

Forestry Commission

Corporate Plan 2010-2011
Great Britain Activities

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Foreword

In November 2009, I was pleased to give my support to the launch of the Read Report, an independent assessment of the contribution forests can make to climate change. That report provides the evidence base which the Forestry Commission will take forward into improved guidance on managing woodlands in a changing climate and a Code of Good Practice for Forest Carbon Projects. It will continue its research programme on forests and climate change to add to the knowledge base and improve wider understanding. Trees and forests can help society adapt to a changing climate and the actions set out in this plan will form an important component of making this a reality.

In 2010/11, we will see the publication of the new UK Forestry Standard and Guidelines. This has been a major project, involving many stakeholders, setting out our view of sustainable forest management in the UK. The Standard and Guidelines underpin our strong commitment to sustainable forestry nationally and internationally, along with the Code of Good Practice, they put the UK in an excellent position to demonstrate leadership internationally on sustainable forest management.

Having co-chaired the “London Challenge” of the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration last year, I was keen that the enthusiasm of that event was not lost. This plan commits the Forestry Commission to work with the Partnership in developing an action programme. It also recognises a number of actions in the international arena through which the Forestry Commission will coordinate and develop the UK’s position on sustainable forestry.

In the past few years, we have seen a significant growth in the threat to our trees and forests from pests and diseases. A more strategic approach is now needed and this year the Biosecurity Programme Board will bring forward proposals for management regimes and a biosecurity code of practice. We will continue to deal with a wide range of pests and diseases, working in partnership with scientists, landowners and other public bodies.

The plan also sets out how the Forestry Commission will improve how it works to ensure that it is an efficient, effective and sustainable organisation.

I welcome this plan and the commitment of the Forestry Commission across Great Britain to such a wide range of actions supporting delivery.

Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs

Introduction

This Corporate Plan describes the work the Forestry Commission does for all of Great Britain. It sets out its strategic direction and the specific actions it is taking forward in 2010/11. It also covers the work carried out by the FC's central support services.

Ministers have agreed that, whilst most of the FC's work is now done at country level, a number of the FC's functions are funded directly by Westminster and operated on a cross-GB basis by Corporate and Forestry Support Division. In this GB role, the FC provides advice and support to the UK Government and to the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales. These activities are covered in the first part of this plan.

In addition, central support services are provided to the entire organisation, funded as shared services by the users. Part two of this plan describes this part of our work.

Part 1

The Forestry Commission in Great Britain

The Forestry Commission in Great Britain

In our GB role, we support the sustainability of forests in the UK and internationally. We set sustainability standards, underpinned by a sound evidence base and authoritative information. We encourage good practice and support delivery through guidance, interpretation and expert advice. We develop and implement regulation at EU and GB levels to protect our trees, forests and timber from harmful pests and diseases.

We have a Board of Commissioners with duties and powers summarised in the Forestry Act as 'promoting the interests of forestry, the development of afforestation, the production and supply of timber and other forest products, the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the conservation of flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest.' Our GB work includes support for our governance structure and the implementation of central Government Initiatives.

At the current time, we are faced with two overarching priorities – climate change and ensuring the continued health of our trees and forests - and our priorities for these are set out separately. However, there is a close relationship between these areas and the rest of our work. This is managed by our specialist advisor and international policy teams, to ensure we take an integrated approach to delivery.

Forests and Climate Change

Climate change remains a huge global challenge. We will use our knowledge and expertise in playing a part in meeting this challenge, both as the government department responsible for forestry in England, Scotland and Wales, and as the largest single woodland manager in Britain. It is essential that we take whatever action is needed to ensure that our forests are planned and managed in ways that sustain their vital contribution to the economy, society and the environment.

There have been major steps in climate change policy across the UK in the past 12 months. The UK has passed world-leading legislation through the UK and Scotland Climate Change Acts. Work has begun to put in place policies and mechanisms to meet the targets set out in these Acts, through the Government publishing the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan in July 2009. It is, therefore, crucial that we raise awareness and understanding of the role that trees and forests can play in helping to meet government objectives on climate change.

A major step in this process was the publication in 2009 of an independent assessment of the science concerning forestry and climate change. "Combating Climate Change – a role for UK forests" was commissioned by the Forestry Commission and was written under the editorship of Professor Sir David Read lately Vice-President of the Royal Society. Known as the "Read Report", it provides the evidence to demonstrate the contribution of trees and woodlands to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions; how forests and timber sequester and store carbon, and how woodfuel and wood products substitute for the greenhouse gas emissions of fossil fuel-intensive materials. The report also sets out the contribution that trees and woodlands can make to helping society adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change.

Taking this work forward, the Forestry Commission will use the best available scientific evidence in making its contribution to the Government's climate change objectives. Both the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan and the Read Report stated the importance of having an enhanced programme of woodland creation. Our recent and ongoing work indicates that three building blocks are essential to this process: science, standards and incentives. The following actions will form the centrepiece of our work programme on climate change for the next 3 years.

Science

We have set up a Centre for Forestry and Climate Change within our research arm, Forest Research. The Centre is implementing major research programmes that we have commissioned on climate change mitigation and on adaptation. The future development of these programmes is being examined in the light of the Read Report. Further research activity will be developed where gaps in our knowledge and understanding are evident. This research effort will underpin the Centre's role as a knowledge hub on forestry and climate change.

Standards

Under the revisions to the UK Forestry Standard (see p12*), we are introducing for the first time a Guideline on Forestry and Climate Change. This will guide forest managers on how woodlands can be created and managed to deliver mitigation and adaptation benefits while ensuring sustainable forest management.

We will complete the development of a Code of Good Practice on Forest Carbon Projects in the UK. This code will provide assurance in the capacity of woodland creation to deliver effective mitigation, thereby increasing confidence among potential investors. The Code will ensure compliance with the UK Forestry Standard in order to meet the requirements of sustainable forest management. It will provide robust protocols for measuring carbon and will put in place rigorous processes for registering, validating and verifying claims of carbon uptake through woodland creation.

Policy & Funding Mechanisms

Investment by the private sector will be essential to fulfil the potential contribution that forestry can make to tackling climate change. Two issues are critical. (i) It is currently difficult for companies to credibly account for the benefits that result from their domestic woodland creation investments, including for example, the amount of carbon sequestered. This is a deterrent to those who might otherwise invest as part of their community or corporate social responsibility programmes. (ii) To achieve a

significant and sudden step-change in current planting rates, woodland investors and managers are likely to need a timely financial reward for the carbon sequestered.

We will continue to work with colleagues across Government on these issues and to examine whether existing policy mechanisms can play an increased role in enabling trees and woodlands to provide climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will use the findings of the Read Report to take forward the research programme of the Centre for Forestry and Climate Change in Forest Research.
- We will enhance understanding of forestry's role in tackling climate change by developing facts and figures on our website and in publications.
- We will provide guidance on the management of woodlands in a changing climate.
- We will launch a Code of Good Practice for Forest Carbon Projects, and put in place a process and bodies for accrediting such projects.
- We will continue to work with colleagues in DEFRA and DECC and with stakeholders to develop a policy framework that provides appropriate incentives for woodland creation.

Ensuring the continued health of our trees and forests

The table below details ten of the most potentially damaging pests, some of which are already present. Our science indicates that climate change will create the conditions for increasing pest activity¹, and we must now take a more strategic approach to forest and tree health. We have recently formed a Biosecurity Programme Board with membership drawn from a number of organisations with environmental interests in the private and voluntary sectors together with experts from the Forestry Commission and Forest Research.

¹ Combating Climate Change: A role for UK Forests Pages 85-92 www.tsoshop.co.uk

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>GB Status</u>	<u>Impact</u>	<u>Control</u>
8-toothed European spruce bark beetle	Insect	Absent (intercepted)	Significant tree mortality mainly spruce, a significant component of commercial forestry in GB.	Sanitation felling, strip and destroy bark
Acute Oak decline	Bacterial	present	Rapid death of oak trees – present mainly in the midlands, but spreading.	None known. Probably sanitation felling
Ash dieback	Fungus	absent	Causes wilting, dieback of branches and crown death.	None known. Probably sanitation felling
Bleeding Canker of Horse Chestnut	Bacteria	present	Causes death of horse chestnut, with up to 50% of Britain's trees symptomatic (based on 2007 survey).	None known. Some trees may recover
Citrus Longhorn Beetle	Insect (wood borer)	Absent (intercepted)	Extensive damage to urban and forest trees of a number of broadleaf genera. Timber value reduced.	Sanitation felling, chipping of tree and root system
Emerald Ash Borer	Insect (wood borer)	absent	Widespread mortality of ash and loss of timber value.	Sanitation felling, chipping of tree
Oak Processionary Moth	Moth	present	Major defoliator of oak with some mortality in peak periods of activity, and related public health issues. Trees weakened and prone to secondary attack by other pests.	Insectidal spray (larval stage), physical removal of nests
Pine Wood Nematode	Nematode	Absent (intercepted)	Major tree damage and mortality caused in Portugal. Less likely to have serious impact here in absence of suitable vector.	Sanitation felling
Red Band Needle Blight	Fungal	present	Some mortality and general loss of timber yield in pine. Main host Corsican pine no longer being planted commercially in GB.	None known
Sudden Oak death	Fungal-like	present	A range of trees and shrubs are susceptible, with significant number of Japanese larch, a recent new and sporulating host, killed.	Sanitation felling (sporulating trees) destruction of infected Rhododendron ponticum

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will work with the Biosecurity Programme Board to revise our strategy for dealing with pests and diseases including developing strategies for species choice and management regimes. We will also develop a new biosecurity code of practice.
- We will support an increased research effort into ways to deal with a number of other new and emerging threats, including Acute Oak Decline and Bleeding Canker of Horse Chestnut.
- We will work closely with key stakeholders in the affected Boroughs of London to pursue our eradication programme for Oak Processionary Moth.
- We will, in collaboration with private forestry groups, investigate cost effective ways of addressing the threat from Red Band Needle Blight of Pine.
- We will continue to work closely with FERA, in England and Wales, and Scottish Government officials to combat the threat from *Phytophthora ramorum* and *P. kernoviae*. This will focus, in particular, on the new and significant step change with the discovery that Japanese larch is a new and sporulating host, and the increased risk to forests throughout Great Britain.
- We will continue with our investigations into Pine-tree Lappet moth to establish whether it is a native species and, through climate modelling, determine its potential as a tree pest.
- We will continue to work with officials in the European Commission and the member States, as well as the wood packaging material manufacturing industry, to ensure a properly managed extension of treated wood packaging material requirements for intra-Community trade to address the risk from Pine Wood Nematode.

Setting the sustainability standards for forestry in the UK

The United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS) is the principal document which sets out the approach of the governments in the UK to sustainable forest management (SFM). As the foundation for sustainable forestry in the United Kingdom, the UKFS sets standards, provides a basis for regulation and monitoring (including national and international reporting); and indicates sources of guidance. Together with the national forestry strategies in the four constituent countries of UK, the UKFS is the key element of the National Forest Programme. This is a national overview of forestry and statement of intent that links the delivery of international obligations on sustainable forest management with policies on implementation.

The UK approach is based on internationally recognised science and best practice. The Forestry Guidelines support the UKFS by capturing the essence of the various elements of forest management in further detail, setting out how the requirements can be met, and providing advice on forest management. The UKFS & Guidelines have an important function as the basis of forestry practice in the UK for the independent UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS), which is used for voluntary independent certification (www.UKWAS.org.uk).

Last year we consulted on revisions of the UKFS and the 7 UK Forestry Guidelines. The new suite links UKFS and the Guidelines more closely by incorporating forest management requirements from Guidelines in the UKFS and strengthens the role of forest planning. This revision will clarify the status of the UKFS, and the assurances provided by meeting the standard through the regulatory process. It provide an explicit statement of all the forestry requirements for land-managers, in common with statements for other land uses supported by EU rural development measures and include domestic and international initiatives on climate change and the role woodlands can play in mitigation and adaptation. We have also incorporated recent developments in the scientific understanding of forestry, in legislation and international agreements, and in the way forestry activity is monitored and reported.

Sustainability standards apply both to the forests and the produce from them. The European Commission has proposed a new regulation to minimise the risk of illegally obtained timber or timber products being placed on the EU market. Known as the "Due Diligence Regulation for Timber and Timber Products" the regulation is currently being debated and refined in Brussels and is expected to be in force by 2012. We have been working closely with Defra officials, who take the lead on the regulation. The incidence of illegality in forestry is very low in the UK and we are particularly

keen to ensure that the new regulation can be accommodated domestically within the existing regulatory mechanisms; namely felling licences and forest plans. In this respect, revision of the UK Forestry Standard, (UKFS) is timely as it provides a useful opportunity to look at our regulatory procedures and make any necessary adjustments. We will also work with the regulatory teams from the four countries of the UK to minimise the impacts of the new regulation.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will amend the UK Forestry Standard and Guidelines following public consultation and publish the revised standard for sustainable forest management in the UK in the autumn of 2010.
- We will assist the Forestry Commission in England, Scotland and Wales and the Forest Service in Northern Ireland in developing new risk-based, cost-effective, and transparent approaches to implementing sustainable forest management through the new UK Forestry Standard.
- We will work closely with DEFRA officials and the timber industry to ensure a satisfactory outcome for the UK on the proposed EU "Due Diligence Regulation for Timber and Timber Products".
- We will continue to work with the UK Woodland Assurance partnership (UKWAS) on a revision of the UKWAS standard to help facilitate independent voluntary certification within the UK.

Providing the underpinning evidence and supporting delivery

Our GB and country policies need to be responsive to future challenges such as the impacts of climate change and the changing needs of society. One of our core functions is to provide the evidence base to support this. We deploy our science budget to implement our Science and Innovation Strategy for British Forestry. We have recently refreshed the strategy, and have increased its emphasis on communications and knowledge transfer.

Through the strategy, we will work with our other government partners and our research providers to:

- Provide a firm base of scientific evidence for effective policy and practice.
- Disseminate that knowledge as widely and effectively as we can; and
- Develop an excellent and well networked body of forest researchers.

As a result, we will be able to:

- Support the contribution of forests to the challenge of climate change.
- Better safeguard the health of UK forests and trees.
- Provide authoritative information on the state of Britain's forests.
- Ensure that woodlands contribute fully to a diverse and resilient environment; and
- Enable woodlands to provide the greatest level of benefit to society.

Our Forest Research agency will be our main supplier but we will also commission work from external suppliers with particular areas of expertise.

Actions for 2010/11:

Ensuring decisions are underpinned by sound science and analysis

- We will implement our refreshed Science and Innovation Strategy for British Forestry.
- We will develop a process for offering an annual open call for PhD studentships, in partnership with other organisations.

Providing authoritative information

- We will develop a programme of technical publications to support the revised UK Forestry Standard and Guidelines.
- We will complete the compilation of the definitive GB forest map.
- We will re-launch our catalogue of research, and publish our annual programmes of research on the internet.

Robust evidence base

- We will research the carbon credentials of timber to produce an evidence base to support greater use of GB wood products within the construction sector.
- We will collaborate with Defra on a joint research programme on woodland birds.
- We will sponsor a European-level research conference on Children in the Natural Outdoors to take place in early summer in Scotland.

- We will run an Art and Forestry event with external participants from universities, arts councils and the Arts and Humanities Research Council at Yorkshire Sculpture Park in June 2010.
- We will run a workshop on soils, soil carbon, and land use change for government partners and the wider research community.

Promoting the sustainability of forests globally

The UK has a number of strategic international objectives in the areas of forests, climate change, the natural environment, sustainable development and poverty reduction. The foundation of forestry's contribution to help achieve these objectives is sustainable forest management. Therefore, the Forestry Commission's role is to promote how forests contribute effectively to sustainable development and thereby support the UK Government's priorities on international forestry and climate change.

In Europe the political framework and standards for the sustainable management of Europe's forests are set by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). We represent the UK Government in the MCPFE and work with countries across Europe to support and review the process and explore the added value of developing a legally binding agreement on the sustainable management of forests in Europe.

We provide forestry expertise and champion the role of forests in delivering EU policies and strategies by representing the UK's forestry priorities in Europe and advising the European Commission through their Standing Forestry Committee. The recent CAP Health Check recognised climate change as one of the emerging challenges for Rural Development and the mid-term evaluation of the Rural Development Regulation during 2010 provides an opportunity to highlight forestry's role in tackling climate change and reflect it in future EU policies/programmes for land use.

The FC will continue to play a leading role in promoting the sustainable management of forests globally, through sharing UK experience of sustainable forest management and implementation of actions to achieve the four UN global objectives on forests adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007¹.

² The Global Objectives on Forests aim to:

- Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management (SFM), including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;
- Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people;
- Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products derived from sustainably managed forests; and
- Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilise significantly- increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

In our role as chair of the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration, we work with IUCN and other international partners to promote the restoration of forests around the world and share best practice. Over the next 18 months, the Global Partnership is committed to scaling up restoration activity globally and to producing a major report on its contribution to tackling climate change and the other environmental, social and economic benefits it can deliver.

The Forestry Commission is pleased to be hosting the 18th Commonwealth Forestry Conference in Edinburgh in June 2010. In support of our restoration activity the theme of the Conference is “Restoring the Commonwealth’s Forests: Tackling Climate Change”, and we are keen to focus the event on exploring how countries can use forest restoration to help the Commonwealth’s citizens adapt to and mitigate against a changing climate.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will work with partners to expand the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration. The Partnership will produce an action programme, building on the success of the global assessment of degraded landscapes, the learning network and economic appraisal of forests’ contribution to their restoration.
- We will identify UK best practice to contribute to the 20th Session of FAO’s Committee on Forestry in October 2010; and the 9th session of the UN Forum on Forests in January 2011 under the theme of “Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication”.
- We will co-ordinate and develop the UK’s position on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe and on the future strategic direction of the MCPFE political process, as well as addressing key thematic areas, in preparation for the 6th Ministerial Conference in Oslo in 2011.
- We will follow up the European Commission’s mid-term review of the EU Forest Action Plan to develop a future Plan post 2011 and consider the future of the EU Forestry Strategy, including the role of the Standing Forestry Committee.
- We will co-ordinate and develop the UK’s position on the European Commission’s Green Paper on forest protection and information; contribute to the UK’s input to the European Commission’s mid term evaluation of the Rural Development Regulation.
- We will plan, organise and deliver a successful Commonwealth Forestry Conference in June 2010 and follow up to ensure effective actions across the Commonwealth.

Corporate Governance

Forestry is a devolved matter. Forestry Commission England, Forestry Commission Scotland and Forestry Commission Wales report directly to their appropriate Minister, providing advice on policy and implementing that policy within the relevant country. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs also has responsibility for the GB activities described in this plan. The Commissioners' programmes to deliver each country's forestry strategy are set out in Corporate Plans for England, Scotland and Wales. These programmes are directed and financed by the three administrations to which the FC is directly accountable.

We have a Board of Commissioners that has duties and powers prescribed by statute. It consists of a Chair and ten other Forestry Commissioners, who are appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of Ministers. We also have an Executive Board through which the Director General and the senior team ensure the effective management of the Commission by providing leadership and setting direction for the Commission as an organisation. During 2009/10 we took the opportunity to review and refine the performance, functions and remit of the Board of Forestry Commissioners and Executive Board and we will be taking this forward in 2010/11.

Our Corporate Services team ensures that the FC's statutory framework and obligations are fulfilled and provides support to the Forestry Commissioners and the Executive Board. The team also implements Government-wide initiatives including Open Information, Data Protection and Better Regulation and ensures the security of FC systems and assets.

We also have an independent Internal Audit unit, set up within the FC to give assurance to the Accounting Officers, evaluate its systems and make recommendations. It is part of the corporate governance framework and functions by examining and evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of all other elements of the framework.

Better Regulation

The Forestry Commission is playing a full part in the Westminster Government's initiative to ease the burden that government regulation imposes on business. Although we exceeded the five-year target set for us in year one, we have continued to look at what we might do for our stakeholders. Our fourth Simplification Plan, *'Making Regulation Work for Everyone'*³ was published in December 2009. This sets out additional measures that will potentially save timber hauliers and contractors an additional £60,000 each year through further developments in e-business. Although this is a relatively small sum, it is significant to the small businesses affected and brings the total savings to our stakeholders since this work began to around 30%.

³ <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infd-6gaeqa>

We are committed to good enforcement policies and procedures in line with the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006. In line with this, in January 2010 we published our Enforcement Policy Statement, which is available on our website. We are also committed to the principles of the Cabinet Office's Enforcement Concordat.

In October 2009, the Government announced a target to reduce the regulatory burden on business by a further £6.5 billion annually by 2015. In line with this ambition, consideration is being given to simplification by themes, rather than on a department-by-department basis. The FC will be part of the Natural Environment theme, which will consider the full range of environmental regulation. In addition we would wish to work with colleagues in other Departments to reduce the overall burden of regulations on the forest sector.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will consider how the Forestry Commission can contribute towards meeting the new targets, either directly or indirectly through collaboration with other Departments.

Our regulatory functions

By agreement with the devolved administrations, the FC develops and implements regulation at EU and GB level in two areas: Plant Health and Forest Reproductive Material. The first has the vital task of protecting GB and EU forests and timber from harmful pests and diseases. The regulation of Forest Reproductive Material (seeds, plants and cuttings) provides a system to ensure that planting stock is traceable throughout the collection and production process.

Plant Health

The Plant Health Service, with support from Forest Research, protects our trees and woodlands against the entry of harmful pests and diseases from overseas and controls those that may become established. We also protect forests elsewhere in the world from the movement of harmful pests from and through Great Britain, notably on controls on the use of wood packaging material used in international trade.

Forest Reproductive Material

The Forest Reproductive Material Regulations provide a system of control for the seed, cuttings and planting stock used for forestry purposes in Great Britain. We maintain a control system, in accordance with an EU Directive, which ensures that all reproductive material remains separated and clearly identified throughout the entire plant production process from collector, to grower and to end user. To ensure compliance with the Regulations we carry out inspections at various stages in the process.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will consult with industry over the introduction of new standards for testing seed against quality standards.
- We will provide a comprehensive forestry response to the EC plant health regime review.
- We will review and consult on our fee structure for plant health inspections to ensure it continues to comply with EU legislation.

Funding the GB activities

Our GB activities are funded as part of the Forestry Commission Request for Resources within the Defra vote. Some of our work, notably import inspections and export certification for Plant Health, operates on a full cost recovery basis.

The corporate services described in Part 2 are organised centrally but paid for by the countries. The cost of these services is included in the Corporate Plans for each country and Forest Research.

Source and Use of Funds

£m	2009-10 Budget	2010-11 Indicative
SOURCE OF FUNDS		
GB Total Parliamentary funding	21.9	20.7
USE OF FUNDS		
Science and evidence – spend with providers	11.2	11.1
Forests and Climate change	0.8	0.9
Biosecurity and plant health	1.0	1.0
Standards, evidence and knowledge transfer	2.0	1.8
Promoting the sustainability of forests globally	0.7	0.7
Governance and other corporate services	0.6	0.6
Depreciation and other non cash	5.7	4.5
GB Total Expenditure	21.9	20.7

Part 2 – Corporate Services

Improving how we work – an efficient, effective and sustainable organisation

Improving how we work – an efficient, effective and sustainable organisation

The Forestry Commission operates across Great Britain (GB) as a cross-border public authority. This allows FC England, FC Scotland and FC Wales to benefit from the economies of scale that a GB-wide body is able to offer with regard to support services. This includes services on finance, human resource management, information services, forestry operations, communications and internal audit. These services are organised centrally and paid for by the countries.

People

As 2010 is the final year of the current People Strategy, a full review will be undertaken, with a view to publishing a new People Strategy in 2011. However, we will continue to work on the priority streams, which will include continued implementation and bedding-in of all new initiatives. These cover for example leadership development, embedding diversity and simplifying HR processes and practices.

HR Operations

We will continue to review our HR policies and processes to ensure they are fit for purpose, modern, efficient, effective and communicated in plain English. The priority areas for the coming year are harassment and bullying, improving performance and attendance management and a review of how HR information is stored, displayed and accessed by staff. Changes to the Civil Service Compensation Scheme will also mean amendments to our processes and guidance ensuring both staff and managers have the necessary support and guidance when implementing the new rules.

We will continue to review our Resourcing strategies to ensure we attract and recruit the right people at the right time and as part of this we will be monitoring the changes our new electronic recruitment system will bring. Another change taking place over the coming year is the tender and introduction of a new HR and payroll system, which aims to further improve our efficiency and effectiveness along with our management information capabilities.

Learning & Development

Investors in People (IiP) re-accreditation is due in June 2010 and we are currently supporting the organisation to ensure it is best placed for this exercise in order to retain IiP recognition.

We will continue the roll out of our 3 levels of management development, with the specific introduction of Level 3 for senior managers in pay bands one and two in 2010. We will run our first Senior Leadership Programme assessment centre in the summer 2010. On technical training we are currently working with units to formalise the

identification and collation of training needs and ensure we provide the right training at the right time. Finally, all existing and newly developed training events will incorporate relevant equality and diversity material as part of embedding diversity into our technical and management training.

Equality and Diversity

In our People Strategy, we seek to better reflect the society we serve as a Government department. Diversity is central to good people management and modern organisational development. The Diversity Team's main task is to ensure that the FC remains compliant with Equality and Diversity legislation. To that end, this year we published the FC's second Disability Equality Scheme (DES). The DES was prepared after initial engagement with a broad range of disabled individuals and groups representing the interests of people with a wide range of disabilities.

Three annual Monitoring Reports (Disability, Race and Gender) were produced. Although very slight increases in our workforce diversity were reported, these were not statistically significant. The Monitoring Reports do not indicate anything discriminatory in the FC's processes and procedures. Rather, the lack of diversity occurs at job application stage. To that end, we will build on the work we are doing to raise the profile of the FC in the lifestyle press targeted at diverse communities (e.g. Able and Roots magazines) and at events (e.g. Black History Month, Stonewall, Diversity Jobs and Opportunities Fair, FC's Graduate Recruitment). We have developed four levels of diversity training and we will continue this to ensure that all of our staff, including new entrants to the organisation, receive appropriate diversity training.

Work in progress includes a project to improve self-declaration of disability, prior to joining the JobCentre Plus' "Two Ticks" Scheme and also a series of Managers' Fact Sheets. The first two of these on sexual orientation and Religion and Belief have been completed and commended by Stonewall Scotland and the Interfaith Council. We have also engaged with the Recreation and Procurement teams and will produce guidance to ensure that diversity issues are included and appropriately dealt with across the FC's business.

In summary, we will continue to support the organisation in mainstreaming diversity throughout the FC. However, the team's first priority remains maintaining legal compliance. It is likely the Single Equality Bill will have a considerable impact on how the FC delivers its Equality and Diversity responsibilities and this will be a challenge for us in 2010.

Health, Safety and Environment

We put a lot of effort into managing health and safety across the whole business. Particular attention is paid to those who work in a high-risk environment. The number of reportable accidents has progressively reduced and now stands at 0.57 per 100 employees. We will continue to work to further reduce this through a framework to

manage health and safety, audit systems that measure health and safety performance and improved risk assessments.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will review and revise the Gender Equality Scheme.
- We will publish annual Equality Monitoring Reports.
- We will refresh our Bullying & Harassment policy & procedures.
- We will review attendance management policy & procedures.
- We will review how HR information is presented to staff especially the HR Intranet site.
- We will tender for new Payroll/HR MIF System.
- We will introduce Management Development Level 3.
- We will implement Senior Leadership Programme.

Finance and Accounting Services

Finance functions

Our Finance and Accounting Services (FAS) provide professional accounting advice and guidance to country-based finance teams, particularly in relation to fixed asset accounting and the reporting requirements under the government's Financial Reporting Manual. We work in partnership with customers to deliver effective, cost efficient, high quality solutions to finance and accounting related issues.

FAS co-ordinates the development and maintenance of business planning and monitoring systems for the organisation. The Systems team implements improvements to corporate financial and commercial systems, including the promotion of efficient business practices within the forest industries across GB. We provide corporate credit management and banking services are provided to the internal customer base. Effective procurement policies are essential and FAS provides guidance for all FC staff on public procurement legislation, contract management and other legal issues. FAS supports the countries in the development of appropriate efficiency planning linked to meeting their financial targets.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will support countries in the implementation of accounting policies and procedures under International Financial Reporting Standards.
- We will complete the automation of transaction based services to release resources for priority developments.
- We will continue to expand use of data exchange and other e-business solutions for customers and suppliers.
- We will develop further the procurement function to ensure best practice through the exchange of knowledge, ideas and innovative solutions.

Information Services

The Information Services (IS) organisation is responsible for the development and delivery of information technology solutions to the Forestry Commission. Our Information Systems Strategy for 2010-2015 establishes following as priorities:

- **Resolve the outstanding operational problems**

There are a number of day-to-day problems with the ICT infrastructure that impact the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. These issues will be resolved as a matter of priority.

- **Manage business and IT risks**

The Forestry Commission is highly dependent on the ICT systems and infrastructure for its day-to-day activities. IS are re-assessing the provision of these key systems to minimise the risk of business disruption in the event of a potentially damaging incident.

- **Improve customer service management**

IS will develop and implement a set of service management processes to ensure that day-to-day service delivery better meets customer expectations.

- **Better align IS with the business priorities**

IS will begin a review of business systems across the organisation and implement portfolio management processes to ensure that limited resources are focused on those areas that deliver maximum business benefit.

- **Establish clear IS governance**

We will further develop governance structures to ensure that IS decision making is fully aligned with the business priorities and to ensure clarity for the authority and responsibility of IS decisions.

Our Actions for next year concentrate on the key building blocks needed to deliver the Information Systems strategy.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will implement a common managed desktop solution across the organisation.
- We will design and implement a robust business systems infrastructure to reduce business risks and improve service availability.
- We will develop service management processes to improve customer service delivery.
- We will implement portfolio management processes to ensure resources are directed to those areas that deliver maximum business value.

Forestry Business Units

The Forestry Business Units (FBUs) provide essential services to forestry operations in England, Scotland and Wales in areas where a common approach across geographies is cost effective. These services comprise Civil Engineering (FCE), Mechanical Engineering (MES), Plant & Seed Supply (PSSB) and Renewable Energy Development (REBU). Additionally FBU support Country objectives by adding value in such areas as specialist bridge structures and other innovations, for example, such as low carbon emission vehicles and road condition surveying technology.

Renewable Energy

The Renewable Energy Business Unit has increased its effective support of RE development objectives in England and Scotland particularly over the past year. To meet the increasing importance of this area, there will be a new internal business unit in FC Scotland, Forest Renewables, which will promote and manage the development of all wind and hydro energy resources on the national forest estate in Scotland.

Efficiencies

The FBU remit is to deliver these services efficiently and effectively to agreed financial targets and other performance indicators. The FBU Value for Money Delivery Plan will deliver an accumulated saving of over £2 million over the three year CSR07 period. FBU are now midway through this programme and are confident the savings will be achieved or exceeded.

Review of the Business Units

Following the creation of Forest Renewables there will be a review of the services provided by the current Forestry Business Units. The review will define current business needs for these services, examine how efficiently and effectively they are being met, and consider future options for provision.

Actions for 2010/11:

Renewable Energy

- We will conclude the negotiation stage of the Hydro and Wind renewable energy development offer in Scotland.
- We will ensure wind development projects undertaken with Partnerships for Renewables proceed to plan in England and Scotland.
- We will obtain planning permission and grid connection for two hydro schemes in Scotland.
- We will work in co-operation with other Government departments to assist in RE development.

Forestry Civil Engineering

- We will implement the Forest Road/Access Condition Survey using ground penetrating radar with a qualitative assessment and video of each section of road to identify deficiencies, target resources and reduce the cost of both surveys and maintenance.
- We will continue the programme of six-yearly principal bridge inspections on the 2,500 bridges on the forest estate.
- We will promote the use of FCE's stress laminated timber footbridges for both internal and external customers.

Mechanical Engineering Services

- We will monitor performance of the wood fuel heating systems and use this to evaluate further use of wood fuel for heating of workshops.
- We will monitor development of electric vehicles and other technologies and the implications this may have for FC.
- We will continue to encourage the use of the smallest, fittest for purpose vehicles across the FC and actively support initiatives such as the use of video/tele-

conferencing, all with the single aim of reducing the miles travelled, CO₂ emissions and reducing the environmental impact of our fleet.

Plant and Seed Supply

- We will increase the availability of Sitka spruce planting material as cuttings taken from genetically improved material meet our customer requirements.
- We will adjust nursery programmes to respond to the change in the Countries' requirement for pine species that has arisen from the threat of Red Band Needle Blight.

Business Sustainability

The Business Sustainability Team is responsible for setting policy and helping to deliver the environmental management of the Forestry Commission corporate business. The sustainable management of forests managed by the FC on behalf of the 3 country administrations is independently certified under the UKWAS scheme. However UKWAS does not address the sustainable management of what is sometimes referred to as our 'back office functions'. Essentially, business sustainability is not just about how we manage our forests, but about how we manage ourselves.

We are continuing the work from previous years' to develop systems for gathering the data needed to manage these activities. We have introduced targets to reduce emissions from offices and travel, and are looking to reduce the volumes of waste we generate and increase the amounts we re use and recycle. During 2009 we completed work on our Environmental Management System. This is now in place and guidance has been issued to all parts of the Forestry Commission setting out responsibilities and targets. During 2010 all units will conduct local environmental reviews which will form the next stage in securing ISO 14001:2004 accreditation.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will achieve accreditation of our Environmental Management System to ISO 14001:2004. We shall aim to achieve this for Silvan House, Northern Research Station and Alice Holt by late spring 2010 and then move on with accreditation for the three countries later in the year and early in 2011.
- We will monitor our use of energy in buildings to achieve an annual saving of 3% against a baseline from 2009-10.
- We will monitor our travel and transport in order to achieve annual savings of 5% in carbon emissions from administrative travel. The savings will be made against

the performance figures for 2009-10.

- We will establish a baseline figure for our waste arisings from all of our activities except forest management and a baseline figure for the volume of that waste which is recycled.

Inventory, Forecasting and Operational Support

Inventory, Forecasting and Operational Support (IFOS) was established in April 2009.

IFOS is responsible for:

- **The National Forest Inventory of Great Britain**
Accurate, up-to-date information about the size, distribution, composition and condition of Britain's woodlands is essential for developing and monitoring policies and guidance for their sustainable management. We are now surveying for a new National Forest Inventory, and surveyors will be visiting 15,000 1-hectare plots of woodland across England, Scotland and Wales between 2009 and 2014.
- **'Forester GIS'**
We support and develop Forester GIS, the FC's corporate forest management information system.
- **Management and dissemination of corporate spatial data**
Our Mapping & Geodata Services help ensure that frontline FC staff have access to the map and remote sensing information necessary for the development and delivery of sound plans and programmes.
- **Operational Best Practice**
We develop, maintain and support the promotion of operational best practice, taking account of changes in legislative, policy or operating environments.

National Forest Inventory

The work we do on the National Forest Inventory contributes to the GB Objective "Providing the underpinning evidence and supporting delivery". It will improve our understanding of Britain's trees and forests and the contribution they are and could make to delivery of climate change commitments. The modeling capacity we have enables us to take quality assured inventory information and create realistic scenarios

for developing and reporting on delivery of forestry policy and programmes at GB, Country and Regional scales. A key deliverable from the National Forest Inventory programme will be a landmark 'State of the Nation's Forests' report in 2015.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will complete the National Forest Inventory map of Great Britain. We will report on woodland area and how it has changed in each country.
- We will develop (for publication in late 2011) GB, Country and Regional assessments of conifer growing stock (as timber, biomass and carbon) to defined confidence intervals.
- We will develop (for publication in late 2011) forecasts of production and stock change under different scenarios.
- We will develop plans to enable the publication of spatial metadata and major FC datasets to help meet the objectives of the European Inspire Legislation and of the UK Making Public Data Public initiative.
- We will complete, test and deliver GIS tools that will help front line management of our recreation, conservation and heritage assets and services.

Corporate Communications

In our Corporate Communications team, we provide the communications resource for GB and shared service functions. We also provide services to support the communications functions in the countries and FR. The support functions provided are: the photographic service and library, internet; internal communications, public enquiries and media summary.

Our priorities for the next 3 years are:

- **Climate change**

The pace of change in our understanding of climate change and forests' role in mitigation and adaptation is increasing and so our communications on the subject must be constantly reviewed and updated. We will assess the impact of our current climate change communications strategy and revise it to reflect the considerable progress already made, and in the light of the findings of the recent UK assessment: 'Combating Climate Change - a role for UK forests'.

- **European communications strategy**

The EU Standing Forestry Committee has committed to producing a European strategy for communicating forestry. The Forestry Commission has helped to steer this initiative from the outset and we will continue to make a full contribution to the formulation of the strategy.

- **2011 – International Year of the Forest**

The UN has proclaimed 2011 as the International Year of the Forest and has invited governments, UN bodies, NGOs, and the private sector to make concerted efforts to raise awareness of the importance of forests. The Forestry Commission is keen to play its part and we will be making plans for our involvement.

- **Website**

The FC website is a vital communications channel and its breadth of information and functionality continue to grow in response to new opportunities and user demands. The site will be redesigned to improve its usefulness to its increasingly diverse range of users. The new design will be based on substantial user testing and feedback.

Actions for 2010/11:

- We will revise our climate change communications strategy.
- We will contribute to the formulation of a communications strategy for Europe's forests.
- We will make plans for our involvement in the International Year of the Forest.
- We will re-design and improve our website.

Meeting our customers' needs

Anyone with comments on this Plan, or suggestions for future Plans is welcome to write to the address below.

If you need this publication in an alternative format, for example in large print or in another language, please contact:

The Diversity Team
Forestry Commission
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Road
EDINBURGH
EH12 7AT

Tel: 0131-314-6575

E-mail: diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk