were undertaken using Objective 5b funding which has now ceased.

Contact with Woodland Owners

- 3.4. Fourteen of the Initiatives were actively involved in contacting woodland owners. Collectively, these Initiatives have made contact with very large numbers of woodland owners, offering initial advice regarding woodland management. For example:
- Northwoods has made initial contact via letter with 2100 owners (and inviting follow up enquiries);
 - Marches Woodland Initiative has made use of partner databases, sending promotional leaflets via the CLA, NFU and MAFF to several thousand farmers and landowners in the Objective 5b area. Through the County Councils it also circulated promotional leaflets to all the Parish Council clerks;
 - Oxfordshire Woodland Project has made use of the mailing list of its 'parent' organisation, the Oxfordshire Woodland Group (this runs to 750 people and organisations, most of them owning woodland);
 - Yorwoods purchased a Yellow Pages database giving the contact names of 1,800 farmers in the Objective 5b area who were sent a promotional leaflet. MAFF also circulated information about the project to all the 3,600 registered farm holdings in the area.
- 3.5. The activities of these Initiatives in contacting owners are described below.
- 3.6. Other Initiatives do not regard contact with woodland owners as a priority. Indeed certain Initiatives have not considered it necessary or appropriate to adopt this approach. This is especially the case in areas dominated by large estates with woodland managers who are already aware of woodland issues (e.g. Rockingham Forest), where there are large numbers of 'hobby' owners (e.g. Kent) or where the Initiative is focussing on other activities (e.g. Stroud Touchwood or the Greenwood Trust).
- 3.7. **Targeting activity.** There was some variation in the way in which Initiatives targeted their activity in contacting woodland owners. Most Initiatives accepted that large commercially run forests were essentially

excluded from their remit. At the other end of the scale, some Initiatives tended to exclude, or at least not target, the very small woodlands (e.g. for Anglia Woodnet, woods of less than 5 ha were not a priority). On the other hand the Marches Woodland Initiative specifically targeted woodland under 10 ha in size. Some Initiatives, such as the Oxfordshire Woodland Project did not see size as the issue, but rather focused on the potential for economically and environmentally beneficial management. Others were particularly interested in semi-natural or ancient woodlands. Many felt that, with the decline in timber prices and depression in the contracting sector, woodlands that might have been excluded from their activity five years ago were now a target because many owners now regarded active management as unviable.

- 3.8. **Establishing initial contact with owners.** When the first Initiatives started, one of their initial tasks was to make themselves known to woodland owners, particularly the target groups whose woodland were not under management. A number of Initiatives have set-up or made use of a database of woodland owners in their region. Northwoods and Yorwoods made use of a database called Woodline. This was updated to include 1,500 woodland owners and was made available on CD Rom as the 'Touchwoods' database. Although somewhat out of date now, this database was used, and contributed to, by Cumbria Broadleaves and, to a lesser extent, by the Bowland Added Value Project. Anglia Woodnet has also made use of a database produced by its predecessor, Anglian Woodlinks.
- 3.9. Other Initiatives such as the Chilterns Woodland Project have maintained a list of clients which has grown to encompass most of the owners of significant woodlands in their area. The Red Rose Community Forest undertook a systematic survey of all the woodlands in their area in 1999/2000, establishing ownership of 80% of the individual blocks, while the Marches Woodland Initiative undertook a data gathering exercise to identify farming woodland owners in the Oswestry area at the start of its project in 1997.
- 3.10. In some cases Initiatives have relied on more general lists of farmers and landowners. The MAFF (now DEFRA) list of agricultural holdings

was used by many of the Objective 5b funded projects to distribute introductory leaflets. These Initiatives (Lincwoods, Northwoods and Yorwoods) sent out large numbers of initial contact letters to farmers through this database (e.g. Northwoods sent 2100 letters). This is a large database and does not distinguish those holdings that include woodland. In addition, the list is confidential to DEFRA and all letters must therefore be sent out by DEFRA. Nevertheless, it has proved a valuable way of inviting woodland owners to contact Initiatives.

3.11. Other lists of potential woodland owners that have been used include those provided by local authorities (particularly useful where the authority has a Forestry or Woodland Officer) and commercially available lists of businesses such as the Yellow Pages.

3.12. **Ongoing contact with owners.** Such 'scatter gun' approaches to raising awareness (as described above) were generally found to be most appropriate during the early years of an Initiative or for specific new projects. Once Initiatives have become established and are well known to other organisations in the area, the most regular means of contact with woodland owners is by referral from partners such as the Forestry Commission regional offices, local authority staff, local Farming and Wildlife Advisory Groups (FWAG), private woodland consultants, Forestry & Timber Association (FTA) and County Wildlife Trusts, amongst others. Almost all of the Initiatives maintain a presence at local shows and most produce their own, or distribute other peoples', advisory leaflets. Many Initiatives distribute a regular newsletter to interested owners.

Advising Woodland Owners

3.13. Eleven of the Initiatives studied (approximately half) reported that providing advice to woodland owners was a primary activity (see Table 5). These Initiatives have provided advice to large numbers of owners. For example, using a team of advisors, Northwoods carried out 110 advisory visits over the 3 year life of the project and Cumbria Broadleaves has carried out 730 visits since 1991. The Chilterns Woodlands Project advises some 30 new owners per year using in-house staff (a total of 438 woods since 1989). Long running Initiatives (such as the Chilterns Woodlands Project) also remain available for

follow up advice, which experience shows may be some time (months or years) after the initial visit. Further information on the provision of advice is described below.

- 3.14. **Who gives the advice?:** Where Initiatives provide advice to owners it takes a number of forms (see Table 6). Some Initiatives provide this advice using in-house staff (such as the long standing Initiatives - Cumbria Broadleaves and the Chilterns and Oxfordshire Woodland Projects), whereas other Initiatives have a well-established link to another organisation (the Forest of Avon Wood Products Co-op uses the services of a Forestry Development Officer shared between the Forest of Avon and Great Western Community Forests). Some Initiatives have been able to fund private sector consultants to provide the advice, which is seen as desirable in order to avoid competition with the private sector.

Table 6: Types of advice provided by Initiatives

- Methods of management and management plans
- Timber utilisation, market opportunities and productivity
- Woodland biodiversity
- Woodland archaeology
- Landscape issues
- Amenity, access and recreation
- Pest control and deer management
- Felling licences
- Availability of grants and grant applications
- Useful contacts for contractors or other ways of undertaking work
- Certification issues.

- 3.15. For the Initiatives that provide woodland management advice from within their own staff resources, the issue of managing high levels of demand with the limited time available to staff is important. Waiting lists are not uncommon.
- 3.16. The Initiatives that make use of private-sector consultants to provide advice to woodland owners have developed a variety of mechanisms for managing this service. On the assumption that the woodland owner will not be willing or able to pay the full economic costs of receiving the advice, Initiatives have bid for funds to subsidise this advice. Almost all of the Objective 5b funded Initiatives (Anglia Woodnet, Lincwoods, Marches Woodland Initiative, Northwoods, Working Woodlands and Yorwoods, but not Bowland Added Value Project) included woodland management advice delivered through private consultants in their programme.
- 3.17. The way in which the Initiatives that use commercial consultants subsidised the cost of the advice varied. Yorwoods started by offering consultants a fee of £50 in return for a three-hour site visit and brief written report. It soon became apparent, however, that this sum was insufficient, even as a loss leader to further chargeable advice. As a result, a further £125 was offered as a payment to complete a Woodland Grant Scheme application and a consultant was taken on at an hourly rate to make a preliminary site visit to assess the economic opportunities of the site. Limited funds were also found in the programme for Yorwoods to fully fund consultancy advice on sites with a high environmental priority. In contrast, the Marches Woodland Initiative paid consultants a fixed fee per site that was calculated as a 50% subsidy of the anticipated average cost. These fees were £75 for the initial appraisal visit, £100 for an environmental survey and £125 for a completed WGS application. At the top end, Anglia Woodnet were able to pay up to £400 to consultants for a WGS application, again funded under the Objective 5b programme.
- 3.18. In most cases, the Initiatives that provide advice from their own staff resources, do so without making a charge, on the basis that a charge is likely to put off owners who will almost inevitably have to spend money to bring their woodland back into active management.

However, several of the Initiatives have identified that advice is more likely to be valued, and a commitment gained from the owner, if a financial value is attached to it. Anglia Woodnet therefore charge a nominal £50 fee for an initial advisory visit. The Oxfordshire Woodland Project examined the potential for levying a refundable fee or 'performance bond' which would be charged after the advice had been delivered but then refunded when the recommended work had been undertaken. However, it was decided that the cost of running this system would exceed the benefit. The Chilterns Woodlands Project charges for follow up advice to draw up felling licence, WGS applications or to mark trees for felling but not for first visits and an initial report.

- 3.19. **Accreditation of woodland advisors:** If woodland owners are to take action after receiving advice, the advice must be of a high quality and must be delivered in a professional manner. Initiatives that devolve this service to private sector consultants were aware of the issue of assuring the quality of advice and used a number of different methods to do so. For example, Yorwoods made the choice on the basis of personal recommendation with no requirement for formal forestry qualifications while Marches Woodland Initiative used a formal selection and interview process of qualified consultants. On-going quality assurance was achieved by the Initiative receiving copies of the written advice provided. Lists of approved consultants were amended in the light of this review process. In each programme, the number of consultants actively involved fell as certain individuals and companies withdrew or were dropped. Some consultants took advantage of the opportunity provided by the programme to enlarge their business.
- 3.20. Initiatives who provide advice to woodland owners from their own staff resources are generally less aware of the need to review quality. While most staff providing advice have formal academic or professional forestry qualifications, the level of continuous professional development and ongoing training was often not strong as little funding was available for this. There were suggestions during the study that the more relaxed, perhaps less rigorous, attitude to giving woodland management advice adopted by some Initiatives may mean

that the advice is regarded as of less value than that received from Forestry Commission staff and private sector consultants.

3.21. **Recording of Success.** Whilst most Initiatives were able to provide records on the number of woodland owners that had been advised, less retained records of the area of woodland covered by the advice. When it was recorded, it often seemed to be done to justify expenditure by funders rather than to improve future delivery (probably because as a measure of delivery, it is very crude). Some Initiatives produced figures on the area of woodland brought into management, while the Marches Woodland Initiative had a sophisticated recording system giving the areas covered by a basic assessment, by an environmental survey, the areas under sustainable management and under a management plan (see Box 1).

Box 1: Outputs of Marches Woodland Initiative	
MWI Outputs 1998 – 2001	Achieved
Hectare of Woodland Assessed & Surveyed (Tier 1)	2622.6
Hectare of Woodland (Environmental Survey)	1288.2
Hectare of Woodland Under Sustainable Management (Tier 3)	1,341.3
Hectare of Woodland under Management Plan (Tier 3a)	393.5
Number of Owners Managing Woodland	204

Grant Aid to Woodland Owners

3.22. **Woodland Grant Scheme.** All of the Initiatives regarded the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) as an important incentive to bring neglected woodland into management. Some Initiatives recorded the number of grant applications made. For example:

- Chilterns Woodlands Project reported approximately 10 WGS applications per year (from approximately 30 owners advised);
- Lincwoods (which had separate grant funding – see below) reported 45 WGS applications over its three-year operational period;

- The Mersey Forest assisted with the submission of about 40 WGS applications a year, while the Red Rose Forest, with a much more urban project area, helped submit around 5 applications a year, almost all of them involving the Community Woodland Supplement;
- The Oxfordshire Woodland Project generally assisted with the submission of a WGS application for half of the woodland owners visited in a year (i.e. about 40);
- Yorwoods funded the preparation of a number of WGS applications during its three-year period of operation (though FMD curtailed this activity in 2001);
- The Bowland Initiative completed 3 WGS applications in 2001 (though this was not considered a priority output of the Initiative and was again affected by FMD).

3.23. **Other Grant Aid.** Only the Initiatives that received funding under EU structural funding programmes (Objectives 1 and 5b and Leader II) had significant grants to allocate to woodland owners that were under their own control (Lincwoods, Northwoods, Marches Woodland Initiatives, Working Woodlands, Yorwoods and to a lesser extent Anglia Woodnet). For most of these Initiatives the availability of grants to woodland owners and managers to assist with the harvesting, extraction and processing of timber, was a major part of their work. The grants included funding for both revenue and capital works.

3.24. Revenue funding was provided by Northwoods and Yorwoods for a harvesting subsidy which paid £10/te for uneconomic thinning or felling.

3.25. Capital funding schemes were operated by Lincwoods, Northwoods, Marches Woodland Initiative, Working Woodlands and Yorwoods to assist with such activities as the management for BAP targets and the purchase of harvesting, extraction and processing machinery (such as forwarders, skeleton trailers and mobile saw mills).

3.26. During the six years of its Objective 5b programme, Working Woodlands allocated £45,440 to 13 woodland owners (out of a total capital grant spend of £695,000 to 111 businesses, including

contractors, processors and manufacturers of wood products). Over the same period Yorwoods allocated a total of £176,000 in capital grants to 78 businesses (not only owners but also contractors and processors). Marches Woodland Initiative allocated capital grants for timber harvesting, extraction and processing, and targeted these grants at agricultural holdings (as required by the Objective 5b programme). Of the 22 businesses that received a total of £145,000 of capital grant aid, all but 4 of these businesses were primarily contractors and processors rather than woodland owners. The Northwoods capital grants are explained in Box 2.

3.27. In many cases, the businesses who applied for and received the grants were not as originally intended. For instance Yorwoods grants had been targeted at upland hill farmers but the main applicants were larger estates with previously managed woodlands which had become uneconomic because of falling timber prices. The majority of the recipients of the Marches Woodland Initiative capital grants were existing contracting or processing businesses, rather than farmers although some farmers used the grant to diversify into timber contracting.

3.28. Several Initiatives also used EU structural programmes to assist with the provision of access tracks for timber extraction (also enabling better recreational access) (e.g. Yorwoods, Northwoods, Lincwoods and Anglia Woodnet). Yorwoods operated a separate access grant and Anglia Woodnet operated a pilot project funded by Leader II to provide access tracks to environmentally sensitive woodlands in need of management.

Box 2: Northwoods Capital Grants

Over its 3 year operational period, Northwoods had access to capital grants of £186,400. This was distributed across 35 projects (which contributed an additional £113,600). The grant was used for access improvements (32%), environmental work such as ecological surveys or management according to BAP targets (22%), harvesting subsidy (16%), provision of sheep sheds (10%), business development (12%) and marketing grants (8%).

The grants were estimated to have contributed to the following outputs:

- 51 jobs supported;
- 1019 ha of woods brought into management;
- 9250 m of new access roads;
- Harvesting subsidy for 4901 tonnes of timber;
- 7 BAP habitats protected;
- 107 ha of habitats managed;
- 6 ecological surveys;
- grants for 2 sheep sheds (to enable sheep to be excluded from woodlands);
- grants for business (e.g. towards buying wood processing equipment and safety gear for one business and a grant towards new computer equipment for another business).

Source: Northwoods Annual Statement (2000/2001) and Draft Final Report (1 September 1999 to 31 December 2001).

3.29. Working Woodlands has approval under the Objective 1 programme in Cornwall to fund a wide range of 'seed corn' grants and business support activities delivered at the workplace to any business in Cornwall involved with the production, harvesting and processing of timber, the manufacture of wood products and the selling of either.

3.30. The process of accounting for and auditing these delegated capital grants was a significant issue for all the Initiatives concerned, creating an unexpected and unwelcome administrative burden.

Training to Woodland Owners

- 3.31. Nine of the Initiatives considered provision of training to woodland owners to be a primary activity. For example, the Lincwoods Initiative provided 360 training places over the 3 year project lifetime, the Northwoods Initiative provided 263 training days and Cumbria Broadleaves' training programme, operated with Newton Rigg College, put on 92 courses attended by 950 trainees covering topics such as chain saw use, use of mobile saw mills, use of pesticides in woodland, hurdle making, coppice management and charcoal making.
- 3.32. These Initiatives reported a high volume of people wanted to attend with the Marches Woodland Initiative training events being so oversubscribed that additional events had to be provided.
- 3.33. The Northwoods training programme was designed following a training needs analysis undertaken amongst woodland owners to determine their requirements for training so that the programme could be tailored accordingly.
- 3.34. The EU structural funding programmes (Objectives 1 and 5b, Objective 3, LIFE etc) have been a major source of funding for training organised by Initiatives, with Bowland Added Value Project, Cumbria Broadleaves, Lincwoods, Mersey Forest, Marches Woodland Initiative, Northwoods, Silvanus Trust, Wessex Coppice Group and Yorwoods all operating schemes.
- 3.35. In most cases, attendees were asked to provide a contribution towards the costs of training, although the cost was subsidised by the Initiative. Bowland Added Value Project, Cumbria Broadleaves and Northwoods all subsidised 50% of the training costs, Lincwoods subsidised two thirds of the cost, while Yorwoods levied a token charge of £5 to £10 as a means of securing a commitment from attendees. The Oxfordshire Woodland Project makes no formal charge for their training courses but attendees at their events are each strongly encouraged to donate £35 towards the costs of holding the

event. The Chilterns Woodlands Project has charged for attendance, but this has been limited recently by partnership working within the TWIG project (income earned from this source would reduce the level of EU funding gained).

- 3.36. Where Initiatives run a significant programme of training (as opposed to occasional one off events), outside trainers with specialist skills are usually involved. For instance, Yorwoods made use of the local FWAG adviser, a seconded member of staff from the Forestry Contracting Association and two private consultants. Where other suitable training programmes are already in existence, Initiatives refer woodland owners and others to these. For instance the Marches Woodland Initiative referred people to the Marches Training Initiative run by the Forestry Contracting Association and Stroud Touchwood refers interested people to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the National Trust.
- 3.37. For the Greenwood Trust, the provision of training courses is one of its central objectives. A programme of 32 courses is planned for 2002, the majority on topics involving craft uses of roundwood timber (such as making baskets, besoms, coracles and even long bows). These training courses, which are charged at cost, are open to members of the public and fall more under the heading of promotion and wider public education than professional training.

Demonstration Woods

- 3.38. Many of the Initiatives have, at one time or another, established demonstration sites, usually in privately owned woods to exemplify the management they wish to see adopted in other woods. For example, Weald Woodnet is operating a 22 ha demonstration woodland for training purposes which is used for both contractors and owners and covers a variety of issues. Rockingham Forest Trust operates two woodlands (Boughton Estate and Rawhaw Woods) which are used to demonstrate methods of management and the harvesting of wood for use as products. Demonstration woods are usually not seen as a key output of the Initiative, though the events and open days that are used to promote the demonstration sites can be a useful means of encouraging group working by woodland owners and debate on

current issues. However, Weald Woodnet is considering moving further into using its demonstration wood for training purposes.

Woodland Management Services

- 3.39. In general, Initiatives are not involved with the direct provision of woodland management services to owners (such as contracting services). Where services have been provided in the past, Initiatives have tended to cease this activity. For example, Chilterns Woodland Project and Weald Woodnet (formerly East Sussex Small Woodlands Project) both employed their own woodland contractors in the early stages of their existence. Both have moved away from this work to avoid competition with the private sector. Notably, the staff who were trained by these Initiatives have, in both cases, gone on to set up their own contracting business.
- 3.40. The one exception is the marking of trees for thinning or harvesting which has been undertaken by a number of the Initiatives (such as the Chilterns Woodland Project and Cumbria Broadleaves). In general, this is only done where the work is not considered an economic proposition and is necessary to bring a woodland into economic management. The Oxfordshire Woodland Project also undertakes formative pruning of young trees, but this is done primarily to demonstrate the technique to woodland owners.
- 3.41. The Silvanus Trust is something of a special case. As explained in Box 3, although the Trust does not provide woodland management services, it established Silvanus Services Ltd which is now one of the largest forestry contracting companies in the South West.

Box 3: Silvanus Trust and Silvanus Services Ltd

The only Initiative studied to have developed a fully commercial contracting business is the Silvanus Trust. Originally established in 1986 (emerging from the Dartington Amenity Research Trust), "*to develop viable and sustainable management of woodland in the South West for the benefit of local communities, the beauty of the landscape and wildlife*" the Trust established Silvanus Services Ltd (SSL) to provide a service dedicated to the management of small woodlands in the South West of England. SSL is a limited company wholly owned by

the Trust. Three of the six SSL board members are Trustees of Silvanus Trust. SSL covenants 50% of its profits to the Trust, providing the Trust with an essential, though not necessarily consistent, source of core unrestricted funds.

With an annual turnover of around £1.5 million, "*in many ways, SSL is the greatest achievement of the Trust*" (Silvanus Trust Business Plan 2001-2004). However, the relationship is not without its tensions. There is a perception from some private contractors that the Trust subsidises the work of SSL (erroneous since the subsidy is in the other direction) and that it preferentially refers woodland owners to SSL (vigorously denied by the Trust). From SSL's point of view, the diversion of 50% of their annual profits diminishes what would otherwise be working capital and the presence of the Trustees on the Board may constrain the commercial freedom of the company. However, the relationship is generally positive, though there can be confusion for clients over the different roles of the two organisations.

Involvement with Wood Businesses

- 3.42. Most of the Initiatives were involved with other parts of the wood chain, such as contractors and processors, with the aim of supporting these business activities (see Table 5). The range of activities undertaken is described below.

Trade Directories

- 3.43. Many of the Initiatives have developed their own database of local contractors and processors to which they can refer woodland owners. For many, this database has been developed into a trade directory which is either published and distributed in paper format or is available on the Initiative website. Trade directories often list contractors under headings such as arboriculture, fencing, tree nurseries, harvesting contractors and consultants.
- 3.44. Trade directories have been prepared by Chilterns Woodlands Project, Lincwoods, Northwoods, Weald Woodnet and others. The Oxfordshire Woodland Project maintains a trade directory listing about 40 businesses or organisations involved in forestry contracting or consulting. The print run for each edition (updated every two years)

runs to 2,000 copies, circulated to members of the Oxfordshire Woodland Group as well as to public libraries and partners. Several Initiatives produce a directory that is accessed via the Internet. Yorwoods lists around 35 businesses under categories such as woodland and tree advice, establishment and fencing, and harvesting and haulage. Wessex Coppice Group provide details of 24 coppice workers from 11 counties (which advertise on their website) and a database of over 500 workers is available by email request. Marches Woodland Initiative transferred their printed directory (with 180 businesses and a circulation of 2,000) to their internet site, under the heading of the MWI Virtual Timber Yard.

- 3.45. The Woodlots publication was set up and produced in the South East (by Weald Woodnet) in order to put growers of wood in touch with users of wood. It also promotes the use of local timber, and provides information on events, training and equipment. Woodlots has subsequently been merged with Eco-Ads to form Eco-Lots and is available nationally in electronic form. In the South East, Woodlots continues to be produced by Weald Woodnet as a timber-specific publication for Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire.

Liaison Meetings

- 3.46. Initiatives have also been involved in bringing together the different elements of the wood chain at meetings. The Wood Industries Liaison Group was set up by the TWIG project to bring together different parts of the wood chain to forge links between owners, contractors and users. The Initiative reported that the Liaison Group was well thought of by those attending and that it is aiming to become a self-sustaining forum.

Business Support

- 3.47. The provision of business management advice and support was a minority activity offered by a few Initiatives. For instance:
- the Mersey Forest's Timber Project directed contractors to the Small Business Service and Chester and Ellesmere Port Enterprise Agency, funded through the Mersey Objective 1 programme;

- Rockingham Forest Trust provides business advice to forestry operators;
- Lincwoods provided a business 'health check' which was associated with applications for grant aid. This was provided by ADAS.

3.48. Some Initiatives provide support to local branches of the Forestry Contracting Association (FCA). The Marches Woodland Initiative used financial and staff resources to help set up a Marches branch of the FCA, an action it saw as important to stimulating a viable contracting sector.

Capital Grants

3.49. Paragraphs 3.22 onwards have described the role of capital grants in assisting woodland owners to invest in plant and equipment. These grants were also open to businesses involved in growing, harvesting, processing, manufacturing, building, distributing and selling timber and wood products. For example, out of a total capital grant of £695,000 which was available to Working Woodlands, over 90% was allocated to a range of businesses (as listed above). In practice, these businesses were often better able to make successful applications for these grants than woodland owners.

Stimulating Economic Clusters of Activity

3.50. Both the Mersey and Red Rose Forests have specific projects to establish Timber Networks and, in a smaller way, the Forest of Avon Wood Products Co-op has gained the use of a wood yard to lot and store timber from local woodland owners in the hope of accessing higher value markets. Paragraph 3.55 describes the study undertaken by the Mersey Forest into the current status and potential of the timber supply chain in their area. The Woodland Enterprise Centre, promoted by Weald Woodnet, is envisaged as a 'physical cluster' of woodland based activities and a 'centre of excellence' for the woodland industry.

3.51. There have been some successes at the small scale (e.g. the establishment of a sawmill using grant aid from the Lincwoods project has set up a mini-cluster of activity in the Lincolnshire area). However,

Initiatives were not able to point to any examples of a large scale successful self-sustaining network of woodland-based activities.

Increasing Business Activity through Collaboration

3.52. The Forest of Avon Wood Products Co-operative is an example, unique amongst the Initiatives studied, of a varied group of wood users collaborating to fund a promotional and point of sale brand ('Forest of Avon Products') and to sell each others products. Thirty two businesses have joined the co-op ranging from a part time hurdle maker to a manufacturer of oak framed buildings. Members contribute between £25 and £100 a year and are expected to pay a commission of 10% on all products sold through the Co-op. The Co-op maintains a display of members' craft products in the shop at the Ashton Court Visitor Centre on the edge of Bristol which is manned by Co-op members. At the moment, the Co-op acknowledges it is only 'tickling' a viable wood chain and needs to do more both to link with local woodland owners and to promote the links between local woods and the products the Co-op sells to the public. The Co-op hopes to finance a part-time co-ordinator through a bid for Lottery funding to accomplish this. Achievements have been modest to date, with the turnover of the Co-op (from membership fees, commission and sales through the Visitor Centre shop) of around £10,000 a year.

Provision of Training for Contractors

3.53. As stated earlier, many Woodland Initiatives run training courses on practical woodland management topics and skills. In some cases, training needs analysis has helped identify the training needs of contractors. Although contractors are very familiar with the professional skills being promoted in practical courses (such as chain saw use or formative pruning), training aimed at health and safety issues or other issues of direct relevance to contractors are proving helpful. For example, in Kent, the realisation that existing market demand for chestnut fencing products was not being met led to closer investigation of the supply chain. This revealed a shortage of cutters, lack of health & safety compliance and little communication between those working in the industry. Consequently, Kent Interreg sought funding for training for basic health and safety compliance, and this

programme is now underway. Further funding to support training to increase harvesting efficiency and to increase productivity and earnings is now being sought. Another example is the Wessex Coppice Group which has run a training programme with Lantra which was aimed at coppice workers.

- 3.54. Workshops and seminars on development of the market in local wood products have also been held periodically by many Initiatives and these are also highly relevant to the contracting sector. Initiatives report a strong demand for training events and seminars, although they are often filled by attendees from outside the geographical area of the Initiative.

Building Demand for Wood Products

Establishing Demand

- 3.55. A number of Initiatives have attempted to establish the demand for different grades of locally produced timber. Both the Red Rose and Mersey Community Forests undertook research into the demand for timber, including recycled wood, in their areas as part of their work to develop self-sustaining timber networks. The Marches Woodland Initiative circulated and analysed a wood-users questionnaire in 1999 which helped to refine the Initiative's assistance to the processing and manufacturing sector and guide owners and contractors to meeting demand.
- 3.56. The Mersey Forest Timber Project study attempted to estimate annual demand from wood using businesses in the Community Forest area. A questionnaire was sent to a selection of the 3,500 wood using businesses in the area. Although the responses demonstrated a strong willingness to purchase locally produced timber if it was identified as such and the price was competitive, the nature of the answers made it difficult to quantify the level of demand. Nevertheless, the study concluded that demand far exceeded the 6,000 cubic metres of timber that could be sustainably harvested from the Community Forest area. It stated that the lack of infrastructure (concentration yards, processing facilities, etc) was the problem rather than low demand. Certification was not thought to be a significant

issue for buyers. As a result of the study, which was completed in 1999, the Timber Project used grant aid to woodland owners, contractors and users, under the Objective 2 programme, with the objective of building the infrastructure in support of a local timber supply chain.

- 3.57. Though other Initiatives have not undertaken the same empirical analysis, many of them believe that the same situation (lack of a viable market because of the poor state of the supply chain infrastructure) applies in their area and justifies their work with contractors and wood users.
- 3.58. Market research undertaken by the Rockingham Forest Trust indicated that the role of public perception was likely to be key in marketing woodland products. In particular there was a perception that harvesting of timber from woodlands caused damage, and therefore the role of management in benefiting woodlands needed to be further developed.

Finding Markets for Low Grade Timber

- 3.59. The market intelligence studies undertaken by some Initiatives have proved what is self evident to many in the industry – that markets for low value wood are few and far between.
- 3.60. Several Initiatives had undertaken projects to assist indigenous charcoal makers (such as Cumbria Broadleaves) or to improve the convenience and efficiency of wood fuel (Weald Woodnet, Anglia Woodnet). For example, the Woodheat initiative is a £2 million Objective 5 initiative developed by Bow Maurice Ltd and AEA Technology plc. Its purpose was to create a market for the poor quality timber that participants in the Working Woodlands Initiative could access in abundance in the South West. The remit of the Woodheat initiative was to demonstrate the commercialisation of the use of wood as a fuel. By the end of June 2002, contracts are due to be in place with local suppliers to provide the heating plant and woodfuel for in excess of 1 Megawatt of installed capacity at some 12 locations scattered through North Cornwall, North Devon and North Somerset. This is due to be expanded through Objective One funding.

However, although this project does appear to offer significant potential for woodfuel, the experience of many of the Initiatives to date suggests that the faith put by some in the potential of the charcoal and wood fuel markets has yet to be justified.

- 3.61. Other Initiatives are examining how to add value to low grade timber. For example, Weald Woodnet has been working on research to add value to chestnut coppice for building components. Wessex Coppice Group has been undertaking studies on the use of greenwood products in civil engineering. Another response to the lack of market for low grade timber is the work undertaken by the Bowland Added Value Project. Box 4 describes this project.

Box 4: Bowland Added Value Project (AVP)

Unique amongst the Initiatives studied, Bowland AVP bought standing timber from six different woodland owners, retaining ownership of the timber through to final sale. The purpose of the project, which was established as a not-for-profit partnership hosted by Lancashire County Council, was to explore the extent to which timber could be extracted from farm woodlands in the Bowland Objective 5b area (broadly contiguous with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and value added locally to maximise the revenue to the woodland owner, and to local contractors. A total of 1,079 cubic metres of wood was harvested during the three years of the project (1999 to 2001).

The outcome of the Project was the 'AVP model', a spreadsheet which suggested likely harvesting, haulage and processing costs and final value for different grades of timber, based on the experience of the Project. Its successor, the Lancashire Woodland Project, will further refine this model in conjunction with the private sector but will not buy timber in its own right.

The Project also delivered training to woodland owners and contractors and developed a local timber product brand '*Produced in the Forest of Bowland*'.

Promotion through Trade Shows

- 3.62. Initiatives are organising events which address trade to trade activity at the regional level. For example, the Weald Woodfair is a regional networking event with over 100 trade exhibits which attracts many contractors and merchants. This event is also a promotional activity.
- 3.63. The Wessex Coppice Group is unusual amongst Initiatives in attending, and taking groups of wood working businesses to international trade fairs – in their case coppice workers to garden product and landscape architect's trade fairs. The Group has taken stands to SALTEX and to GLEE (International Garden and Leisure Exhibition) (using Forestry Commission funding in 1999 and 2000) both held in the UK as well as

sending five coppice workers to a Swedish trade fair. Kent Interreg was involved in promoting craft workers in the Kent area through trade shows in England.

- 3.64. Quantifying the value of presence at trade shows is difficult. However, the Wessex Coppice Group state that "*thousands of pounds worth of orders are taken at the show [GLEE]. One worker alone states GLEE as a major factor in his business growing from a one man band to having 5 employees in approximately 2 years*".

Gaining Wider Economic and Social Benefits for Promotion of Woodlands

- 3.65. Some Initiatives have aspirations towards the promotion of tourism and recreation as markets for woodlands. The Wychwood Project has increased the awareness of woodland owners and other businesses, to the historical associations of the area with the ancient Norman forest of Wychwood in Oxfordshire. This is seen as a potential marketing tool to attract visitors to the area and bring revenue to local woods. In a similar way, the Chilterns Woodlands Project considers recreation and access to be a key issue in the future of woodlands in the Chilterns area.
- 3.66. Once again, the Community Forests are in something of a separate group. Virtually alone amongst the Initiatives studied, they were heavily involved in promoting recreational access to woodlands and green spaces and see access to woodlands as a community health issue. However, as a result of dialogue with local community groups, the Community Forests are shifting their emphasis from gaining greater access to, and promoting recreation in, woodland towards the role of trees and shrubs in street and urban park situations. The role of new woodlands to rehabilitate brown field sites, even if this provides a prelude to later redevelopment, is also growing in importance.
- 3.67. The Mersey and Red Rose Forests were also more aware, through their timber network projects, of the potential demand from industrial and urban markets for timber, whereas the rurally-based Initiatives have

tended to focus on wood fuel or the higher value niche and craft markets for woodland products.

Branding and Certification

- 3.68. One of the Initiatives, Anglia WoodNet, operates a low cost Group Woodland Management Certification Scheme, specifically to assist small to medium sized woodlands (<500 ha) in achieving UK Woodland Assurance Standards (UKWAS) and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification.
- 3.69. Local brands are being developed by some Initiatives to identify the local provenance of products. In some cases this is seen as an alternative to UKWAS accreditation, directly linking products to their local source. For example the Rockingham Forest Trust has used branding for charcoal products from the Rockingham Forest area, the Forest of Bowland brand was developed by Bowland AVP and the Forest of Avon Products brand was developed by Forest of Avon Community Forest. These local brands also require a chain of custody traceability for wood products.

Direct Marketing

- 3.70. Although several Initiatives are keen to assist local processors and manufacturers, few of the Initiatives were involved in direct marketing of woodland products. An exception to this is Rockingham Forest Trust which has been directly involved with branding and direct marketing of woodland products to local outlets (shops, garden centres etc.). The Initiative sets annual sales targets, which were not met by sales, largely because small local outlets were not able to sell sufficient quantities of the goods. The Bowland Added Value Project was directly involved with marketing its own products, but this was only done as a trial.

Public Awareness and Promotion

- 3.71. To a greater or lesser extent, all the Initiatives studied were also involved in raising public awareness of woodland issues by, for instance, publishing newsletters and attending and organising public events (e.g. the Weald Wood Fair which attracts 10,000 visitors per

year and the Woods at Work event in the Chilterns) and with the use of displays in public libraries (e.g. Chilterns Woodlands Project and TWIG). Many Initiatives issue occasional press releases to publicise forthcoming events or celebrate milestones in their activity. Most Initiatives do not have public relations expertise in house, but those that were based in other organisations (such as local authorities) have made use of their public relations departments.

- 3.72. Almost all of the Initiatives have stands at local agricultural and countryside shows and many will involve woodland contractors or craftworkers as an attraction for visitors and as a means of promoting their business. Attendance at these events helps publicise the Initiative in the early years and latterly continues to play a valuable role in raising public awareness of wood products and the link with local woodlands.
- 3.73. A few of the Initiatives regarded raising awareness of woodlands and woodland management issues as one of the priorities of their work. For these Initiatives, woodlands are a means of improving social inclusion, increasing community involvement in the local environment and challenging perceptions about the link between timber products and sustainable woodland management.
- 3.74. For the Community Forests, promoting enjoyment and responsible use of woodland and green spaces is obviously a central objective involving a range of discrete projects with community groups and local authorities in their area. During the year 1999 - 2000, the Red Rose Forest held 795 community events, involved 282 schools (11,658 children) in forest activities and made use of 17,656 volunteer days. The Mersey Forest's activity in this area was of a similar (slightly higher) order.
- 3.75. The Greenwood Trust has run several projects working with 'hard to reach learners' helping them develop practical skills that may lead to employment. Hard to reach learners are individuals with learning difficulties (usually reading or writing) whose educational needs are not best served by the conventional educational system. Funded by the National Lottery Charities Board, their Green Wood 2000 project was a community project for people in the Woodside, Wellington and

Donnington Wood areas of Telford which taught individuals, community groups and out of school clubs craft skills and encouraged them to experience their local countryside through guided walks. The project also worked with members of an Islamic Cultural and Educational Centre in Telford to build a timber-framed conservatory.

- 3.76. Quantifying the effectiveness of raising public awareness, and of raising the quality of life and social inclusion, is obviously difficult to do and none of the Initiatives have attempted to measure the wider social outcomes of their work in these areas.

Research

- 3.77. Of the Initiatives studied, only the Bowland Added Value Project could be said to have had research as a primary objective. Where research was undertaken by other Initiatives, it was intended to help meet other targets such as training needs analysis, nursery stock research, market research into specific products and solutions to technical management issues.
- 3.78. As explained in Box 4, the Bowland Added Value Project sought to demonstrate the most effective paths for adding value to a variety of different grades and species of timber extracted from small broadleaved woods. While the final outcomes of the project are still being monitored (as timber is dried, processed and sold for manufacturing), it seems likely that the most valuable part of the project will be the model that was established to predict the most cost-effective markets for different grades of timber. It will be important that lessons from this project, and a refined version of the model, are disseminated to others, including Woodland Initiatives, by the Lancashire Woodland Project that has taken over the work of the Bowland AVP.
- 3.79. Other research undertaken included:
- Cumbria Broadleaves helped to steer a market research programme using Objective 5b funding. Thirteen separate studies were commissioned in 1995 and 1996, costing a total of £40,000, on topics such as the market for fuelwood in Cumbria; the feasibility of

machinery rings in forestry; and a case study on the harvesting, extraction and processing of low grade broadleaved timber.

- The Mersey and Red Rose Community Forests and Marches Woodland Initiative have gathered data on demand for woodland products in their area.
- Anglia Woodnet has undertaken a number of small research projects on woodfuels and one, funded under the Rural Priority Area, on assessing the environmental value of woodlands.
- The TWIG project commissioned work on the quality of charcoal products in the Chilterns and on the growth of beech in the Chilterns.
- Weald Woodnet has been involved in various research projects including research into the processing of small dimension timber into value added components for the construction industry, examining the extent and characterisation of Ghyll woodlands and methods for adapting continuous cover forestry to small scale lowland woodlands.
- Lincwoods carried out a variety of research into marketing (e.g. into existing markets, an end user survey and a study of the conversion of low value roundwood to high value sawn wood) in addition to a case study into the economics of regenerating over mature coppice.

3.80. Initiatives could point to research reports which had been or were being prepared. However, it was unclear to what extent dissemination would be undertaken – in many cases there was no funding allocated for presentation of findings and spreading success stories.

3.81. Initiatives can also play a significant role in steering the research of others (e.g. Community Forests are involved in this aspect of work).

Lobbying and Campaigning

3.82. Lobbying and campaigning on woodland issues was not a core activity of the Initiatives interviewed. Where these activities were undertaken, they were usually carried out 'outside working hours'. Initiatives

reported that there was insufficient funding available for increasing this activity.

3.83. Anglia Woodnet is one of the few Initiatives which has worked at developing a national profile, particularly in relation to the issue of certification of small woodland owners and contractors under the FSC, and campaigning to reduce the cost of certification and overseeing a group certification service.

3.84. However, many of the Initiatives recognised the importance of lobbying at the national level (particularly within DEFRA) and at the local level (with local authorities). Many of the Initiatives were keen to change the purchasing policy of their local authority (e.g. in terms of street and rights of way furniture). This was often frustrated by the lack of awareness amongst relevant local authority departments. Issues such as 'Best Value' regulations were cited as reasons why they could not source locally.

4. ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Organisational Structures

- 4.1. It is a measure of the varied history and current diversity of activity of the Woodland Initiatives that there is no standard structure or way of working that is common to all or even the majority of the Initiatives studied.
- 4.2. A legal structure is a formal method of organising a project, which is acceptable in law. The main types of structure used by the Initiatives were:
- Unincorporated associations which are usually a partnership, hosted by a 'lead' organisation (such as FCA, ADAS or a local authority);
 - A company limited by guarantee.
- 4.3. Although information on structures was collected as part of this study, it has not been possible to provide information on whether particular structures are more or less successful than others. This is a complex area, and advice is due to be prepared shortly by the Small Woods Association and FC.

Administration

- 4.4. In general, Initiatives reported spending a high proportion of staff time on administrative activities. Where it was estimated, this varied from 10% up to 35%. Time spent on administrative activities included many of the 'core activities' e.g.:
- liaison and reporting to the Initiative's partners (especially important for unincorporated associations);
 - general administration of the office and staff;
 - maintenance of the Initiative's profile and presence at shows and conferences;

- development of a long term strategy or business plan;
 - development of new projects, including applications for funding.
- 4.5. Although these are all necessary activities (and often a requirement of certain funding bodies), it could be argued that the high proportion of staff time spent on these activities means that the cost-effectiveness of Initiatives in achieving outputs was reduced. There was a recognition that to reduce the relative proportion of time spent on administration activities, Initiatives could grow in size. However, there was amongst many of the Initiatives a reluctance to grow further (see below).

Staffing

- 4.6. Most of the Initiatives retained only a small number of staff, generally less than five full time equivalent employees. With ten staff, the Silvanus Trust is one of the largest Initiatives. The Community Forests are slightly different, in that they have higher numbers of employees (e.g. Mersey Forest employs nine full time staff), but only a proportion of these are involved in activities relating to support of existing woodlands.
- 4.7. Whilst many of these staff have a background in forestry or a related discipline (e.g. landscape/wildlife conservation), many of the staff were 'generalists', and covered a range of issues, including administration and project management. Part time support, particularly in relation to accounts, was common.
- 4.8. Initiatives were not keen to grow further. There was a recognition that growth would enable Initiatives to achieve more results, and to reduce the relative proportion of time spent on administration activities. However, the uncertainty regarding sustainability of funding sources meant that Initiatives were unwilling to take on additional staff. For example, Anglia Woodnet has reduced staff numbers to their current level of five staff, as a larger number could not be sustained.
- 4.9. Specialist advice was bought in where applicable (e.g. for providing advice or training events) or was provided by partner organisations.

Target Setting and Performance Monitoring

- 4.10. Initiatives were all involved in setting targets and monitoring performance to some degree. This is a requirement of project-based funding, and, in particular, with European funded projects. Examples of targets and criteria used are provided in Box 5. Long running Initiatives reported that funding bodies were increasingly requiring evidence of performance in relation to targets.
- 4.11. Where Initiatives are involved with contacting and engaging with woodland owners to promote the benefits of management and the provision of advice, they could demonstrate achievements in terms of numbers of owners contacted and areas of woodland brought back into management. On the other hand, where Initiatives are involved in other activities including training, networking, promotion of woodland products or in raising the public profile of woodlands, their achievements were much more difficult to measure. It is possible to demonstrate 'outputs' (e.g. in terms of numbers of training days held) and in many cases to demonstrate that there is a need for the service (i.e. the high demand for some training courses demonstrates a lack of provision elsewhere). However, the 'outcomes' of these activities are intangible and their contribution to supporting the management of non-commercial woodland is more difficult to ascertain.
- 4.12. Some of the Initiatives reported that liaison/networking days were very valuable in helping woodland owners to make contact with contractors and users (eventually leading to an increase in woodland management), but the benefits of these types of link are virtually impossible to measure. Initiatives were also obviously very successful in building up a reservoir of contacts and local knowledge, and thus providing a contact point for a range of interested parties. Again, the contribution that this type of achievement makes to supporting woodland management is difficult to measure.

Box 5: Examples of Performance Targets

Northwoods

The Northwoods Initiatives agreed with MAFF a number of target outputs for the project. Selected examples include:

- 200 ha of woodlands brought into management;
- 1 database produced;
- 4000 promotional leaflets;
- demonstration woodlands;
- 120 advisory visits;
- 800 training days;
- 12 copies of Woodlots.

Chilterns Woodlands Project

The Chilterns Woodlands Project Business Plan (2002-2005) sets objectives and targets in relation to a number of key themes (sustainable woodland management, biodiversity, awareness raising, and social inclusion). In relation to the skills theme, examples include:

Objective: Promote and provide training opportunities for woodland owners and managers to improve the quality of multi-purpose woodland management.

Targets:

- Hold 1 evening meeting per annum;
- Hold 1 event (woods at work) per annum;
- Run 5 workshops per annum;
- Organise 1 visit to AONB woodland award winner per annum;
- Publish report on training needs of woodland owners.

5. CO-OPERATION AND LINKAGES

National Co-operation

- 5.1. National networking commenced in 1987, when several of the emerging woodland initiatives met, with the result being the creation of the National Small Woods Association (NSWA). This organisation supported Initiatives through networking, providing an annual conference and undertaking lobbying at the national level, in addition to providing a Register of Woodland Initiatives.
- 5.2. National networking days have been run by the Forestry Commission since 1997 to provide a forum where representatives can network in order to share best practice. The event is held roughly every 18 months, and is an opportunity for all the Initiatives to get together, exchange information face-to-face and to learn of, and debate, national policy developments. In particular the aims are to:
 - expose 'new' players to the 'experienced' more effective Initiatives;
 - raise the profile of Woodland Initiatives;
 - engage the Initiatives in delivery of the England Forestry Strategy;
 - influence activity over the subsequent 18 months;
 - capture and publish a résumé of Initiative activity for distribution to a wider audience;
 - raise the profile of Initiatives, internally (FC) and externally.
- 5.3. Publishing the proceedings and circulating them widely has ensured that there is much greater understanding of the role and diversity of Initiatives. The proceedings provide a valuable reference for anyone enquiring about or thinking of starting their own initiative.
- 5.4. The first meeting was held in December 1997 with the primary objective of sharing best practice and '*stop re-inventing wheels*'. The event sought to '*draw a line in the sand*' and pave the way for subsequent co-operation and networking. The second meeting in May 1999 introduced the FC agenda via the England Forestry Strategy and

tried to identify 'Gate Keepers' to take a lead on certain specialist areas.

- 5.5. The third event in September 2000 focussed on the opportunities afforded by the developing Woodfuel market. It also sought to develop wider partnership working.
- 5.6. In parallel, the Small Woods Association (formerly NSWA) continues to support Initiatives at the national level, principally by provision of advice, and by maintaining the Woodland Initiatives Register. In addition, the provision of a Woodland Initiatives Network Officer, jointly funded by the Forestry Commission and Countryside Agency, with the Small Woods Association, is to be undertaken shortly. This post will provide national co-ordination of best practice and the exchange of information on operational and technical issues between Initiatives. This should increase the operational efficiency and stability of Initiatives and ensure that they have access to the best and most up to date information.

Regional co-operation

- 5.7. Although there is a lack of 'top-down' co-ordination for Initiatives on a regular basis, there are examples of Initiatives promoting co-operative working at a regional level. For example, SERLAWN, operating in the South-East region and EMWING, operating in the East Midlands provide two different examples of regional co-operation (see Box 6).

Box 6: Regional Woodland Groups

SERLAWN (South East Region Local Authority Woodland Network)

SERLAWN was established in 1999 as a working group of local authorities in SE England, with an interest in developing the potential for the sustainable development of the region's woodland resources. Its aim is to bring together environmental and economic development interests in county councils and unitary authorities in the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) region. One of the initial objectives of SERLAWN was to get woodlands included into the Regional Economic

Strategy (RES) for the South East.

The partnership works within the context of the England Forestry Strategy, the National and local Biodiversity Action Plans, and the RES to stimulate sustainable development of the woodland resource to meet the economic, social and environmental needs of the region. The group works with the Forestry Commission, Countryside Agency, SEEDA and DEFRA, as well as Private and NGO partners, to demonstrate the positive contribution that woodland management and local wood industries can make to rural regeneration in the region.

The Initiatives strongly linked to the County Councils in the South East (Weald Woodnet and Kent Interreg) are heavily involved in SERLAWN. Other Initiatives in the SERLAWN area (e.g. Chilterns Woodlands Project, TWIG and Wessex Coppice Group) have been involved (e.g. through hosting meetings and providing information on their activities) but not to the same level.

The group is felt to be a useful way of producing regional information and liaising at the regional level. Much communication is by email thus minimising the need for meetings and consequently the time input required.

EMWING (East Midlands Woodland Initiative Group)

EMWING was originally established by the Countryside Agency but the co-ordination role has subsequently been taken over by the Forestry Commission. The group comprises the principal Initiatives in the East Midlands region (e.g. Rockingham Forest Trust, Lincwoods, National Forest, Greenwood Project, East Derbyshire Woodland Initiative) together with the Forestry Commission and Countryside Agency. The group has been co-operating by assigning different Initiatives to take the lead in different work areas (e.g. Rockingham Forest Trust is taking a lead role in training by submission of a successful bid to VTS), whilst Lincwoods is taking a lead role in product development (a RES bid was submitted although this subsequently turned out to be ineligible).

- 5.8. However, the time input involved in contributing to these working groups has proved to be problematic for some Initiatives as it forms one of the 'core' activities for which funding is difficult. The operation

of these groups also relies on commitment from a key partner to carry out the co-ordination (e.g. EMWING has been co-ordinated by the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission but is currently struggling as the constituent Initiatives do not have sufficient time and resources to allocate to the group).

- 5.9. In addition, to the above 'formal' arrangements, informal co-operation is common between Initiatives as time allows. For example, the Chilterns Woodlands Project covers the Chilterns AONB in Oxfordshire and the Oxfordshire Woodland Project (OWP) covers the rest of the County – with the Wychwood Project also working out of the same office as OWP. CWP and OWP organise some joint woodland events and training workshops, and are looking at working together on allotment coppice and in the production of newsletters. In the South West region, Initiatives have networked to produce a study examining the economic value of the industry to the south west, largely funded by the FC and RDA. In addition, Silvanus Trust and Bow Maurice Ltd are working together as joint programme managers of Working Woodlands.

Partnership Working

- 5.10. By working in partnership with others, Initiatives bring together diverse groups of organisations. For example, the TWIG project, utilising the availability of EU funding, brought together a wide range of partners including national agencies and local authorities alongside educational establishments and an existing Woodland Initiative (the Chilterns Woodlands Project). The two Community Forests studied (Red Rose Forest and Mersey Forest) are also being successfully run by wide ranging partnerships.
- 5.11. The Oxfordshire Woodland Project is supported and steered by the Trustees of the Oxfordshire Woodland Group, a charitable organisation representing woodland owners in the County as well as the County Council and four district councils. The Forestry Commission, English Nature and the Environment Agency are also partners but take a lesser role.

5.12. Initiatives that operate in a range of different project areas have to get used to working with a wide range of different partners. For example, the Silvanus Trust are involved in many different partnerships. For instance, the Working Woodlands initiative is run by Working Woodlands Holdings Ltd, a joint public private sector company limited by guarantee which is managed on a day to day basis by Bow Maurice Ltd and the Silvanus Trust as joint programme managers. The Silvanus Trust also runs the South Hams Woodland Campaign with South Hams District Council, and the Tap Routes training project with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (as joint lead partner of 12 bodies). The Silvanus Trust is aware that each of these relationships is different, having different strengths and tensions. The benefits of these partnerships are regularly monitored by the Trustees of the Trust.

Local Co-operation

5.13. **Activities of local groups.** A brief survey was undertaken of local and community groups contributing to woodland management in the Kent & East Sussex, the West Midlands and the East Midlands areas. This has indicated that there are large numbers of local groups in these areas, but that there is some variation in the number and types of groups. For example Kent & East Sussex, and the West Midlands contain a larger number of local woodland groups than the East Midlands.

5.14. The main activities of these local woodland groups are:

- direct management of woodlands (often a single woodland) for example Birch Wood Association in Kent (involved in restoring and maintaining a wood near Southborough) and the Friends of Pond Wood (also in Kent);
- stimulating community involvement in woodlands, for example the Community Tree Project in Daventry, Community Woodland at Whitchurch and Pepperwood Community Woodland (in Worcestershire).

5.15. **Linkages with Initiatives.** Since Initiatives are not involved in directly managing woodlands, there is little overlap with the local groups.

Initiatives were not performing a co-ordinating role for the local woodland groups in their area. The principal linkage between Initiatives and the local groups is that local groups may make use of services offered by the sub-regional Initiatives, in particular relating to markets for timber from their woodlands. There was a general feeling that the role of the Initiatives was not to provide general advice to these local groups, as they were obtaining sufficient support from elsewhere. For example, local and community groups are often funded and supported by national organisations (e.g. the Woodland Trust) and additional support is available from the local authorities. This may also reflect the growing involvement of the Initiatives in the 'pull' factors rather than direct involvement with woodland owners.

- 5.16. However, a number of the local groups are also involved in issues which do directly overlap with those of sub-regional Initiatives (e.g. training and marketing). For example, Commonwork in Kent is undertaking woodland management training and the Clun Valley Charcoal Alder Project (and subsequent Blue Remembered Hills Project) is looking at economic drivers involved in harvesting riverside alder.

6. FUNDING

Sources of Funding

- 6.1. Table 7 summarises the different sources of funding that the Initiatives have made use of in the last five years. The table distinguishes between organisations that have contributed money and those that have provided in-kind support (in kind support is discussed further below).
- 6.2. A wide range of funding sources have been accessed, from European funding, national agencies, regional agencies, local authorities, grant giving trusts, commercial sponsors and lottery funding. These are described further below, setting out the types of work that were undertaken by Initiatives under the different funding programmes and the requirements of the funding bodies.

European Funding

- 6.3. Many of the activities of Woodland Initiatives are compatible with the objectives of a range of different European programmes and this is reflected in the number of Initiatives that have received funding from these sources. Objective 5b, which made funds available from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) was a key source of funding during the period 1996 to 2001, leading to the creation of six new Initiatives (Bowland Added Value Project, Lincwoods, Marches Woodland Initiative, Northwoods, Working Woodlands Holdings and Yorwoods) and the significant expansion of Anglia Woodnet.
- 6.4. The purpose of the Objective 5b programme was to assist investment in the infrastructure of areas whose economies lagged behind the EU average. As a result, the geographical boundaries of the Objective 5b areas were tightly constrained.
- 6.5. The Objective 5b programme was administered by MAFF and involved EU funding being matched equally by MAFF. Schemes that bid for funds were required to meet a wide range of specific quantifiable targets relating to the number of jobs and businesses sustained and

created, as well as a range of environmental targets. Applicants were also required to demonstrate significant contributions (typically 35-40% of total costs) from project partners and beneficiaries, though this could take the form of staff time. The programme started in 1996 and schemes approved under the programme were required to complete their work mid way through 2001. However, the disruption to individual work programmes caused by Foot and Mouth Disease meant that many of the schemes were extended until the end of 2001.

- 6.6. Unlike almost all other Woodland Initiatives studied, those using Objective 5b funds were able to offer grants to the private sector as discussed earlier. Some of these grants took the form of revenue grants to silvicultural consultants to subsidise the cost of advice to woodland owners and capital grants to subsidise the cost of purchasing harvesting and processing machinery or creating access tracks. These were considered a valuable aid to 'kick-start' woodland management in the area.

Initiative	European Union Funding Programmes							National Agencies							Regional Devt. Agency	Local Authorities		Private sector			Others				
	Objective 1 ⁽¹⁾	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 5b	Recite II	LIFE	Interreg	Leader II	MAFF / DEFRA	Other government departments	Forestry Commission	Countryside Agency	Timber Research & Devt. Assoc.	Timber Growers Association		Forestry Contracting Assoc.	ADAS	English Nature	County / Unitary Councils	District Council	Charities & grant giving trusts	Commercial sponsors	Forestry sector businesses	Higher & Further Education Bodies	Landfill Tax
Anglia Woodnet				●			●	●									●	●○			○				
Bowland AVP				●				●		●								●○			○				
Chiltern Woodlands Project										●	●							●	●	●					
Cumbria Broadleaves				●				●										●○	●						
Forest of Avon WP Co-op											●							●	●						
Greenwood Trust																			●	●			●		●
Kent Interreg Project							●			●					○	○	●	●○	○		●		○	○	
Lincwoods				●				●		●	●					○	○	●	○		●				
Marches WI				●				●		●○	●						●	●	●		○				
Mersey Forest	●	●	●	●				●		●	●							●	●	●	●	●			
Northwoods				●				●		●	○		○		○	○	○	●	●		●				
Oxfordshire WP										●	●							●○	●	●	●				
Red Rose Forest										●	●							●	●	●	●				
Rockingham Forest Trust										●	●							●	●	●	●		●		●
Silvanus Trust	●		●	●			●	●		●	●		●	●			●	●	●	●	●○	●	●	●	●
Stroud Touchwood			●	●				●		●	●							●	●	●	●		●		
TWIG					●					●	●	○						●○	○			○		○	
Weald Woodnet						●	●										●	○							
Wessex Coppice Group			●	●				●	●	●	●		○	○			●	●	●	○					
Working Woodlands	●			●				●		●	●							●	●	●	●○				
Wychwood											●							●	●	●				○	
Yorwoods				●				●		●							●	●	●	○					

Table 7: Funding sources used by Initiatives

Key: ● Financial contribution ○ Contribution in kind

Notes: ⁽¹⁾ Mersey Forest obtained funding from Objective 1 (1996-2000), whilst Silvanus Trust and Working Woodlands are obtaining funding from Objective 1 (2001-2006)

6.7. Other sources of European Union funding have included:

- European Regional Development Funds under the Objective 1 and 2 programmes (used by The Mersey Forest) and Objective 2 programme (used by the Red Rose Forest). Both Objective 1 and Objective 2 funds have enabled the same range of measures (capital and revenue grants) as occurred under Objective 5b. The Mersey Forest used this funding to undertake a 'Timber Project' (involving market research and business advice and support to the wood supply chain), in addition to community activities.
- European Social Fund under the Objective 3 programme, which has been used to run training programmes for woodland contractors, consultants or owners by Silvanus Trust, Stroud Touchwood and Wessex Coppice Group.
- Interreg funding used in Kent (in co-operation with Nord Pas de Calais) to fund a post for two years to extend the knowledge base of woodlands in Kent and by Weald Woodnet in East Sussex (with Seine Maritime) for projects to look at sustainable management of forests and utilising low value timber. The Interreg fund has also contributed to capital funding of the Woodland Enterprise Centre.
- Recite II funding used by TWIG (Transnational Woodland Initiatives Group) in co-operation with partners in Greece and Germany to undertake work associated with support of the wood chain in the Chilterns.
- Leader II, which like Objective 5b was geographically confined, was used to provide more modest funds by Anglia Woodnet and Silvanus Trust.
- LIFE funding, which was used in the establishment of Weald Woodnet.

6.8. A feature of all the European Union funded schemes is the level of administration and auditing required. Initiatives reported a confused, repetitive and time-consuming application procedure. Once projects received approval, the need for separate accounting to measure project outputs against the targets of the programme created a

significant extra cost. The audit required on completion and the time/expenditure records which have to be kept for each partner organisation (which feed into quarterly reports) were also noted as time consuming activities.

England Rural Development Programme

- 6.9. The England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) became effective in 2000 and introduced a range of new schemes to assist structural adjustment and investment in value added and environmentally sustainable land-based production. Existing woodland establishment and agri-environment schemes such as the Woodland Grant Scheme, Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Area Schemes were drawn together under this national programme which runs from 2000 to 2006. The England Rural Development Programme does not apply in Objective 1 areas such as Cornwall where Objective 1 funding covers the same areas but with its own eligibility criteria.
- 6.10. Several of the Initiatives studied, including Northwoods, Yorwoods and the Lincwoods, were attracted to the Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES) forming one of the funding streams under the ERDP. It was hoped that this would enable the Initiatives to provide capital and revenue grants to forestry contractors, processors and woodland owners, in a similar fashion to the Objective 5b programme. These Initiatives made lengthy applications to this Scheme late in 2001, having been given indications by DEFRA staff that the projects proposed in outline would be eligible. However, by December 2001, it became clear that applications under article 33 (the article under which applications were made) were ineligible and the applications to the RES were rejected. Due to the non-enactment of article 30 of the RDR, almost all activities involved in woodland management and timber harvesting and processing were not funded. An application made by the Wessex Coppice Group covering training and support of craft workers is still being considered.
- 6.11. Another ERDP scheme which may be of assistance to Woodland Initiatives is the Vocational Training Scheme (VTS). At least 20 days training must be provided and up to 75% of eligible costs can be grant

aided. Wessex Coppice Group has obtained funding under this scheme and both Anglia Woodnet and Rockingham Forest Trust have applied to run a training programme under this Scheme.

National Agencies

- 6.12. The Forestry Commission (FC) and Countryside Agency (CA) have both played an important role in pump priming and fostering many of the Initiatives studied. The Community Forests were established by the FC and CA in partnership with others. CA funding (and to a lesser extent FC funding) has remained a core source of revenue, though this will cease in 2005.
- 6.13. Both the CA and FC were important contributors to the matching funds used to draw down EAGGF funds in Objective 5b areas. However, the CA has decided to direct future funding to specific projects that meet their national priorities. For this reason, the CA will not fund the core management costs of Initiatives. The FC, with more limited funds available, is currently supporting the national networking days at a national level, but other than this does not currently have a coordinated national strategy for funding Initiatives. At the Conservancy level, limited support has been provided to some Initiatives, but is not co-ordinated between different Conservancies.

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

- 6.14. In general, RDAs have not been a source of funding for Woodland Initiatives. The exception was funding provided by the Rural Challenge Fund of SEEDA to Weald Woodnet (for construction of the Woodland Enterprise Centre) and SEEDA funding to Wessex Coppice Group. This in part reflects the lack of other funds (e.g. European Objective funds) in the South East and therefore the greater sympathy of the RDA to support rural Initiatives, especially recognising the very large contribution of small woodlands to the environmental character of South East. In addition, Advantage West Midlands has provided funding to Marches Woodland Initiative.

Local Authorities

6.15. Local authority funding has been central to the establishment and continuation of six of the Initiatives studied (Chilterns, Cumbria Broadleaves, Oxfordshire Woodland Project, Rockingham Forest Trust, Stroud Touchwood and Wessex Coppice Group). For the county councils involved, they have seen the Woodland Initiatives as contributing significantly to the work of the County Forester with the advantage that the Initiative has wider partnership support and is able to focus on assisting the small woodland sector without the burdens of statutory responsibilities of county council staff. Due to the nature of local authority budgets, Initiatives must bid on an annual basis for funding, with no guarantee that funding will be forthcoming often until close to the beginning of the financial year in question. Local authority funding has tended to bring a landscape management and nature conservation focus to the work of Initiatives, compared to the more enterprise-centred activity of some other sources of funding.

Grant Giving Charities

6.16. Six of the Initiatives studied have drawn significantly on grant giving charities such as the Esmee Fairburn Trust and Ernest Cook Trust. Several others, now facing a shortage of funds, are looking at such charities as a potential source of funds. There are a large number of charitable trusts that have educational, craft, recreational or rural objectives that could provide funds to Woodland Initiatives. However, such charities tend to be an unreliable source of repeat funding, firstly because the Trustees deliberately avoid regular contribution to the same beneficiary and, secondly, because funding tends to be allocated on an annual basis, with applicants from a wide variety of areas competing between each other. However, matched funding of discrete projects may be more appropriate and in tune with the objects of the Trusts themselves.

Commercial Sponsors

6.17. Most Initiatives had not spent a large amount of time in attempting to obtain funding from business sponsors and perhaps as a consequence, none of the Initiatives were receiving significant amounts of money

from this source. Some Initiatives were obtaining relatively minor amounts of money, such as Cumbria Broadleaves from United Utilities (North West Water and Norweb), Oxfordshire Woodland Project from Thames Water, The Greenwood Trust from Lloyds TSB and Stroud Touchwood from the National Grid Community Fund. Wessex Coppice Group has obtained both funding for events and in kind support from a local computer company.

- 6.18. The Community Forests bid for funds from a wide range of bodies to help deliver specific projects. For instance, The Mersey Forest received funding from Littlewoods, North West Water, ICI and Esso during 1999-2000.
- 6.19. It is likely to remain difficult to attract business sponsors to support work involving the 'pull' factors of woodland management as these overlap with perceived commercial activities. Sponsors are more likely to fund work with clear 'environmental' results (e.g. archaeology, biodiversity) or those with an element of community involvement.

Lottery Funding

- 6.20. In order to qualify for lottery funding, the Initiatives must meet the requirements of one of the Lottery Distributors. The most relevant are the Heritage Lottery Fund which is concerned with safeguarding and enhancing heritage (including environment) and assisting people to enjoy heritage, and the New Opportunities Fund which is concerned with local greenspaces, education and healthy living. The Rockingham Forest Trust has recently won Heritage Lottery Funding to undertake a countryside survey in the Rockingham Forest area.
- 6.21. The Greenwood Trust received a significant amount of money from the National Charities Lottery Board (now The Community Fund). The Community Fund is an independent body set up to distribute a share of the money raised by The National Lottery to support charitable organisations meeting the needs of those at greatest disadvantage in society and to improve the quality of life in the community.
- 6.22. Work involving the 'pull' factors of woodland management is not likely to meet the current requirements of the main lottery distributors.

Other Income

- 6.23. Initiatives have been successful at gaining some income from training events and from woodland owners. Although these were subsidised in many cases, those attending were willing to pay towards the cost of training provision. For example, approximately 10% of income to the Chilterns Woodlands Project is gained by this method. However, certain funding bodies (e.g. the Recite II programme) required any income from these events to be offset against the funding provided.
- 6.24. The Silvanus Trust also receives income from its trading arm (Silvanus Services Ltd) which covenants 50% of its profits to the Trust.

Contributions In Kind

- 6.25. The partnership structure of Woodland Initiatives has enabled contributions to the work of Initiatives to be made in a variety of non-monetary ways. These include office accommodation, seconded staff (professional and administrative), and provision of time on advisory and steering groups. Some of this is provided as match funding for EU funded schemes.
- 6.26. Contribution in kind is often a vital element in assisting Initiatives with undertaking their core activities, as it reduces the requirement for core funding. In particular, where a staff member was seconded from an organisation, this provided valuable continuity and a resource base from which to apply for project funding.

Land Use Consultants
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