



Corporate Plan 2011-15

Our mission is to protect and expand Britain's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.

Foreword



Caroline Spelman MP
Secretary of State

Our trees and woodlands have long been an integral and valued part of our history and culture.

Today, they continue to provide many benefits that will help us face the challenges of today and of the future. But we must look after our woodlands so that they can play an even greater role in enhancing biodiversity, providing opportunities for public access and enjoyment, and helping to support local businesses and communities.

With the threat of multiple tree diseases, we need to ensure that our trees and woods remain healthy and are managed to the highest possible sustainable standards. This corporate plan sets out how the Forestry Commission helps that happen in public and private woodlands.

The changing climate brings fresh challenges for woodland managers throughout Britain. The Forestry Commission's role in managing these threats derives from a sound base of science and management techniques that will benefit all woodland owners.

This plan highlights some key areas where the Forestry Commission is well placed to deliver solutions that benefit the nation's trees and woodlands, whilst at the same time striving for a public forest estate on a sound financial footing.

The government wants to provide more opportunities for individuals and civil organisations to determine what they want from their trees and woods, and to take the lead in deciding which benefits are of most value to them. An independent panel has been set up to consider these, including the role of the Forestry Commission itself.

In this, the International Year of Forests, the government is committed to being the greenest government ever, and it looks forward to the Forestry Commission taking a leading role in supporting this impartial initiative and in helping to deliver the maximum possible benefits from our trees and woodlands.

Chair's Introduction

Pam Warhurst

Chair of the Forestry Commissioners

Having completed my first full year as Chair of the Forestry Commissioners, I still remain amazed by the variety and quality of the work undertaken by the Forestry Commission. It is an organisation built on the passion of a workforce that strives to deliver high-quality products and services right across Britain.

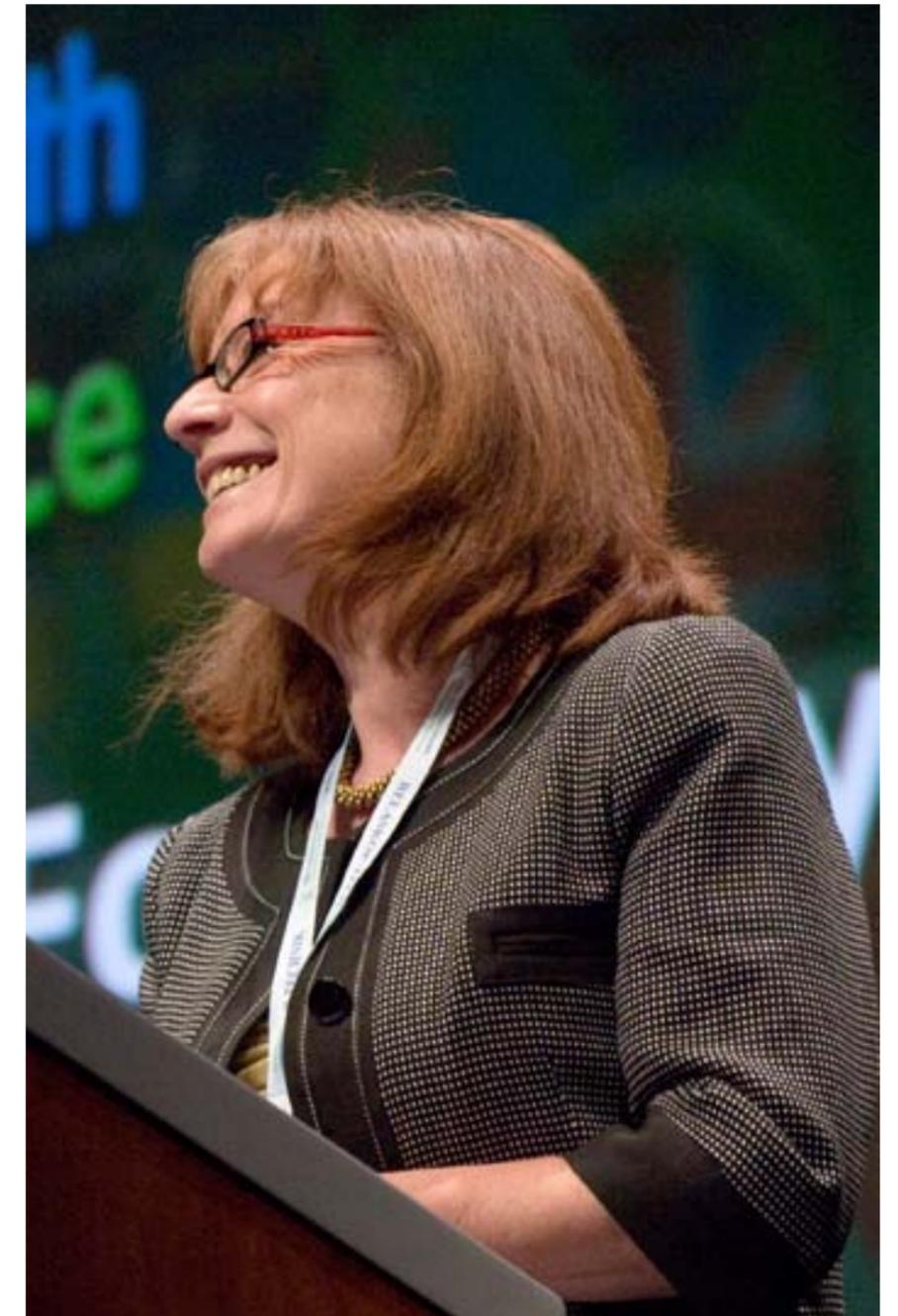
The government has laid out renewed challenges for the Commission: to meet growing public aspirations, to improve its efficiency, to protect, improve and expand Britain's woodlands, and to focus on those tasks which only government can do.

Across Britain we share a vision of ensuring we have a healthy and sustainable woodland resource that can contribute to the challenges of the 21st century. That means protecting our trees and woodlands from pests and disease and, where our woodlands are under attack, providing sound science to help manage those outbreaks.

It also means developing our understanding of how climate change will impact on our woodland resource, and what our woodland resource can do to mitigate the impacts of climate change on society.

Increasingly, it also takes us closer to larger communities as more is understood and expected of trees in urban settings. And we do all of this to the highest sustainable standards. What we do is founded on evidence and experience, and this we gladly share internationally through fora such as the Commonwealth Forestry Conference and the UN Food & Agriculture Organization.

I am proud to introduce this corporate plan, which highlights how the Forestry Commission will work to make all this happen. I am aware that it will do so at a time when it is also playing a part in reducing public sector spending, but knowing the passion, pride and prowess of the Commission people I have met so far, I am confident that it will rise to meet the challenge.



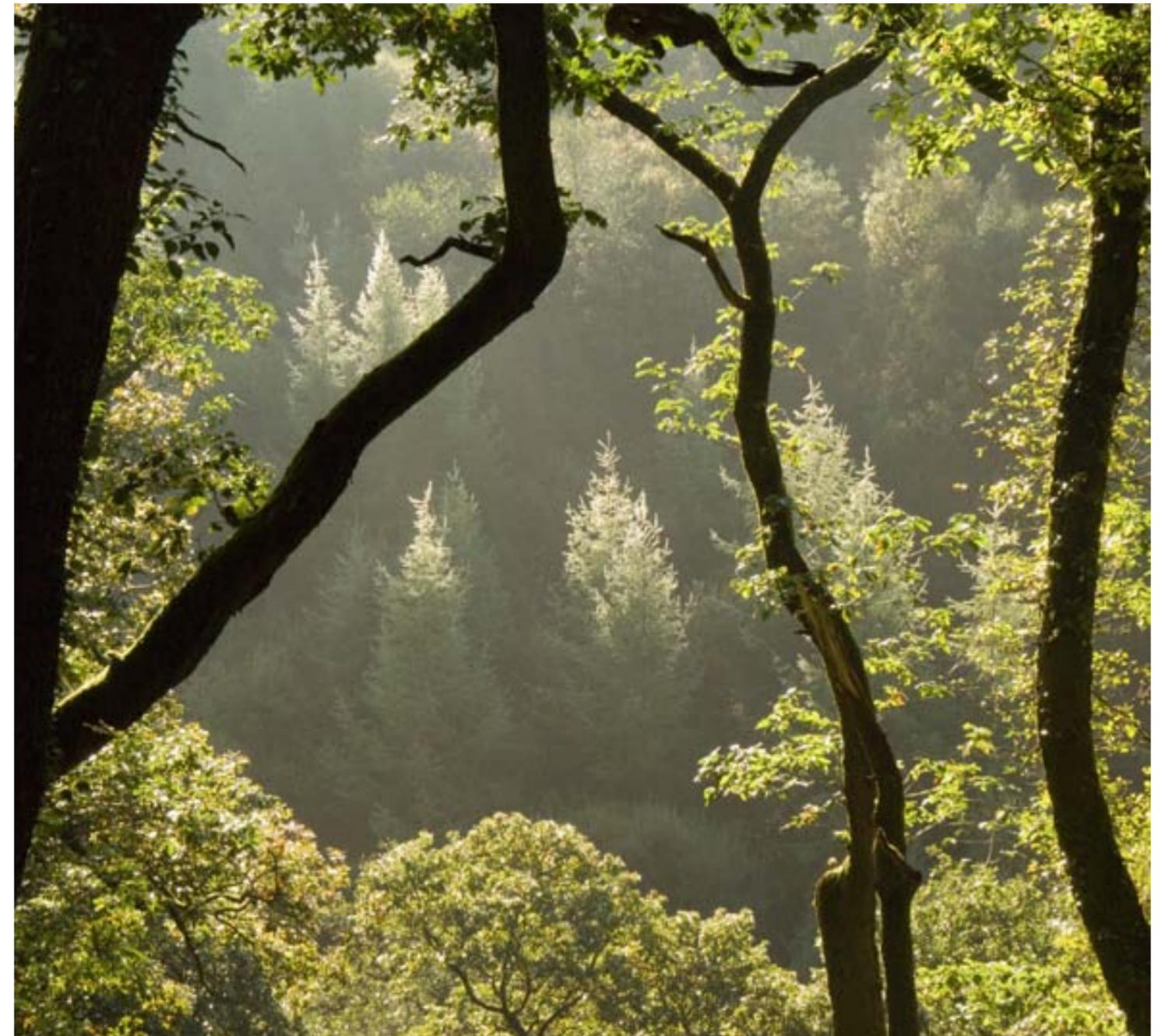
The Government's Vision

Sustainable forest management is at the heart of forestry policy across Great Britain.

The government in England, along with those in Scotland and Wales, shares a common vision of forestry contributing to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of each nation. What this means in practice is that we must reflect the different policies and priorities in each country.

The legal basis for the Forestry Commission is the Forestry Act 1967. It sets out the composition of the Commissioners, the purpose of the Commission and the functions of national and international significance that it is responsible for.

The sustainable management of our forests will help to deliver sustainable economic growth, improve our quality of life and protect our natural environment now and for future generations. We cannot do this alone and will work across government, with communities, businesses, voluntary groups and the forest sector to share our experiences and practice.



Delivering the Vision - Our Role

Forestry policy is a devolved responsibility of the separate administrations in England, Scotland and Wales, and continues to develop in distinctive ways. Nevertheless some of our work transcends national boundaries, and by working in partnership we can provide greater environmental and public benefits as well as delivering value for money. Support for this work comes from Westminster funding. However we work with the devolved administrations to deliver each government's priorities.

The Forestry Commission provides evidence and advice to policy-makers in the devolved administrations, UK Government, the European Commission and international fora. By doing so, we help to join up policy at different geographical scales and across sectors.

We manage the practical implementation of regulations, for example, through our plant health inspectors or our seed collection inspectors. We also advise other regulators on how specific activities will affect forestry and the forest sector. For instance, we work with the Department of Energy and Climate Change on biomass, and Defra on the EU timber regulation.

Our work for people and communities throughout Britain is to support and promote the sustainability of Britain's forests. We will continue to work with a broad range of UK partners, other government bodies, private sector business and civil organisations to deliver those functions which only government can deliver: those that are

technical, that require political impartiality, or need to act independently to establish facts. We will focus on our role in the key priority areas of:

- forest biosecurity: protecting the woodland resource and reducing its susceptibility to pests and diseases;
- climate change: ensuring a resilient woodland resource that contributes to mitigating climate change and helps us to adapt to its impacts;
- standards: setting standards for sustainable forest management in the UK; and
- evidence: making sure that all policy making is founded on a robust evidence base.

We will also work to restructure our business to meet the targets set by the Westminster government spending settlement for 2011-2015, which requires us to manage a net reduction in funding of 25 per cent by 2014-2015.



Forest Biosecurity

Over the last five years or so we have seen a substantial increase in the incidence of pests and diseases across Britain, and forest biosecurity is now at the forefront of our activity. We are working in partnership with Defra, Fera, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government, industry representatives, private business representatives, and NGOs such as the Woodland Trust to deliver a cross-border tree health strategy and forest biosecurity action plan.

This approach relies on robust evidence to support decision-making, and we work closely with our research agency to deliver this. The stakeholders also form the Forest Biosecurity Programme Board, which has advisory and executive roles to ensure concerted action against threats can be rapidly co-ordinated.

Case Study: *Phytophthora ramorum* in Japanese larch

In 2009 *Phytophthora ramorum* was found causing mortality and sporulating heavily on Japanese larch, significantly increasing the risk of the disease spreading. We quickly established an outbreak management team (OMT) involving the governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and other key stakeholders.

Using funding from Defra's *Phytophthora* Programme, the OMT established aerial surveys, ground inspections and laboratory analysis to identify infected trees. Following scientific advice, Statutory Notices were served on owners requiring infected trees to be felled to prevent further spread. At 31 March 2011 an estimated 2,223 hectares had been felled or were under notice in South West England, Wales, Northern Ireland, western Scotland and the Isle of Man. Biosecurity measures are implemented at sites where infected trees and logs are present.

It is probably impossible to eradicate *P. ramorum*, so our objective is to reduce the inoculum to a point that prevents epidemic levels of the disease, and to where outbreaks remain within the sector's capacity to respond. Further



Indicators:

- Number of new diseases established.
- Number of interceptions of non-compliant imports.
- Meet our customer care target of inspecting 95 per cent of imports of wood and wood products on the day of notification of landing, or the next-again working day.

Key Actions:

- Improve horizon scanning to identify new threats and introduce controls to prevent accidental introduction
- Work with partners to deliver a cross-border tree health strategy and forest biosecurity action plan.

research is needed to inform long-term management strategies, and Forest Research's plant pathology team has been strengthened to enable this.

A strategy is in place to minimise market distortion and economic losses caused by the increased larch harvest. Grants are available to assist owners with the costs of felling young trees or to get advice on felling and marketing older trees that can recoup some timber value.

Climate Change

In a changing climate, the way we manage our woodlands must change to ensure they are resilient to likely future climatic conditions and continue to deliver the wide range of benefits that society enjoys. Britain's trees and woodlands have the potential to play an important and cost-effective part in the nation's response to the challenges of a changing climate by absorbing CO₂ from the atmosphere and substituting renewable resources for other materials that may have a greater impact on the environment.

We work closely with other Government bodies, NGOs, trade and environmental organisations such as ConFor and Environment Link, and the private sector, to bring together relevant expertise and advice. This was evident during the development of the Read Report, compiled by leading scientists from universities and research institutes across the UK, and the evidence base of our current work.

Case Study: Piloting the Woodland Carbon Code

The Woodland Carbon Code sets out the standards for voluntary carbon sequestration projects that incorporate the core principles of good carbon management as part of modern sustainable forest management.

A planting scheme by The Heart of England Forest Project (the commercial arm of the Forest of Dennis Charity) and Dorsington Farms Ltd, is one of the first to use the code, and will see 120 hectares of native broadleaves planted on partners' land.

John Jordan from the charity said: "As a charity, we are just starting to develop our relationships with organisations that wish to sponsor planting with us for carbon sequestration purposes. The Woodland Carbon Code arrived at a perfect time for us; it gives us the credibility that we need and reassurance for our supporters that we are following best practice and that our calculations and methods are audited by experts in the field – literally."

Indicators:

- Projected amount of carbon captured to 2050 by (code-approved) British woodlands

Key Actions:

- Launch the Woodland Carbon Code
- Continue research and analysis of forestry's role in helping to tackle climate change.
- Examine new funding mechanisms for woodland creation.

Using the Forestry Commission's Carbon Lookup Tables, the net carbon sequestration for this project will be the equivalent of about 34,400 tonnes of CO₂ over 100 years. Planting is part-funded by Forestry Commission grants and by private investors in woodland carbon. The local community has been involved and has been supportive of the plans.



Standards

The UK is committed to sustainable forest management in accordance with international agreements and conventions at global and European levels, and as the fundamental tenet of domestic forestry policies in the four countries.

In developing these standards we will work with, and draw input from, the devolved administrations, other public bodies such as SEPA and the Environment Agency, conservation organisations, charities and other non-government organisations, the forest industry and other groups such as the Institute of Chartered Foresters, and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard Steering Group.

Case study: The UK Forestry Standard

The United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS) provides the basis for forest regulation in the UK. It is the framework within which existing regulations and incentives are applied. It ensures that forestry activities are controlled and influenced to deliver environmental and other public benefits.

The UKFS is the single document that brings together all that is required of forest managers. It is a summary of legal requirements, based on existing relevant statutes, together with good forest practice requirements. The UKFS is supported by a series of UKFS Forestry Guidelines; that provide forest managers with details and advice on compliance.

The UKFS also underpins the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, which allows independent certification of woodland management and wood products in the UK.

Through the revised UKFS, it can be demonstrated that forestry activity in the UK is sustainable and meets international commitments. It also provides the basis for demonstrating that forest products are legal and / or sustainable and are compliant with policies for responsible timber procurement and biomass criteria for renewable energy, without the need for additional regulatory burdens.

Indicators:

- The number of felling licences and forest plans approved each year under the UKFS and the total areas of woodland captured under these plans.

Key Actions:

- Launch a revised and updated version of the UKFS and Guidelines.
- Review country-level approaches to the implementation of the UKFS in the light of the revision.
- Ensure that the implementation of the proposed EU Due Diligence regulation is aligned with the UKFS.
- Ensure criteria for sustainable biomass are aligned with the UKFS
- By the end of 2013, develop an independent measure of the implementation of the UKFS and Guidelines.

Evidence

Our research programmes deliver the evidence to underpin robust policy making, and also to provide advice to the sector on sustainable forestry practices. We work in partnership with research purchasers and providers to get the most from investments in research. We agree all priorities for research with the devolved administrations. We develop strategies for collaborative research and share data with a range of organisations to enable greatest leverage of research funds, and collaborate with equivalent organisations throughout the UK, in Europe and around the world to enable UK information to be shared and placed in context.

Case Study: Completing the National Forest Inventory

Accurate, up-to-date information about our forests and woodlands is essential for developing and monitoring policies to support their sustainable management. The National Forest Inventory (NFI) will provide a record of key information about our forests and woodlands. One of the first outputs of the NFI will be a woodland map, based on aerial photography, scheduled for publication in spring 2011.

Data for the NFI is collected using ground surveys, aerial photography, satellite imagery and information provided by woodland owners and managers. Not all of Britain's forests and woodlands will be ground surveyed. The

survey team will visit a representative sample of plots across England, Scotland and Wales randomly selected through a sophisticated scheme designed by Forestry Commission statisticians.

The NFI will be the definitive source of information about Britain's forests and woodlands. It will include details such as the area, distribution, composition and condition of woodlands, together with information about the species, ages and sizes of trees. Timber, biomass and carbon forecasts will demonstrate how management and policy decisions impact on our forests' future outputs.

Indicators:

- The proportion of funds spent on research delivery against commissioning costs.
- National Forest Inventory sample plots against target number required.

Key Actions:

- Direct and manage research programmes relevant to the forestry sector, and disseminate results.
- Develop close partnership working with other government departments and external organisations to leverage our research spend.
- Provide timely and accurate official statistics (including National Statistics) on the forestry sector, such as forest area, timber volume, biomass and carbon stored, to inform trade and industry, government and the general public.
- Publish maps and analysis from the national Forest Inventory.

Restructuring our Business

The Forestry Commission's SR10 settlement from Defra requires us to reduce spending by 25 per cent. We will therefore undertake significant restructuring and downsize many programmes while maintaining and in some cases increasing the resources on those of highest priority.

By April 2015, the Forestry Commission will have evolved its GB role to focus on:

- setting standards;
- research and evidence; and
- working to combat the threat of pests and diseases and climate change.

The proposals will see a scaling back across most activities. We will create a single analysts or evidence group who will jointly address the three strands of evidence, standards and resilience. We will maintain expertise in some areas such as climate change and statistics, but also look to the analysts team to have the flexibility to pick up emerging issues. The plant health

and biosecurity function has been largely maintained, reflecting the continued importance of this work. Delivery of the Science and Innovation Strategy (which is due for full revision in 2013) will remain a key element, but will be managed with a lighter touch.

Although our main focus for the analysts will be on delivering the GB objective, we will also work with teams in the countries where a cross-border approach is the most effective. In determining our key priorities we have focused on maintaining funding for delivery and reducing administration and transaction costs.

Our GB work also supports our corporate functions as a statutory body.

Indicators:

- Number of staff (full-time equivalents).
- Total spend on GB activities.

Key Actions:

- Work with FC England and Defra to provide a more integrated and streamlined approach to our GB and England functions.
- Develop proposals to re-structure our evidence function, securing the best science from a range of providers and maintaining a core in-house analytical resource.
- Reduce staff numbers and examine and implement other cost-saving measures.
- Continue to roll out our Environmental Management System to ensure that we maintain accreditation to ISO 14001:2004.

Bringing It All Together

The way we manage our forests in the next decade will set the tone for the future look of forestry in Britain.

The Forestry Commission can help achieve the desired outcomes by providing governments, other public bodies, woodland managers and key stakeholders throughout Britain with a framework of evidence, policy, standards and practical support – all set within the context of sustainable forest management.

Our work on protecting our trees and woodlands from the increasing threats of pests and diseases, and the application of our knowledge of what needs to be done to combat climate change, will give us a resilient and adaptable forest resource.

Our work to deliver guidelines and management techniques to support the UK Forestry Standard will see Britain's trees and woodlands managed to the highest standards of sustainability.

And all of this – and much more besides – will be implemented using the robust evidence base founded on years of expertise and research.

We are doing this at a time when we are also contributing to improving public sector finances and focusing our resources on key programmes and activities.

This is the balancing act that the Forestry Commission delivers for people and communities across Britain.



Annex A: Indicators and Actions

No	Delivery Priority	Indicators	Key Actions
1	Forest Biosecurity	Number of new diseases established	Improve horizon scanning to identify new threats and introduce controls to prevent accidental introduction.
2	Forest Biosecurity	Number of interceptions of non-compliant imports.	Work with partners to deliver a cross-border tree health strategy and forest biosecurity action plan.
3	Forest Biosecurity	Meet our customer care target of inspecting 95 per cent of imports of wood and wood products on the day of notification of landing, or the next again working day.	
4	Climate Change	Projected amount of carbon captured to 2050 by (code-approved) British woodlands.	Launch the Woodland Carbon Code.
5	Climate Change	-	Continue research and analysis of forestry's role in helping to tackle climate change.
6	Climate Change	-	Examine new funding mechanisms for woodland creation.
7	Standards	The number of felling licences and forest plans approved each year under the aegis of the UKFS and the total areas of woodland captured under these plans.	Launch a revised and updated version of the UKFS and guidelines.
8	Standards	-	Review country-level approaches to the implementation of the UKFS in the light of the revision.
9	Standards	-	Ensure that the implementation of the proposed EU Due Diligence regulation is aligned with the UKFS.
10	Standards	-	Ensure that criteria for sustainable biomass are aligned with the UKFS.

Annex A: Indicators and Actions (Cont.)

No	Delivery Priority	Indicators	Key Actions
11	Standards	-	By the end of 2013 develop an independent measure of the implementation of the UKFS and Guidelines.
12	Evidence	The proportion of funds spent on research delivery against commissioning costs.	Direct and manage research programmes relevant to the forestry sector, and disseminate results.
13	Evidence	National Forest Inventory sample plots against target number required.	Develop close partnership working with other government departments and external organisations to leverage our research spend.
14	Evidence	-	Provide timely and accurate official statistics (including National Statistics) on the forestry sector, such as forest area, timber volume, biomass and carbon stored, to inform trade and industry, government and the general public.
15	Evidence	-	Publish maps and analysis from the National Forest Inventory.
16	Restructuring our Business	Number of staff (full-time equivalents).	Work with FC England and Defra to provide a more integrated and streamlined approach to our GB and England functions.
17	Restructuring our Business	Total spend on GB activities.	Develop proposals to re-structure our evidence function, securing the best science from a range of providers, and maintaining a core in-house analytical resource.
18	Restructuring our Business		Reduce staff numbers and examine and implement other cost-saving measures.
19	Restructuring our Business	-	Continue to roll out our Environmental Management System to ensure that we achieve external accreditation to ISO 14001:2004.

Annex B: Source and Use of Funds

£ million		2011-12 Planned	2012-13 Indicative	2013-14 Indicative	2014-15 Indicative
Source of Funds					
Parliamentary Funding	Resource	16.253	15.066	14.064	13.058
	Capital	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
	Total	18.253	17.066	16.064	15.058
Use of Funds					
	GB Activities	14.932	13.911	13.067	12.210
	Other (note 1)	3.321	3.155	2.997	2.848
	Total	18.253	17.066	16.064	15.058

Notes:

1. Includes depreciation of assets, mainly office machinery and equipment, and amortisation of capitalised software development costs.

The Forestry Commission of Great Britain is the forestry department of the British government and reports to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

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