

**National Report to the Fifth Session of the  
United Nations Forum on Forests**

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

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**I. Key Contacts**

**Senior Forestry Official in the United Kingdom:**

Name: Mr Tim Rollinson  
Title: Director General, Forestry Commission

Contact Information:

Address: Forestry Commission, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, Scotland,  
UK, EH12 7AT  
Phone: +44 (0) 131 314 6288  
Fax: +44 (0) 131 316 4344  
E-mail: [moira.hart@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:moira.hart@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

**UNFF national focal point for the United Kingdom:**

Name: Mr Mike Dudley  
Title: Head, International Policy, Forestry Commission

Contact Information:

Address: Forestry Commission, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, Scotland,  
UK, EH12 7AT  
Phone: +44 (0) 131 314 6115  
Fax: +44 (0) 131 316 4344  
E-mail: [mike.dudley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mike.dudley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

**Person to contact concerning the national report, if other than the UNFF national focal point:**

Name: Mr John Mullett  
Title: International Forestry Policy Support Manager, Forestry Commission

Contact Information:

Address: Forestry Commission, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, Scotland,  
UK, EH12 7AT  
Phone: +44 (0) 131 314 6584  
Fax: +44 (0) 131 316 4344  
E-mail: [john.mullett@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:john.mullett@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

## **II. Progress and issues related to implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action**

### **General**

The UK is committed to sustainable forest management and, while our forests cover only around 12% of the land, we recognise the important role that international discussions can play on forests and aim to share our experience and make a practical contribution.

Forestry is a devolved matter and the countries that make up the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) develop and implement their own forest policies. A committee involving Ministers from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland meet annually to discuss international issues and any cross-cutting issues where a joined up approach would be beneficial.

The Forestry Commission is the Government Department responsible for forestry policy in England, Scotland and Wales. It manages 780,000 hectares of public forests throughout the country. In Northern Ireland the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are responsible for managing 62,000 hectares of public woodland.

The Forestry Commission's aim is the sustainable management of our existing woods and forests, and a steady expansion of tree cover to increase the many, diverse benefits that forests provide to meet the needs of present and future generations.  
([www.forestry.gov.uk/sustainableforestry](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/sustainableforestry))

We are proud of our record on sustainable forestry, having taken a lead in implementing forest certification and continuing to develop standards for industry. We also have a long record of contributing to international forestry policy and of co-operating with developing countries on forest issues. Forestry in the UK is widely recognised for its multi-functionality that includes benefits for the wider economy and the provision of non-market social and environmental benefits in addition to timber production.

The UK Government's involvement in international forestry developments is led by the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Department for International Development (DFID) and is co-ordinated through the International Forestry Group. This group comprises representatives from the FC, DFID, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Cabinet Office, Treasury, the Prime Minister's Office, the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales.

The main aims of our international involvement are:

- To represent and promote UK interests in international discussions;
- To demonstrate the high standard of management in the UK forest resource; and
- To contribute to a fuller understanding of sustainable forest management.

International discussions on forests and forestry, and their conclusions, provide a framework for national action. UK forestry has gained greatly from the international processes in which we have taken part although, in common with other countries around the world, we choose national priorities to reflect national circumstances. The FC is committed to continuing participation in international discussions as the best means to achieve a balance between international commitments and developments in policy and practice in Britain.

## **UK Forest Partnership for Action**

The Forestry Commission continues to provide support for the UK Forest Partnership for Action ([www.ukforestpartnership.org.uk](http://www.ukforestpartnership.org.uk)), which was created in the run-up to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, bringing together government, industry and environmental groups to promote sustainable development across the forest sector.

The Partnership has worked on a number of priority issues, including forest certification, forest restoration and protection, illegal logging, and timber procurement, and more recently addressed the use of timber in sustainable construction.

A key development was the launch of the Sustainability Strategy for the UK forest industries sector entitled "Naturally Wood". This Strategy is a statement of commitment by the sector to delivering sustainable development. It is the start of an ongoing process involving the key groups concerned with forest management and the production or importation of forest products. The strategy can be viewed at [www.fidc.org.uk/sustainableforestry](http://www.fidc.org.uk/sustainableforestry).

## **Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE)**

The Forestry Commission takes the lead for the UK Government in the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) ([www.mcpfe.org](http://www.mcpfe.org)), and is responsible for ensuring consistency between domestic, regional and international discussion on forests. The MCPFE is an informal political process that offers an open dialogue between Ministers responsible for forests in Europe and allows regional interpretation of global forest issues for implementation at the regional, national and country levels.

The UK remains active in this process and continues to support the implementation of commitments both at the national level and at the pan-European level through the MCPFE Work Programme.

## **UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission**

The UNECE Timber Committee provides a forum for co-operation and consultation on issues related to forestry, industries and products. The UK is an active participant both in the implementation of the UNECE/FAO Joint Integrated Work Programme and in the ECE Strategic Reviews. At their Joint Session 5-9 October 2004 the UNECE/FAO adopted a revised integrated programme of work resulting from the Strategic Review process in 2003 and 2004.

The Joint Session discussions focused on the long term challenges for the forest and timber policies in a wider Europe and the key links between forest policy and market policy. In early 2005, the European Forest Sector Outlook Study is due to be published. The study comprises a series of reports that provide projections for supply and demand of timber in the next 20-30 years and examine possible scenarios that may frame the development of the forestry sector during this period.

The Timber Committee with co-funding from the Forestry Commission and the Department for International Development (DFID) held a workshop on illegal logging in September 2004.

The UK Government holds regular consultation meetings with civil society on illegal logging to provide updates on developments in the debate. The Government also funds a website ([www.illegal-logging.info](http://www.illegal-logging.info)) which provides a central point of information about efforts to stem illegal forest practices and the associated trade in forest products.

## **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

The Convention held its 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004.

Although forestry was not on the agenda, key decisions related to the issue of ‘targets and indicators’ support the UK position to integrate oriented targets and indicators into all thematic programmes of work including the Expanded Work Programme on Forest Biological Diversity.

The UK submitted its Voluntary Report on the Implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity to the Convention Secretariat in November 2003. ([www.biodiv.org/doc/world/gb-nr-vfe-en.doc](http://www.biodiv.org/doc/world/gb-nr-vfe-en.doc))

## **European Forest Institute (EFI)**

The EFI was established in 1993 to provide a forest research and information resource to meet the needs of a rapidly changing Europe. As part of a wider strategy to improve the contribution of EFI to international forest research, the Institute was established as an international organisation with the signing of the Convention on 28 August 2003. This change in status will bring benefits both to EFI and the wider forestry community in Europe through broadening the EFI’s perspective, primarily by attracting a wider range of nationals to work in the Institute. As a signatory, the UK is following steps towards ratification of the Convention.

## **European Union**

The UK is a member of the European Union. Although there is no common European forest policy, Member States have entered into a number of commitments at the EU level. These take the form of EU legislation, such as the Rural Development Regulation and environmental directives, and shared international commitments. To bring some order to the variety of activities related to forestry in the EU, a Resolution on a Forestry Strategy was agreed in December 1998.

At the heart of the Strategy is a commitment to promote sustainable forest management through co-operative action between Member States and the institutions of the EU. The UK was an active participant in the European Commission’s recent review of the Strategy and will continue to work with Member States and the Commission towards a revised Strategy.

## **International Development Assistance**

Forests play a major role in the livelihoods of poor people and the economies of many poor countries. Ensuring that forests are managed and developed in ways that support sustainable development and poverty eradication has been a key focus of the UK’s international development programme for many years.

Over time, the nature of this support has changed, reflecting an improved understanding of the challenges involved in ensuring that forests play a role in poverty reduction. Primary attention is now given to addressing the policy, institutional, legal and governance issues that dictate how the sector is managed in many countries.

In undertaking this work the UK, primarily through the Department for International Development ([www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)), works closely with a number of developing countries around the world and in partnership with other development agencies, both bilateral and multilateral.

In reading this report for UNFF 5, we would draw your attention to the previous reports prepared for UNFF 2, UNFF 3 and UNFF 4 ([www.un.org/esa/forests/reports.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports.html)). The UK's national report to UNFF 5 is essentially a compilation of the previous reports, with additional points to update or add information where we feel the UK has taken particular actions. Much of the information requested on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action has already been provided.

## **Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 2**

### **Combating Deforestation and Forest Degradation**

Although the UK's forest area is increasing overall, we are not complacent about the many pressures on forests that may result in their loss or degradation. We are committed to the principles of sustainable forestry and have put in place a framework, the UK Forestry Standard, compliance with which is obligatory for all public forests and woodland in receipt of grant aid. We have also in place a system of regulation to licence felling and require Environmental Impact Assessment for deforestation. As part of our commitment to sustainability, we work towards increasing public awareness of the multiple benefits of forests. We undertake this by means of participatory processes, stakeholder groups, partnerships, country strategies and the national forest programme.

### **Forest Conservation and Protection of Unique Types of Forest and Fragile Ecosystems**

Forests and woodlands provide a rich and diverse habitat for wildlife. The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is an essential operational consideration when managing forests. Greater awareness of the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of forest conservation and protected forest areas can help to generate public support and resources for forest conservation.

The UK is committed to the protection of forests and forest heritage and actively promotes forest conservation through its involvement in Forest Principles, Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, G8 Action Programme on Forests, Convention on Biological Diversity, EU Legislation and the Resolutions or General Declarations of Strasbourg, Helsinki and Lisbon.

At a national level forest restoration and protection are domestic priorities for forestry policy; they are also priority areas of the UK Forest Partnership for Action.

As a founding partner of the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration, the Forestry Commission continued to work with others in promoting the initiative, raising funding and encouraging new Partners, at meetings and events alongside a number of international forestry meetings. The Partnership is a network of governments, organisations, communities and individuals who all recognise the importance of restoration and wish to contribute to a global effort to restore forests in areas of deforestation and forest degradation.

### **Rehabilitation and Conservation Strategies for Countries with Low Forest Cover**

This section is not relevant to the UK, as it is no longer a country with low forest cover.

## **Rehabilitation and Restoration of Degraded Lands and Promotion of Natural and Planted Woods**

Use of land degraded by former industrial and urban activity makes an increasingly important contribution to the expansion of woodland. Trees planted on such sites offer immense social benefits in addition to the possibility of economic activity on formerly unproductive land.

There are numerous examples of restoration of degraded land in the UK which include open-cast coal mining sites in South Wales and former industrial sites in North West England. A current key programme in the UK is the Newlands Programme which aims to restore 435 ha of brownfield and contaminated land to Community Woodland.

The UK actively promotes timber as a sustainable material through the UK Forest Partnership, Wood for Good campaign, in its role within sustainable construction policies and through a research and development programme. The Government's UK Forestry Standard was revised in 2004 and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard for forest certification in the UK was revised in 2005. The forestry guidelines that support both standards are now being comprehensively reviewed and revised, a process involving public consultation will take two to three years to complete.

The UK played an active role in the IFF/UNFF intersessionals in Chile and New Zealand on the "Role of planted forests in Sustainable Forest Management".

The UK Government has taken forward its announcement in 2000 of a timber procurement policy for Government Departments. An advisory service has now been established – the Central Point of Expertise on Timber – to assist Government buyers and suppliers of wood products in evaluating evidence of the legal origin of supplies and claims of sustainable management of forests.

## **Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action Related to Thematic Issues of UNFF 3**

### **Economic Aspects of Forests, Including Trade**

The UK approach to valuation of forest goods and services is outlined in the national report to UNFF 3. Forestry generates multiple economic outputs, which provide market and non-market values, including substantial levels of social and environmental benefits. Full details of recent economic research on forestry in the UK can be found on the Forestry Commission website ([www.forestry.gov.uk/economics](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/economics)). A study has recently commenced to examine the economic value of different types of forest recreation; the study is being led by the University of Wales and is due to be completed by the end of 2005.

The key economic instruments used to support forestry in the UK are the incentives provided through a variety of Woodland Grant Schemes

The implementation of these schemes is regionally differentiated in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to clearly reflect the country strategies.

The use of tax as an economic instrument has not been subject to major change since forestry was removed from the income tax system in 1988. A wide range of taxation measures affecting rural land-uses and businesses affects forestry operations.

## **Forest Health and Productivity**

The FC Forest Research Agency and the Forest Service carry out environmental monitoring arising originally from international concern about the potential effect of air pollutants on woodlands. We have also played an important role in standardising the monitoring techniques used across Europe and from year to year. Parts of the monitoring programme are mandatory in member states of the EU and are carried out to agreed international protocols. The programme utilises a large number of survey and inventory plots in which measurements include tree condition and growth, atmospheric chemistry and, soil chemistry and tree growth. Among other things, the data contribute to the development of our national critical load maps. Critical loads reflect the sensitivity of an ecosystem to nitrogen and sulphur pollution and these maps are fundamental in the formulation of international protocols for the migration of pollution.

The scientists working in the programme also have substantial responsibilities for UK input to European expert committees and panels.

The EU monitoring system is currently under review and the UK will review its programmes accordingly.

## **Maintaining Forest Cover to Meet Present and Future Needs**

This subject was covered in depth in the UK Report to UNFF 3.

## **Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action Related to Thematic Issues of UNFF 4**

### **Social and Cultural Aspects of Forests**

The objectives of the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of natural resources. Contracting parties to the Convention are required to integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation of biological diversity into their plans and programmes. The Convention requires the identification, regulation and management of processes and categories of activities that may adversely affect biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Action Plan process is a key part of the UK and country level Biodiversity Strategies. The Biodiversity Strategies require monitoring of progress and of the targets and indicators identified for habitats and species. A full review of the UK BAP is scheduled from July 2004 to December 2006 and will involve 3 components: National reporting round integrating local and national information; Review of targets set for UK Priority Species and Priority Habitats; Review of the UK Priority Lists.

Few young women entering university consider forestry as a career option, and there are indications that there is a tendency for women to enter the sector through a change in later career rather than as new graduates or technicians. This indicates a need for an informational strategy targeting young adults making career choices. The Forestry Commission has commissioned research into the recruitment, retention and career advancement of women foresters in the UK.

Women are poorly represented in timber production and forest establishment and maintenance activities but disproportionately represented in environmental and social aspects of forest management.

There is a higher departure rate of women in mid career, partly related to the dispersed rural nature of forestry and poor access to child caring services, and a tendency for these women not to return to the sector.

Interviewees reported little direct discrimination in terms of promotion, and believed that the very small number of women in senior positions was to do with the demands of family life and the choices that were available to women. The researcher had undertaken similar work in heavy engineering and construction and reported that these sectors face almost identical issues. The Forestry Commission has put considerable effort into meeting the needs of women in its own employment.

UK forestry Ministers have given clear assurances that local communities will be a priority in the way public forests are managed. This means that local people will have a greater involvement in decisions that affect their community. The Forestry Commission will build on its many partnership successes, working closely with communities.

Government measures to bring woodlands closer to the people will mean: local people will be more involved in the plans and shape of local woodlands; the needs of local businesses and contractors will be given higher priority; more recreational information will be provided; local job opportunities will be promoted; communities will be consulted on the sales or development of land. There is recognition that different communities have different needs and should be accounted for.

### **Traditional Forest-related Knowledge**

The UK does not have a strong, recent forestry culture. However, cultural landscapes and historic sites are highly valued by the public and are an economic as well as a cultural resource. The Government has published guidance on forestry in cultural and historic landscapes, supported research and publications on the social history of forestry and also commissioned research into the place of forestry in contemporary culture.

### **Scientific Forest-related Knowledge**

Research is essential to inform future development of forest policy and practice, and the Forestry Commission (FC) supports a wide range of programmes covering economic, environmental and social issues.

These research programmes will continue to be updated to provide long-term support for sustainable forestry policy and practice. The FC's Science and Innovation Strategy has been based on public consultations carried out in each country. It sets out how the research programmes will be determined, linking them to departmental objectives and to the individual country forestry strategies. The Forestry Commission and Northern Ireland Forest Service have jointly prepared a new, cross-UK Science and Innovation Strategy for British Forestry following stakeholder consultations in all four countries of the UK. The Strategy will be submitted for approval by Forestry Ministers in 2005.

Funded by DFID and developed through IMA International the Forestry Research Programme training course on Communication Methods and Science Advocacy was introduced in 2004. The course has a five-day programme specifically designed for researchers who wish to improve their skills in communicating their findings to stakeholders so as to influence policy and developmental impact. In developing the course care was taken to produce a generic training manual with practical examples from various disciplines. Trainers may choose the most appropriate examples for their situation.

The course provides skills and knowledge to improve research promotion and the associated uptake of research findings.

Participants' awareness of key situations and how to handle media and policy contacts is raised through role-play and constructive feedback sessions. Journalists are invited to provide first-hand experience and coaching in media approaches such as Press Releases. During the course, there is opportunity to develop or strengthen the research projects' specific Promotion Strategies, which together with personal Action Plans will initiate a process leading to sustainable and lasting change.

The main elements that are explored during the course are: improved stakeholder identification and engagement to enhance ownership of research; improved identification of change agents, their role and the flow and continuity of information to these agents; appropriate communication, promotion, and advocacy methods; more culturally appropriate ways to stimulate positive action.

Four courses were held in UK, Ghana, Costa Rica and Thailand in which 72 researchers from 20 countries were trained.

In order to maintain the momentum generated by this training, the Forestry Research Programme is also supporting a promotion support service through which course alumni can receive tailor-made support (mentoring) for future communication activities.

### **Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, Concepts, Terminology and Definitions**

Information on the size, distribution, composition and condition of woodlands is essential for developing and monitoring policies for the sustainable development of woodlands and the countryside.

National woodland surveys have been carried out in Great Britain since 1924 and the latest National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees was completed in 2002. The survey reports have been published as a series of Inventory Reports and wallcharts for Scotland, England and Wales. A summary report for Great Britain was published in 2003. All of these reports may be viewed on the Forestry Commission's website [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk).

The UK has also published a range of publications and participates in technical bodies of the EU and UN/ECE/FAO that are concerned with monitoring, assessment and reporting at the international level.

### **Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management**

The "UK Indicators of Sustainable Forestry" was published in 2002 containing 40 indicators, which cover a wide range of aspects of sustainable forestry in the UK.

Updated information is published on the Forestry Commission's website, grouped under the headings of Woodland, Biodiversity, Condition of forest and environment, Timber and other forest products, People and forests, and Economic aspects. The indicators are based on "The UK Forestry Standard" and "pan-European Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management". Where possible, the publication includes statistics for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as for the UK as a whole.

### **III. Preparation of the Report**

A first draft of the Report was prepared in the Forestry Commission on behalf of the UK, based on readily available information and material.

As pointed out above, we had already agreed that the UK's report to UNFF 5 would be essentially a compilation of the previous reports submitted to UNFF 2, UNFF 3 and UNFF 4, with additional points to update or add information where we felt the UK had taken particular actions.

The draft (together with the previous reports) was then circulated to special advisers in the Forestry Commission inviting input, and then circulated to other Government Departments (through the International Forestry Group) for their additions and comments.

The guidance and format provided by the UNFF Secretariat was certainly useful in compiling the report.

However, due to time constraints and the pressure of other commitments at the end of 2004, and beginning of 2005, it was not possible to carry out a full consultative exercise to involve a wide range of stakeholders as we had hoped.

Once all the various contributions were received and incorporated, the report was forwarded to the UNFF Secretariat in February 2005. At the same time, the report was submitted for information to Forestry Ministers.