



## UK Forest Partnership for Action

A new partnership within the UK of Government, business and environmental groups to promote sustainable development in the forest sector, both at home and internationally.





The Partnership is supported by the following, representing business, environmental groups and the Government:

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Department for International Development (DFID)

Forest Industries Development Council

Forestry Commission

Kingfisher plc

Welsh Assembly Government

Northern Ireland Forest Service

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Scottish Executive

Timber Trade Federation

The Woodland Trust

WWF-UK

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## Introduction

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) marks the 10th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit. The UN General Assembly has called for this Summit to reinvigorate, at the highest political level, the global commitment towards the achievement of sustainable development. WSSD provides an opportunity to give fresh impetus to the international sustainable development process, setting out a forward-looking agenda.

The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio drew international attention to the state of the world's forests, and produced the world's first global agreement on forests. The Rio Statement of Forest Principles pledged parties to more sustainable use of forest resources. Rio was a milestone and important progress has been made since then in international forestry policy. A good deal of common ground has been gained. We now have a much clearer global consensus and shared understanding of sustainable forest management. However, follow-up action has not been as effective as we would have liked. The world's natural forests continue to be converted to agriculture and other land uses, with the rate of deforestation globally estimated at 14.6 million hectares a year during the 1990s.

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) provides a forum for multilateral dialogue on forest issues. The UK has been playing a leading role in international negotiations on forests, notably through the UNFF but also through the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance process, and the G8 Action Programme on Forests.

## Dialogue to Action

We acknowledge that we need dialogue between governments through the UNFF and other international processes. But, dialogue is easy – action is a bigger challenge. Ten years on from Rio, we need stakeholders to commit to practical actions to deliver real improvements.

*"We can all agree on the contribution that forests can make to wider global issues of economic development, poverty eradication, environmental degradation and sustainable livelihoods. But raising the profile on international, political and policy agendas is of little value if we cannot deliver on the actions that we agree are needed."*

Elliot Morley MP, Forestry Minister  
UK Statement to UN Forum on Forests  
New York, March 2002

To make progress, we have to forge new partnerships for delivery between government, business, non-government organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. In 2001 the Prime Minister launched partnerships for the delivery of sustainable development in five sectors - finance, tourism, water and sanitation, energy and forestry. These initiatives have been pioneering new ways of co-operation.

### Preparations for the World Summit

In preparation for the WSSD, the UK Government, the devolved administrations, the forestry industry and environmental groups in the UK have been working in partnership to develop actions to promote sustainable development in the forestry sector, both at home and internationally.

The forestry initiative has six areas of activity. The first three areas link the Government's international efforts to combat illegal logging, which we hope to advance with international partners at WSSD; actions at home to require government departments to seek to source timber products from sustainable and legal sources; and efforts to promote greater uptake of the certification of forest management and the delivery of certified wood to the marketplace.

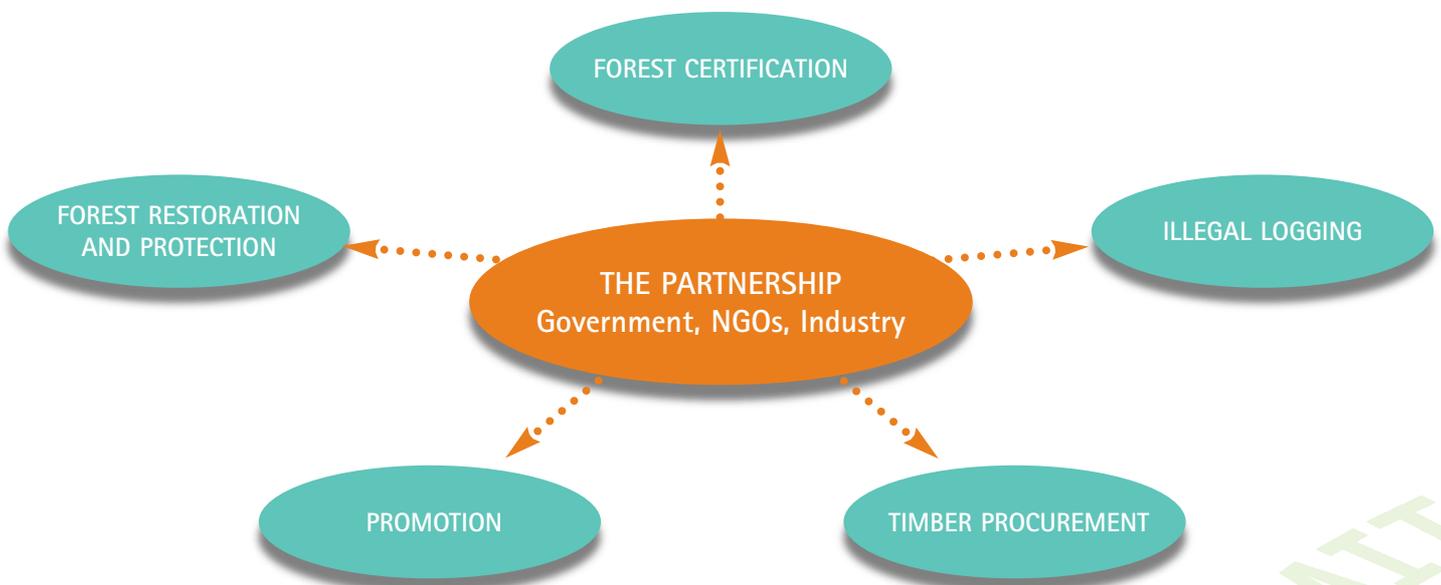
In the fourth area of activity, the UK business sector is, through the Forest Industries Development Council, preparing a sustainability strategy which will set out the commitment of the forestry and forest products sector to sustainable development. The strategy covers the whole wood chain, from growing through to timber processing, with a strong emphasis on the forest products sector, including renewable energy. It will reinforce the social, environmental and economic attributes of wood as a highly sustainable choice of material.

The fifth area of activity is developing an international partnership on forest restoration, building on the UK's experience of nearly 100 years of restoring forests. The global initiative aims to integrate biological diversity conservation and sustainable use, contributing to the implementation of programmes of the UN Forum on Forests, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other international programmes.

Finally, the Government is preparing a statement on sustainable forestry as part of the UK's National Forest Programme. This will set out the UK's international commitments on sustainable forestry. Forestry is a devolved subject and policies and programmes for implementing sustainable forest management are explained in country strategies for England, Scotland and Wales. A strategy for Northern Ireland is currently being prepared.

## Forest Partnership for Action

The partners developing the forestry sector initiative have agreed to continue working together as a Partnership for Action. This will draw on our experience in the UK of building partnerships to deliver sustainable forest management, both in the UK and internationally. The partners have agreed the following priority areas for action:



## Actions

The following tables set out our commitments and the actions that we intend to take in the areas of **Forest Certification**, **Forest Restoration and Protection**, **Illegal Logging** and **Timber Procurement**. The partners to the initiative aim to develop a **Promotion Programme** following the outcome of the World Summit.

## Forest Certification

**Issue:** Forest certification improves forest management and underpins promotion of wood as an environmentally-friendly and sustainably-produced renewable material. It provides a tool to ensure that all the benefits that woods provide are delivered in a responsible way. That they are objectively assessed by independent audits and as such give a verifiable measure of sustainable development.

After a successful start uptake of certification has slowed. There is insufficient awareness and promotion of certification. Increasing the uptake of certification will require action from all partners – government, business and NGOs.

Forest certification has important links with other action areas in the Partnership Action Plan – Promotion of Wood, Timber Procurement and Illegal Logging.

**Commitment:** The Partnership is committed to encouraging the uptake of credible certification of forest management, and the delivery of certified wood to the marketplace and to achieve recognition of all the benefits provided by certification to society. Initial targets of increasing the certified UK forest area from 40 to 60% and the percentage of output that is certified from 60 to 80%, are proposed over the next 5 years. These targets will be kept under review, and will be updated as individual targets emerge from the four countries.

**Achievements:**

- Consensus agreement of a UK certification standard (UKWAS) that has the support of all stakeholders and achievement of equivalence with the Forest Stewardship Council GB standard.
- A unique partnership of stakeholders representing industry, environmental and social groups have worked together to develop and implement a forest certification standard – the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.
- Uptake of 40% of forest area and over 60% of output from UK forests.
- 237 FSC chain of custody certificates allowing delivery of the FSC label on forest products.

**Challenges:**

- Increase uptake of forest certification, in particular for small and medium sized woods.
- Achieve financial and institutional recognition of the non-timber benefits of certified woodland.
- Significantly increase the certified output from UK forests to strengthen efforts to use certification as a mechanism to promote the selection of wood as a highly sustainable choice of material.
- Tackle problem of certified wood losing its certified status due to incomplete chain of custody.
- Increase demand for credibly certified products.

**Actions:**

- Assist other countries that are considering certification. Given the market domination of imports we need to grow the certified supply to help underpin promotion of wood.
- The Partnership for Action will promote and encourage others to promote all the benefits of certification against UKWAS and to look at ways of removing the barriers to achieving certification by developing an action plan within 6 months.
- Such actions will be measured by achievement of the following 5-year targets:
  - 60% of woodlands are certified against the UKWAS.
  - 80% of production is certified against the UKWAS.
  - Members of UKWAS together with government departments and local authorities have a policy of progressively purchasing wood and wood products from credibly certified sources.
  - Small woodland owners no longer perceive certification to be unduly expensive or bureaucratic.

## Forest Restoration and Protection

**Issue:** The continuing deforestation and degradation of the world's forest resource remains a major concern, and increased fragmentation jeopardises the survival of forests and the services they provide. Historic degradation of our woodland resource has left us with little natural forest cover – ancient woodlands cover only 2% of the land area. This remaining area is threatened by further changes in land use, and the potential impacts of climate change. The quality and area of native woodland needs to be increased in the UK, with a focus on improving the levels of biodiversity and other benefits. Areas of new native woodland should also be developed, in particular as extensions to existing sites.

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**Commitment:** The Partnership is committed to the restoration, protection and expansion of native woodlands in the UK as well as to promoting the restoration and protection of forests and their biodiversity globally. The Partnership will refer to the country forestry strategies and promotes the implementation of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, mainly through the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

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**Achievements:**

- Implementation of programmes for native woodland conservation, restoration, and expansion.
- Development of country forestry strategies, and UK biodiversity targets through the UKBAP for native woodland protection, restoration, improvement and expansion.
- Publication of *The UK Forestry Standard* for sustainable forest management in 1998.
- Initiatives at the landscape scale for restoration and habitat creation.
- UK Government supported a Workshop on Forest Landscape Restoration held in Costa Rica in March 2002.
- Protected area networks well-developed.

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**Challenges:**

- Globally and domestically promote and support policies and programmes to expand and restore forests and the range of goods and services necessary to maintain biological diversity, ecosystem integrity and livelihood security.
- External pressures of development, agriculture, climate change and unsustainable management threaten forests and their biodiversity and other services.
- Protected areas not fully effective due to fragmentation and resource constraints.
- Need to improve recording of ancient woodland cover and condition.
- Continued loss of ancient woodland.
- Continued loss of skilled workforce and local industries.
- Need for cultural shift to sustainable forest management.

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**Actions:**

- Contribute to development and exchange, of concepts, policies, programmes, research, knowledge, at international, UK and country levels, drawing on UK experience that can be adopted elsewhere.
- Support for IUCN/WWF international initiative on forest landscape restoration, including a preparatory meeting in Edinburgh in September 2002.
- Help to further develop programmes for forest restoration and appropriate native woodland expansion at country, regional, and local levels.
- Further develop ancient woodland inventories for use as a basis for planning future work programmes, and increase new woodland creation near ancient woodland concentrations over the next 50 years.
- Develop joined-up approaches to ensure effective support for protection and restoration of wooded landscape habitats, including the establishment and management of protected areas, to ensure that all ancient woodland is adequately protected.

## Illegal Logging

**Issue:** Illegal logging and associated trade is a big problem. It denies a livelihood to many poor people, robs governments of billions of dollars, results in environmental degradation and provokes and sustains conflicts in several parts of the world. It is a consequence of poor governance, at local, national and international levels. Countries that import illegal timber are part of the problem: they sustain demand for illegal products. The UK allegedly imports significant quantities of illegal timber and timber products. The issues are how to exclude illegal timber from markets and help producing countries ensure supplies are legal and come from well-managed forests.

**Commitment:** The UK is committed to helping developing countries tackle illegal logging and, in concert with others, to deny access of illegally harvested timber and wood products to the UK market. To do so it will: work towards multiparty agreements in at least two major timber exporting regions; help establish systems of verification of legal compliance; support reforms in producer countries that improve forest management, including the piloting of Producer Groups.

**Achievements:** UK Government has taken a lead internationally through:

- Support for measures to control illegal logging by a number of timber producing countries.
- Committing its central departments and their agencies to procure timber from legal and sustainable sources.
- Leading on illegal logging issues within the G8 Action Programme on Forests.
- Supporting regional forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG) processes, in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- Signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indonesia to control illegal logging and associated trade.

**Challenges:**

- Demonstrating progress with voluntary agreements.
- Broadening the focus from tropical timber to all timber.
- Securing new EU-wide legislation to empower customs authorities to deny access to illegally logged timber.
- Through all of the above maintaining the political momentum and expanding the number of countries taking action to deal with this problem.

**Actions:**

- Support regional FLEG policy processes.
- Support reforms and capacity building in producer countries to be determined by DFID.
- Support establishment of Producer Groups in collaboration with WWF and others within 12 months.
- Support preparation of an EU communication and legal instrument on illegal logging.
- Implement the Indonesia-UK MoU and work towards regional multiparty agreements.
- Implement sustainable timber procurement policy.

## Timber Procurement

**Issue:** A large volume of the forest products consumed in the world come from illegal and poorly managed sources in contradiction to the principles of sustainable development. The UK, in particular public bodies, is a significant consumer of both locally produced and imported timber and timber products and is therefore well placed to promote the legal logging and sustainable management of forests both nationally and overseas.

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**Commitment:** To purchase timber and timber products from legal and sustainably-managed forests with credible independent verification as proof. To encourage others in both the public and private sectors to do likewise.

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**Achievements:**

- The WWF 95+ group trades approximately 10.5 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood, raw material equivalent including recycled materials. The group is dealing with just under 2 million m<sup>3</sup> of credibly certified wood products.
- Within the WWF 95+ group, 88 companies are committed to purchasing 'increasing quantities of their wood product requirement from independently and credibly certified sources'.
- The Timber Trade Federation represents 85% of the UK timber and timber products import sector. Over 400 companies have committed themselves to sourcing timber from legal and well-managed forests.
- Different levels of government and a number of local authorities have committed themselves to purchasing legal and sustainable timber.
- NGOs have raised awareness amongst both the public and private sectors of the importance of buying from independently verified, credible sources.

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**Challenges:**

- To bring to bear the considerable purchasing power of central and local government, devolved administrations and other public bodies to promote the purchase of wood products from sources independently verified as legal and sustainably managed.
- To encourage private sector organisations to follow the example of government and leading local authorities and companies in adopting progressive policies to procure wood products from legal and sustainably managed sources.

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**Actions:**

- Develop a resourced and time-tabled plan for implementation and monitoring of this commitment, including the introduction of progressive targets to achieve the Government's commitment on timber procurement.
- Engage all levels of government and the public sector in implementing and monitoring timber procurement, working in harmony with their suppliers and NGOs to improve procurement guidelines.
- All partners to determine how domestic producers of sustainably managed wood should be encouraged and recognised for their efforts in certifying their woods to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.
- Identify projects where legal and sustainable timber has been successfully acquired and publish case studies to encourage greater take up in the business and public sectors.
- Government bodies to ensure that their procurement officers and their internal customers are kept aware of the Government's timber procurement policy through a combination of training, reporting and regular communication of best practice guidance and developments.
- Through DFID, Government to help producer groups in key producing countries to deliver well managed sources of timber.