

Creating new woodland: Woodland Carbon Code

Planting trees to tackle the effects of climate change





What is the Code?

The Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) is the voluntary standard for UK woodland creation projects where claims are made about the carbon dioxide they sequester. Independent validation and verification to this standard provides assurance and clarity about the carbon savings of these woodlands and means that projects:

- are responsibly and sustainably managed to national standards;
- can provide reliable estimates of the amount of carbon that will be sequestered or locked up as a result of the tree planting;
- must be publicly registered and independently verified; and
- meet transparent criteria and standards to ensure that real carbon benefits are delivered.



Am I eligible?

To be eligible for the code, woodland creation projects with suitable species (native or exotic) and management (non-intervention, continuous cover and rotational clear-fell are all eligible) for the site must:

- be registered with the WCC within two years of the start of planting;
- take place on a suitable site, which was not wooded in the past 25 years and is not deep peat (organic) soil;
- be sustainably and responsibly managed, meeting the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard, preferably with a long-term management plan in place;
- demonstrate that the extra carbon income is material to the project going ahead (however, in most cases a Countryside Stewardship or Woodland Carbon Fund grant can also be used); and
- be validated within three years of registration and maintain verification for the duration of the project.

Projects validated and verified to the standard can carry the Woodland Carbon Code label of approval.

What are the benefits?

Planting woodland to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere, known as woodland carbon capture, is a cost-effective way of compensating for emissions while also providing many other social and environmental benefits.

People who want to invest in carbon capture projects need to feel confident that the woodlands will be well managed and really will capture the CO₂ claimed. Validation and verification to the Woodland Carbon Code provides this evidence. It also creates real and verifiable carbon 'rights' that can be sold to recoup the costs of creating the woodland and generate an income.

Selling the rights to the carbon captured by Woodland Carbon Code validated woodlands can provide new income for landowners, potentially supplementing other income streams.

A new native woodland can capture 300-400 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per hectare by year 50. By year 100, it can capture 400-600 CO₂ equivalent per hectare.

Recently, companies have paid between £5 and £15 per tonne of CO₂. Remember, you need to deduct the cost of involvement in the scheme from this income – either direct costs or through employing a project developer. Currently, around 70% of the carbon rights are sold in advance enabling some landowners to quickly recoup their outlay. The remainder may be sold later as the woodland matures.

How do I register?

You can register your project by following four simple steps. Further help is available on the Forestry Commission website – see **More information**.

1. **Find a project developer**
If you need help, there are a number of organisations that can help you develop your Woodland Carbon Code project and put it through validation and verification.
2. **Register your project**
Create an account on the Market Registry and register your project.
3. **Validation: initial project check**
Validation is the initial evaluation of a project or group against the requirements of the Woodland Carbon Code. For this stage, you need to prepare a Project Design Document.
4. **Verification: ongoing check of carbon sequestered**
Verification is the ongoing evaluation of the project or group against the requirements of the Woodland Carbon Code, confirming the actual carbon sequestered. For this stage, you need to monitor your woodland and prepare a Project Progress Report.

More information

For more information on the Woodland Carbon Code and how to register a project, please see: forestry.gov.uk/carboncode



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woodlands have
been certified in
accordance with the
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