



Forestry Commission

Corporate Plan 2015-16

for FC Cross Border Activities

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Foreword

The Forestry Commission operates in England and Scotland to protect and expand the nations' forests and woodlands, increasing their value to society and the environment. Although forestry policy in Wales is now part of the Welsh government and delivered by Natural Resources Wales, they remain committed to cross border collaboration.

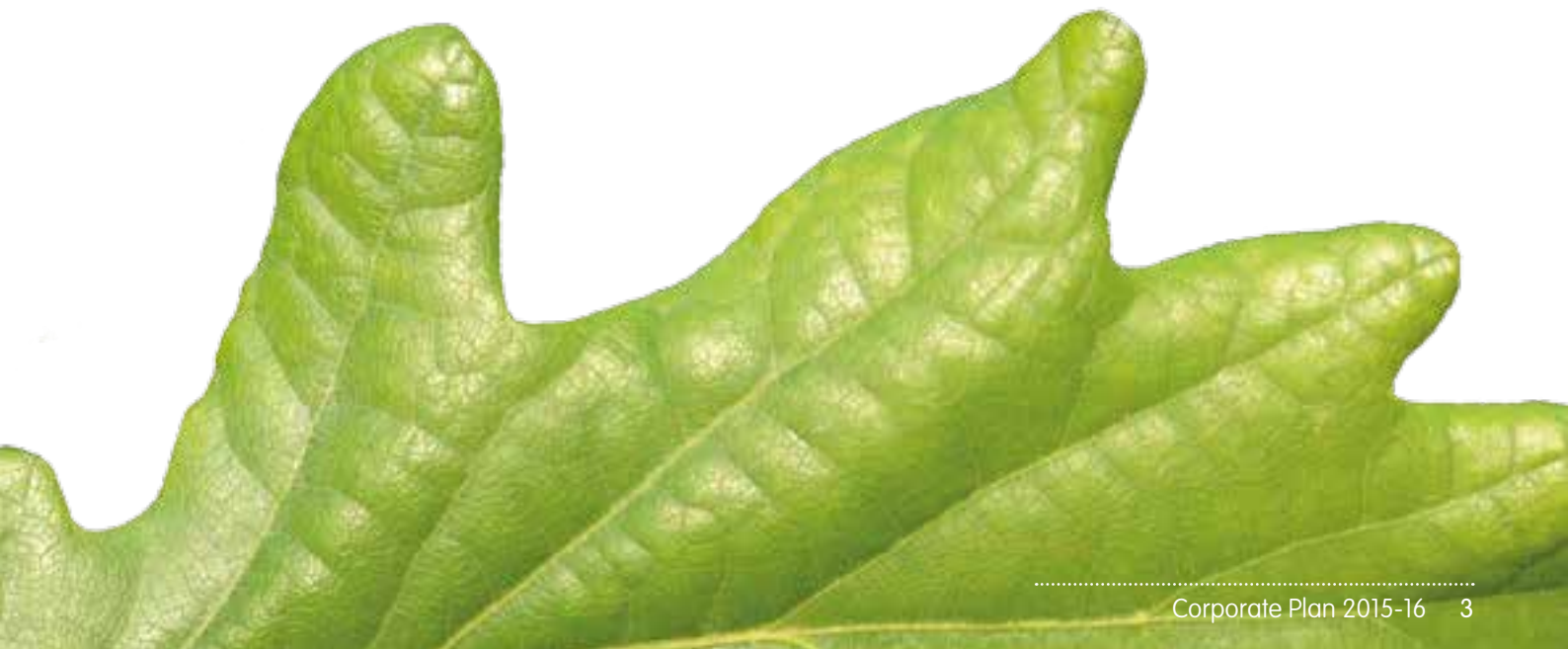
New research programmes have been developed to deliver the Science and Innovation Strategy for Forestry in Great Britain. Plant health and the threats to our trees remain a top priority. Reports from the first cycle of the National Forest Inventory will provide a comprehensive overview of the state of our forests.

In the year ahead, we will continue to deliver this and other important work, through a collaborative, cross-border approach, utilising our forestry experience to the benefit of all. Work is underway to ensure sound governance of the cross border arrangements and to refresh the basis of that collaboration.

We will continue to review the services and functions, and tailor them to serve country requirements, as we and the countries gain greater experience in the new ways of working. This Corporate Plan for 2015-16 describes these cross border functions, and how they will be delivered.



Sir Harry Studholme, Forestry Commission Chair





Our priorities

Resilience

Protecting our woodland resource and increasing its resilience to pests, diseases and the impact of climate change so that our woodland continues to deliver a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

Evidence

Ensuring that there is a robust evidence base available to the devolved forestry administrations across the UK to underpin their policies, decisions and advice.

Standards

Setting the standards for sustainable forest management in the UK and promoting it domestically and internationally.



Forest biosecurity

We will protect our woodland resource and increase its resilience to pests and diseases so that our woodlands continue to deliver a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

Forest and wider ecosystem health is our highest priority. Society needs healthy and resilient forests, woodlands, and trees to support the economy, provide mental and physical stimulation, and act as a haven for Britain's rich and varied biodiversity.

Maintaining and improving the resilience of our woodlands, forests and trees is a major challenge. The changes in weather patterns, with more extreme events, and a gradual change in site

suitability for some of our major species combine to heighten the threat from an increasing number of damaging pests and pathogens. The need to grow the economy will result in increased levels of trade. This will require us to anticipate and be ready to respond to future threats, enhance levels of vigilance at our borders, and work closely with our stakeholders to ensure a consistent approach across Great Britain.

We will continue to work with wider government, academia and the forestry sector in partnership to find ways of lessening and managing these threats. This will involve facilitating the recently formed Great Britain and Northern Ireland Tree Health Advisory Group and working closely with Defra's Chief Plant Health Officer and the plant health services in each country.



Wherever possible, we will supplement our research funding on tree health through partnership and collaboration to build new capacity and capability. We will work closely with the new UK Science Partnership for Animal and Plant Health to ensure that resources are targeted effectively to provide rapid response to new threats and prevent them from becoming established.

Case study



Interceptions of imported dunnage and wood packaging material

Wood sections which are used to wedge or support a cargo during transport are described as dunnage. Dunnage is a very simple form of wood packaging material (WPM) and other forms of WPM include pallets and wooden crates. An international standard (ISPM15) applies to the phytosanitary treatment and the marking of all types of wooden

packaging and this is the minimum landing requirement for material imported into the UK. Improperly treated WPM can represent a potential plant health threat so it is especially important that ISPM15 standards are met when low quality and low value wood is used from sources with unknown plant health status.

Wood packaging material is used in the import of many types of products so inspections need to be targeted toward those commodities which are considered

to be a high risk, such as stone products from China. Funding from Defra has allowed us to carry out further inspections of WPM, and major interceptions of non-compliant material have been made in connection with cargoes of steel and engineering equipment from Turkey, India, Ukraine and China.

Our inspectors have found numerous examples of inadequate marking and excessive bark and in four cases the presence of live pests has been detected. All the intercepted dunnage has been either re-exported or destroyed at the ports under notice at the cost to the importer. Representation was made to the third countries concerned and notices were served on the importers to pre-notify the landing of further imports. Pheromone traps were monitored at the ports and no unwanted insects were found to be present.

Intelligence from some port authorities has enabled the tracking of future shipments en-route, ensuring they can be met at port. At the end of the year inspectors had made 150 interceptions which is substantially higher than last year.

Conifers

Great Britain has had Protected Zone (PZ) status against the conifer bark beetles *Ips typographus*, *Ips amitinus* and *Ips duplicatus* since 1993. PZ status provides us with protective measures against high risk material from those regions where these pests are present. Annual surveys of conifer woodland are used to demonstrate that these pests are not already established in order to retain PZ status. The surveys also provide us with an early warning system. 41 PZ plots have been monitored annually since 1993 and the results are submitted to the European Commission. During this time, we have not detected any of these bark beetles in the PZ plots, though we have found them at ports.

Additional Defra funding has allowed us to establish 44 new plots in spruce and pine woodland using a risk based approach to locate plots near to ports and sawmills, or close to road networks that link major areas of conifer woodland to processing sites. New plots were located close to storage depots where non-compliant wood packaging material had been delivered. None of the insects found in the new plots were of any quarantine significance.

Plane, sweet chestnut and oak

As a consequence of recent changes to EU legislation, the Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005 has been amended to strengthen our PZ status against chestnut gall wasp, sweet chestnut blight, plane wilt and oak processionary moth. The amendment to the EU legislation replaces our national emergency legislation in regard to plane, sweet chestnut and oak. For plane and sweet chestnut, this effectively bans the movement of planting stock to the UK unless it has been grown and is accompanied by a plant passport from a pest-free area. We have undertaken annual surveys of sweet chestnut and oak for a number of years, but until recently had not monitored plane.

We commissioned the London Tree Officers Association (LTOA) to carry out a survey of plane trees in London. The survey has confirmed that *Ceratocystis plantani* is not present in the London plane population, supports our new PZ status, and has identified permanent PZ plots for long-term monitoring.

- Ensure compliance with EU inspection targets for wood and bark products, including an enhanced commodities inspection programme in high risk areas
- Manage co-ordination between cross-border outbreak management teams
- Develop a set of prioritised actions on tree pests and pathogens (through the Defra Plant Health Risk Group)
- Provide expert advice to underpin the UK pest risk register and new shared contingency plans on priority tree pests
- Monitor and evaluate pest risk from new emerging trades

Indicators

1. Number of new tree pests and diseases established in the last 10 years (contextual measure).
2. Number of interceptions of non-compliant imports.
3. Meet our customer-care target of inspecting 95 per cent of imports of wood and wood products on the day of notification of landing, or the next-again working day.
4. Percentage of the research budget committed to biosecurity.



Climate change

We will protect our woodland resource and increase its resilience to the impacts of climate change so that our woodlands continue to deliver a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

Forestry has an important role to play in helping to tackle climate change in the UK. Trees and woodlands take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere as they grow, and wood products offer the potential to substitute for fossil fuel intensive fuels and materials. Woodlands also provide a means of helping us to adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change; for example, by alleviating flooding and providing shade in towns and cities. These two examples demonstrate how sensitive planting and management of trees and woodlands can provide benefits across the economy and society.

The research that we commission is strengthening the evidence base on how woodland creation in Great Britain helps to meet policy objectives related to climate change. Knowledge of how woodlands contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation supports policy and operations across the forest sector. We are also funding new research into the provision of other ecosystem services - including the role of woodlands in improving water quality - which will help to build a business case for the role of woodlands in delivering such services.

We are continuing to develop and promote the Woodland Carbon Code – including the introduction of monitoring and verification procedures – in order to put all necessary processes in place for it to operate in the future. We are also working further with DEFRA and other partners to develop natural capital accounts for forestry. These accounts will help to demonstrate the wider role of woodlands in underpinning the economy, environment and society. These benefits can only be provided if forests and woodlands remain resilient to change. We will work with stakeholders in the public and private sectors to ensure that advice and information is available and relevant to supporting sustainable forest and woodland management.



Case study

Engaging with business and finance sectors to develop future business models to support forestry.

Attracting additional funding into forestry in future will be critical in helping the sector to prosper in future and to deliver a wide range of policy objectives. There is growing recognition of potential financial benefits linked to the role of woodlands in supporting natural capital (the stock of assets associated with nature) and in attracting payments for ecosystem services by providing benefits such as CO2 emissions abatement, flood alleviation and clean water.

We are building the evidence base to underpin the business case that forestry can both provide such services effectively and that it can deliver value for money in doing so. We are engaging widely with companies, business organisations and others to help promote forestry across different business sectors – including finance – by hosting and attending seminars and workshops and by participating in business networks such as the Aldersgate Group. We are also developing opportunities to work in partnership to deliver new woodland creation projects. For example, over 200 projects have been registered under the Woodland Carbon Code, covering 15,400 hectares and projected to sequester 5.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Key actions for 2015/16:

- Establish pilot schemes to test monitoring and verification procedures for the Woodland Carbon Code to enable verified credits to be issued from 2016.
- Evaluate the achievements of the Woodland Carbon Code in its first three years, including its social and environmental impacts.
- Build the evidence base on the value of woodlands in delivering forest ecosystem services.
- Publish a roadmap on developing market-based approaches to encouraging woodland creation.
- Work with experts in and beyond the forest sector to develop new nature-based business opportunities and funding models for woodlands.
- Work with partners to develop natural capital accounts for forestry.

Indicators

5. Projected amount of carbon captured to 2050 by Woodland Carbon Code approved British woodlands.
6. Number and type of dissemination activities emanating from our work on climate change and ecosystem services.



Evidence



We will ensure that there is a robust evidence base available to the forestry authorities across the UK to underpin their policies, decisions and advice.

The policies and operational changes, which support the successful and dynamic forestry sector in GB are based on robust and credible evidence. With a series of new research programmes commencing this year, we will ensure that this remains the case. Increasingly divergent country needs pose an interesting challenge to the delivery of a comprehensive and relevant programme of research. However, this is still possible with good communication between stakeholders and our research commissioning team, and the efficiency gains through purchasing research on a cross border basis remain high. The effective translation of science into practical guidance is a key feature of our work, and we aim to ensure that uptake and application remain at the heart of our activities.

Phase 1 of the National Forest Inventory is nearing completion. NFI data underpins the key statistics used by the forestry sector, and is critical to the delivery of sustainable forest management in Britain and the continuing investment in the forest sector.

Case study Leveraging research funding through living with environmental change and woodwisdom.

With increasing pressure on finances, we have been actively exploring opportunities for leveraging the core research budget through collaboration. During the year, two major initiatives have commenced. WoodWisdom is a European research area network collaboration to the value of €3m. CFS funding of £150,000, matched by FC Scotland and Scottish Enterprise over three years, has allowed UK research providers to participate in four novel projects with a total value of €4m. These are looking at new opportunities

for the processing and use of wood, which will be of benefit to the UK timber sector. The second initiative relates to tree health and plant biosecurity, which is a joint collaboration between the FC, Defra, three research councils, and the Scottish and Welsh Governments. The £9.6m initiative provides excellent leverage for the FC's £0.5m over three years enabling much more research in this important area to be undertaken. To date seven projects are underway, and a call is out for a further two. This research will complement existing work, and is focussed on the most important current issues for tree health as well as providing new capability and skills for the future.

Case study Remote sensing – Satellite - based mapping of storm damage.

Aim: To minimise the loss to UK forestry by providing a new satellite-based rapid mapping service to detect changes in woodland cover following storm events.

Background: In the UK 2013-14 storm season, FC estimated that approx. 30 million trees had been blown down. The quicker damage is mapped, the more likely it is that useful timber can be recovered. There are also implications for biomass and carbon management.

Current methods to assess the damage to woodland after a storm event are either costly (helicopter surveys), time consuming (field visits) or are hindered by cloud cover (optical satellite data).

New method: A new method of rapid damage assessment using satellite-based radar data has been developed. Commercial satellite availability offers a fast (target is 2 weeks), reliable, and repeatable data capture service.

Preliminary studies have demonstrated the technical feasibility of the method, which now needs to be considered for operational feasibility.

Case study

Statistics and the work of the expert group on timber and trade statistics.

The Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics provides advice and assistance to the Forestry Commission on the supply and demand of timber and forest products in the UK. The group, comprising representatives from the Forestry Commission, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service and the UK timber industry, meets three times a year.

The group provides a valuable role in identifying new information needs and in quality assuring the Forestry Commission's statistics on production and trade of wood and wood products. Specific activities in 2014-15 include the provision of advice on forecast scenarios for the National Forest Inventory reports on 50-year forecasts of softwood and hardwood availability.

One of the annual activities undertaken by the group is the production of the UK market statement. This describes the state of the UK timber industry and provides information on economic trends affecting the industry. These include relevant policy developments, the main market drivers and developments in each forest product sector.

The market statement is submitted to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, where it is used alongside historic data, estimates for the current year and forecasts for the following year to produce the "Forest Products Annual Market Review".

Key actions for 2015/16:



Statistics

- Production of agreed UK National Statistics and Official Statistics releases:

- Forestry Statistics
- Forestry Facts & Figures
- Timber Price Indices
- UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures
- Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking
- Woodland Carbon Code Statistics
- Nursery Survey.

Ecosystems and society

- Development and initiation of research plans with Forest Research in the following areas
 - Understanding resilience in forest ecosystems in relation to biosecurity and climate change
 - Resilient forests, woodlands and trees which are able to adapt to global and local change
 - Woodland expansion
- Supporting country implementation of EU Invasive alien species regulation
- Presenting findings of changes to soil carbon under woodland creation and expansion scenarios.

- Developing the evidence base for forest operations and protected species.

National Forest Inventory

- Provide timely and accurate official statistics (including National Statistics) on the forestry sector, such as forest area, timber volume, biomass and carbon stored, to inform trade and industry, government and the general public.
- Publish maps, forecasts, and analysis from the National Forest Inventory.

Indicators

7. The proportion of funds spent on research delivery against commissioning costs.
8. The amount of leverage obtained from FC research resources.
9. Published metrics on deliverables arising from the Science and Innovation Strategy.
10. National Forest Inventory sample plots against target number required.

Standards



We will set the standards for sustainable forest management in the UK, within the framework of international agreements, and promote them domestically and internationally.

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and Guidelines articulate the UK's approach to sustainable forest management within a framework of international agreements at global, European and EU level. This approach is firmly rooted in evidence-based science and enables us to maintain a common UK basis for forestry practice; this is used to regulate forestry, for domestic and international reporting, to provide advice and practical guidance and as a foundation for independent forest certification in the UK. We also use the UK approach, together with our research and forestry experience, to inform the UK's input to international processes. This work is undertaken in support of DEFRA and helps ensure that UK influence is brought to bear and international agreements on forestry (and related fields such as the environment and climate change) are compatible with UK forestry practice.

Case study

Contributing forestry expertise across Europe

We fulfilled our commitments to reporting on forestry indicators as part of the Forest Europe* ministerial process – this will be presented as the “State of Europe’s Forests” to ministers in 2015. In support of DEFRA, who have the lead on international forestry policy, we have also provided expertise in developing the UK position in relation to a legally binding agreement on forests. We have influenced the Forest Europe work programme, notably on the evaluation of ecosystem services and a review of the pan-European indicators to up-date them in the context of evolving policies on climate change, wood-fuel and biodiversity.

We attend and participate actively in the EU’s Standing Forestry Committee on behalf of DEFRA and the devolved assemblies, essentially to ensure developments are compatible with UK positions; for example we have provided a considerable contribution to the development of the EU Forestry Strategy and implementation plan. We have also influenced the EU’s working group on how indicators of sustainable forestry might be used to demonstrate the sustainability of forestry for a range of EU policy needs; for example biomass used for renewable heat and energy. The UK, through DECC, are well advanced in this area and we are using UK practice to inform the outcomes for forestry at both EU and Forest Europe level.

* Forest Europe is an international ministerial agreement; it is Europe-wide, i.e. beyond the EU, and involves 46 signatory countries including Russia and the former Soviet states.



Key actions for 2015/16:

International work

- Maintain the momentum on forests in the global fora by supporting DEFRA to secure a future International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). Achieve this via a holistic and co-ordinated approach that recognises forests as an economic resource, as part of a balanced approach to all forests through the concept of sustainable forest management.
- Provide support to Defra in preparing for the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forest Europe Ministerial Conferences to be held in 2015.
- Contribute FC expertise to the Forest Europe process, and in particular deliver the revised set of indicators for sustainable forest management
- In the EU, aim to secure the role of the existing criteria for sustainable forest management as the foundation for evidence for all uses of wood and in particular for the uses of wood as a renewable source of heat and energy.

Standards

- Develop a practice guide on Forest Operations, in support of the UKFS Forests and Water Guidelines.
- Work with colleagues in DEFRA, DECC and the countries to ensure that existing UKFS-based regulatory approaches allow UK growers access to markets for biomass and wood-fuel and meet the UK Government’s sustainability requirements.
- Develop a proposal to review the UKFS (re-issued in 2011), in discussion with the 4 countries, together with assessing its implementation using experience gained at country level in 2013/2014.

Indicators

11. Pursue the possibilities for developing UK-wide indicators of UKFS implementation with the countries under the review of the UKFS.

Ways of working

This section covers corporate issues such as organisational changes, Spending Reviews, governance and the Woodland Policy Enabling Programme.

In 2015 we will be working with the three countries and Forest Research, to provide support and ensure business continuity, as the structural arrangements for forestry in each country continue to evolve to meet their varying needs.

At the same time, we will continue to support the Forestry Commissioners in providing sound governance and ensuring that the Forestry Commission's statutory duties are met.

Forest Seedlings App
by the FC



Key actions for 2015/16:

- Support the work of, and provide the executive for, the Business Strategy Group.
- In Wales, support the move from transition to transformation of Natural Resources Wales in line with their timetable and support arrangements for those FC services which it has been agreed will continue.
- Work with NRW and WG to confirm collaborative relationships which will endure for the long term good of the sector.
- Continue, as part of the next phase of the Woodland Policy Enabling Programme, to support the desire to create a more distinct Public Forest Estate Management Organisation and the emerging needs of Forest Services arising from the review of forestry functions
- Take forward options for managing the internal Cross Border functions project and consider the shortlisted options for managing this activity in the future.

Indicators

12. Total spend on cross border activities
13. Progress against Shared Service Roadmap
14. Progress on the final model for taking forward cross border functions

Annex A

Indicators and actions

The indicators detailed below are intended to provide information on trends, and are reported on in the Cross Border Activities annual report together with information about the delivery of actions during the year.

Resilience – Challenges for forest biosecurity

Delivery priority indicators

1. Number of new tree pests and diseases established in the last 10 years (contextual measure).
2. Number of interceptions of non-compliant imports.
3. Meet our customer-care target of inspecting 95 per cent of imports of wood and wood products on the day of notification of landing, or the next-again working day.
4. Percentage of the research budget committed to biosecurity.

Key actions for 2015/16

- Ensure compliance with EU inspection targets for wood and bark products, including an enhanced commodities inspection programme in high risk areas
- Manage co-ordination between cross-border outbreak management teams
- Develop a set of prioritised actions on tree pests and pathogens (through the Defra Plant Health Risk Group)
- Provide expert advice to underpin the UK pest risk register and new shared contingency plans on priority tree pests
- Monitor and evaluate pest risk from new emerging trades

Resilience – Challenges posed by climate change

Delivery priority indicators

5. Projected amount of carbon captured to 2050 by Woodland Carbon Code approved British woodlands.
6. Number and type of dissemination activities emanating from our work on climate change and ecosystem services.

Key actions for 2015/16

- Establish pilot schemes to test monitoring and verification procedures for the Woodland Carbon Code to enable verified credits to be issued from 2016.
- Evaluate the achievements of the Woodland Carbon Code in its first three years, including its social and environmental impacts.
- Build the evidence base on the value of woodlands in delivering forest ecosystem services.
- Publish a roadmap on developing market-based approaches to encouraging woodland creation.
- Work with experts in and beyond the forest sector to develop new nature-based business opportunities and funding models for woodlands.
- Work with partners to develop natural capital accounts for forestry.

Evidence

Delivery priority indicators

7. The proportion of funds spent on research delivery against commissioning costs.
8. The amount of leverage obtained from FC research resources.
9. Published metrics on deliverables arising from the Science and Innovation Strategy.
10. National Forest Inventory sample plots against target number required.

Key actions for 2015/16

Statistics

- Production of agreed UK National Statistics and Official Statistics releases:
 - Forestry Statistics
 - Forestry Facts & Figures
 - Timber Price Indices
 - UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures
 - Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking
 - Woodland Carbon Code Statistics
 - Nursery Survey.

Ecosystems and society

- Development and initiation of research plans with Forest Research in the following areas
 - Understanding resilience in forest ecosystems in relation to biosecurity and climate change
 - Resilient forests, woodlands and trees which are able to adapt to global and local change
 - Woodland expansion

- Supporting country implementation of EU Invasive alien species regulation
- Presenting findings of changes to soil carbon under woodland creation and expansion scenarios.
- Developing the evidence base for forest operations and protected species.

National forest inventory

- Provide timely and accurate official statistics (including National Statistics) on the forestry sector, such as forest area, timber volume, biomass and carbon stored, to inform trade and industry, government and the general public.
- Publish maps, forecasts, and analysis from the National Forest Inventory.

Standards

Delivery priority indicators

11. Pursue the possibilities for developing UK-wide indicators of UKFS

Key actions for 2015/16

International work

- Maintain the momentum on forests in the global fora by supporting DEFRA to secure a future International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). Achieve this via a holistic and co-ordinated approach that recognises forests as an economic resource, as part of a balanced approach to all forests through the concept of sustainable forest management.
- Provide support to Defra in preparing for the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forest Europe Ministerial Conferences to be held in 2015.
- Contribute FC expertise to the Forest Europe process, and in particular deliver the revised set of indicators for sustainable forest management
- In the EU, aim to secure the role of the existing criteria for sustainable forest management as the foundation for evidence for all

uses of wood and in particular for the uses of wood as a renewable source of heat and energy.

Standards

- Develop a practice guide on Forest Operations, in support of the UKFS Forests and Water Guidelines.
- Work with colleagues in DEFRA, DECC and the countries to ensure that existing UKFS-based regulatory approaches allow UK growers access to markets for biomass and wood-fuel and meet the UK Government's sustainability requirements.
- Develop a proposal to review the UKFS (re-issued in 2011), in discussion with the 4 countries, together with assessing its implementation using experience gained at country level in 2013/2014.

Ways of Working

Delivery priority indicators

12. Total spend on cross border activities
13. Progress against Shared Service Roadmap
14. Progress on the final model for taking forward cross border functions

Key Actions for 2015/16

- Support the work of, and provide the executive for, the Business Strategy Group.
- In Wales, support the move from transition to transformation of Natural Resources Wales in line with their timetable and support arrangements for those FC services which it has been agreed will continue.
- Work with NRW and WG to confirm collaborative relationships which will endure for the long term good of the sector.
- Continue, as part of the next phase of the Woodland Policy Enabling Programme, to support the desire to create a more distinct Public Forest Estate Management Organisation and the emerging needs of Forest Services arising from the review of forestry functions
- Take forward options for managing the internal Cross Border functions project and consider the shortlisted options for managing this activity in the future.



Annex B

Annex B: Source and use of funds		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
£million		Planned	Indicative	Indicative
Source of funds				
Parliamentary Funding ²	Resource	12.179	11.624	11.624
Use of funds				
GB Activities	Research	8.904	8.674	8.674
	Analysts	1.020	1.020	1.020
	Plant Health	1.325	1.000	1.000
	Corporate Services	0.612	0.612	0.612
	Other	0.318	0.318	0.318
	Total	12.179	11.624	11.624
Staff Numbers (Full-time equivalent)		34.54	32.74	32.74

Note:

1. Pending SR15 and approved budgets
2. Parliamentary funding in 2015/16 includes £0.555m for enhanced plant health activities.



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The Forestry Commission is a non-ministerial department responsible to the Governments in England and Scotland.

On agreed cross border functions the Forestry Commission reports to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

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