

# Woodland Carbon Code Statistics

Data to December 2017

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**Coverage:** United Kingdom

**Geographical breakdown:** Country

**Issued by:** IFOS-Statistics, Forest Research,  
231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT

**Enquiries:** Jackie Watson 0300 067 5238  
[statistics@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

**Statistician:** Sheila Ward 0300 067 5236

**Website:** [www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics)

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## Introduction

The Woodland Carbon Code is a voluntary standard, initiated in July 2011, for woodland creation projects that make claims about the carbon they sequester (take out of the atmosphere).

All projects must be placed on the Register of UK Woodland Carbon Projects. Their claims about potential carbon sequestration are validated by an independent certification body. Validated projects are then verified on a regular basis to confirm the progress of carbon sequestration. The figures presented here exclude projects that have been removed from the register.

*Woodland Carbon Code Statistics* are released on a quarterly basis. Figures to December 2017 are published for the first time in this release. Figures for earlier periods have not been revised from those previously published. For further details, see the Revisions section of the Annex.

The frequency of releases will change from quarterly to annual after the next edition of this release, in April 2018. Further details are provided in the Annex.

Please refer to the Annex for a glossary of terms used in this release.

## Key findings

The main findings are:

- A total of 245 projects were registered under the Woodland Carbon Code at 31 December 2017, covering over 16,200 hectares of woodland and projected to sequester 5.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime<sup>1</sup>.
- A total of 150 projects had been validated by end December 2017, covering almost 5,100 hectares and projected to sequester 2.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime<sup>1</sup>.
- Of these, 31 projects were also verified by the end of December 2017. These projects cover almost 1,300 hectares and are projected to sequester 593 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime<sup>1</sup>.
- Together, all validated (including verified) projects were predicted to sequester 762 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide in England, 1,509 thousand tonnes in Scotland, 164 thousand tonnes in Wales and 3 thousand tonnes in Northern Ireland over their lifetime<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures for carbon sequestration indicate the total projected sequestration of the projects over their lifetime of up to 100 years, and include the amount claimable by a project plus the amount allocated to a shared "buffer" in case of unanticipated losses.

## Woodland Carbon Code data at December 2017

A total of 245 projects were registered under the Woodland Carbon Code at 31 December 2017, covering over 16,200 hectares of woodland and projected to sequester 5.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over their life time of up to 100 years (Table 1). Most of the registered projects were in Scotland (110) and England (94), 39 were in Wales and two in Northern Ireland.

A total of 150 projects were validated by end December 2017 and are projected to sequester 2.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime. Of these projects, 31 were also verified by the end of December 2017 and are projected to sequester 593 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime.

**Table 1: Woodland Carbon Code projects in the UK at 31 December 2017**

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	UK
<b>Number of projects<sup>1</sup></b>					
Awaiting validation	29	37	28	1	95
Validated only	52	57	9	1	119
Validated and verified	13	16	2	0	31
Total validated	65	73	11	1	150
All projects	94	110	39	2	245
<b>Area of woodland (hectares)</b>					
Awaiting validation	347	10,625	188	7	11,167
Validated only	1,192	2,318	276	9	3,794
Validated and verified	153	1,097	37	0	1,287
Total validated	1,344	3,415	313	9	5,081
All projects	1,691	14,040	501	15	16,247
<b>Projected carbon sequestration<sup>2</sup> (thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)</b>					
Awaiting validation	175	3,178	84	1	3,438
Validated only	675	1,028	140	3	1,845
Validated and verified	87	481	24	0	593
Total validated	762	1,509	164	3	2,438
All projects	937	4,686	248	4	5,876

Source: Forestry Commission.

Note:

- (1) Projects can be validated/verified individually or come together as part of a group. The statistics presented here show the number of projects validated or verified whether they were put through the process individually or as part of a group.
- (2) Figures for carbon sequestration indicate the total projected sequestration of the projects over their lifetime of up to 100 years, and include the amount claimable by a project plus the amount allocated to a shared "buffer" in case of unanticipated losses.
- (3) **Awaiting validation:** is when a project or group is undergoing assessment by a certification body.
- (4) **Validated:** is the initial evaluation of a project or group against the requirements of the Woodland Carbon Code. Upon completion a project/group will receive a 'Validation Opinion Statement'. The project/group will then be certified for a period of up to 5 years.
- (5) **Verified:** Verification is the evaluation of a project as it progresses to confirm the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered to date as well as that it continues to meet the requirements of the Code.

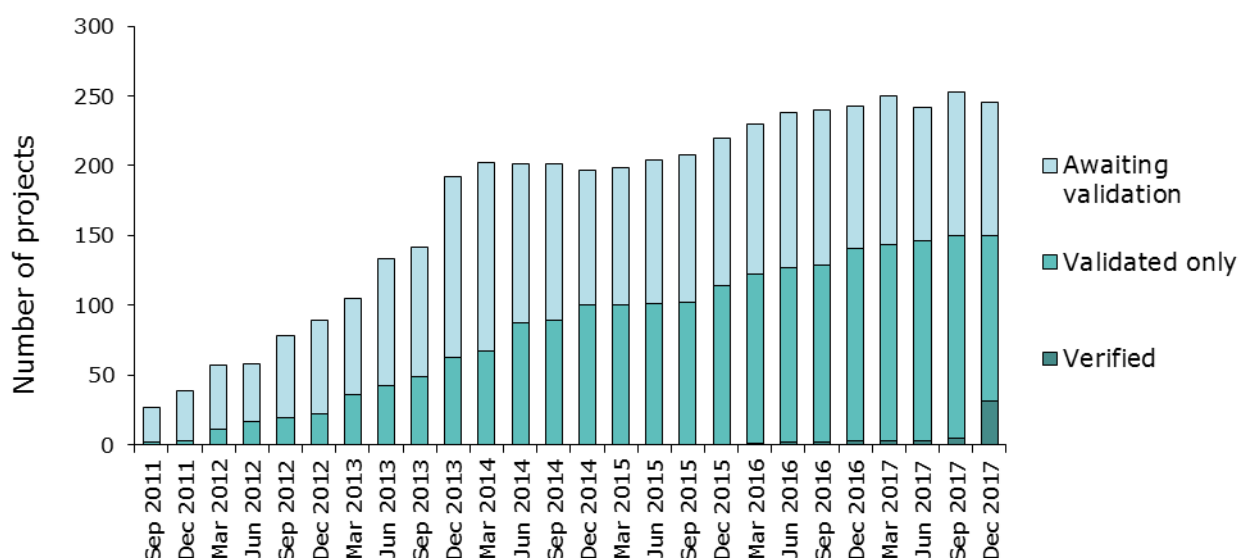
## Woodland Carbon Code projects in the UK

From the launch of the Woodland Carbon Code standard in 2011 until March 2014 there was a steady increase in the total number of projects (Figure 1). The trend has been more stable in recent periods.

The figures presented here report net changes in registered projects (i.e. additions less deletions). There were 27 new projects registered over the last quarter, but 35 projects were removed from the registry, meaning the net number of projects has decreased by 8 projects (or 3%) since September 2017. Projects were removed from the registry for a number of reasons, mainly because they were ineligible for the Woodland Carbon Code or the project developer no longer wished to claim the carbon benefit of the project. Over the past year, the total number of projects has shown an overall increase of 1%.

The number of validated projects (including those also verified) has risen consistently since the Code was launched. The number of projects validated (including those verified) at December 2017 is unchanged from the level in the previous quarter and is 6% higher than at December 2016.

Figure 1: Number of Woodland Carbon Code projects in the UK<sup>1</sup>



Source: Forestry Commission.

Note:

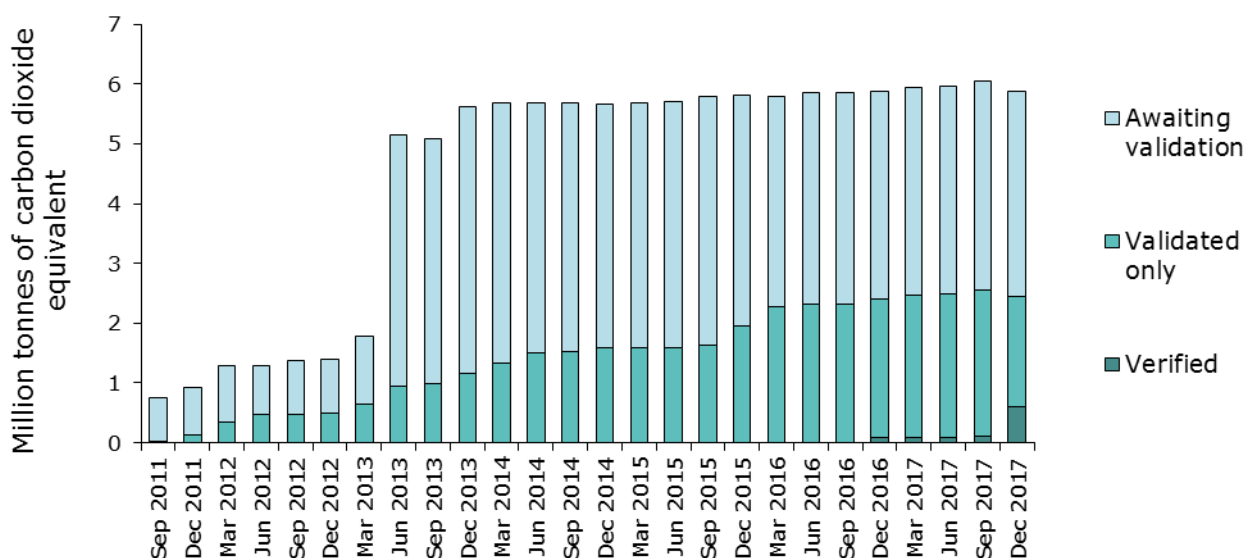
- (1) Projects can be validated/verified individually or come together as part of a group. The statistics presented here show the number of projects validated or verified whether they were put through the process individually or as part of a group.
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Total projected carbon sequestration has decreased by 3% since the previous quarter, in line with the net reduction in number of projects, and is unchanged in the year since December 2016 (Figure 2).

For validated projects (including those verified), there has been a 4% decrease in projected carbon sequestration in the latest quarter, but an overall 2% increase in the year since December 2016. Since September 2017, 3 projects were validated, but a further 3 validated projects were removed from the register. The validated projects removed were larger in scale than the newly validated projects, hence the net reduction in projected carbon sequestration. The validated projects were removed as the project developer no longer wished to claim the carbon benefit of the project.

**Figure 2: Projected carbon sequestration by Woodland Carbon Code projects in the UK<sup>1</sup>**



Source: Forestry Commission.

Note:

- (1) Figures for carbon sequestration indicate the total projected sequestration of the projects over their lifetime of up to 100 years, and include the amount claimable by a project plus the amount allocated to a shared "buffer" in case of unanticipated losses.
- (2) **Awaiting validation:** is when a project or group is undergoing assessment by a certification body.
- (3) **Validated:** is the initial evaluation of a project or group against the requirements of the Woodland Carbon Code. Upon completion a project/group will receive a 'Validation Opinion Statement'. The project/group will then be certified for a period of up to 5 years.
- (4) **Verified:** Verification is the evaluation of a project as it progresses to confirm the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered to date as well as that it continues to meet the requirements of the Code.

## Annex

### Introduction

This annex provides background information on the Woodland Carbon Code statistics presented in this release. It covers the data sources and methodology used to produce the statistics, information on quality measures and on any revisions to historic data and links to further information.

### Glossary

**Awaiting validation** When a project or group is undergoing assessment by a certification body.

**Forest** In the United Kingdom, there is no formal definition of "forest"; the term is often used for large woodland areas (especially conifers) or for old Royal hunting preserves such as the New Forest or the Forest of Dean.

**Forestry Commission (FC)** The government department responsible for forestry matters in England, Scotland and (until March 2013) Wales. The Forestry Commission's functions in Wales transferred to a new organisation, Natural Resources Wales, on 1 April 2013. The responsibility for forestry is devolved.

**Hectare (ha)** Unit of area defined as 10,000 square metres (100 m by 100 m), approximately equivalent to 2.47 acres.

**Tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)** Emissions and sequestration can be presented as tonnes carbon or tonnes carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent. To convert from tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> to tonnes carbon multiply by 12/44.

**United Kingdom (UK)** England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**Validated** The initial evaluation of a WCC project or group against the requirements of the Woodland Carbon Code. Upon completion a project/group will receive a 'Validation Opinion Statement'. The project/group will then be certified for a period of up to 5 years.

**Verified** Verification is the evaluation of a project as it progresses to confirm the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered to date as well as that it continues to meet the requirements of the Code.

**Woodland** Land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20% (25% in Northern Ireland), or having the potential to achieve this, including integral open space, and including felled areas that are awaiting restocking.



# Woodland Carbon Code Statistics

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## Data sources and methodology

Information about Woodland Carbon Code projects comes from the UK Woodland Carbon Registry, housed on the Markit Environmental Registry ([www.markit.com/product/registry](http://www.markit.com/product/registry)). The register is a live database and summary data are extracted on a quarterly basis.

Further information on administrative sources can be found at:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-832ey5](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-832ey5)

## Quality

Detailed information on the quality of the statistics presented in this publication is available in the *Quality Report: Woodland Carbon Code Statistics* at:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/wccqrpt.pdf/\\$FILE/wccqrpt.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/wccqrpt.pdf/$FILE/wccqrpt.pdf)

Further quality information on FC Official Statistics is available at:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-7zhk85](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-7zhk85)

## Revisions

Figures at December 2017 are published for the first time in this release.

Figures for earlier periods have not been revised from those previously published in Woodland Carbon Code Statistics: data to September 2017.

The Forestry Commission's revisions policy sets out how revisions and errors to these statistics are dealt with, and can be found at:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/\\$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf).

## Further information

Figures in tables have been independently rounded, so may not add to the totals shown.

Supplementary data are available in the accompanying spreadsheet at:  
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-93yjte>.

Further information on the Woodland Carbon Code is available at:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/carboncode](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/carboncode).

More statistics on UK forests and climate change can be found in *Forestry Statistics 2017*:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-7aqdgc](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-7aqdgc).

## Release schedule

Woodland Carbon Code statistics are currently published quarterly, in the month after each quarter ends. The next edition, covering data to March 2018 will be released on 19 April 2018.

Summary results are also published in September in Forestry Statistics, available from the [Forestry Commission website](#).

## Change to frequency of releases

In the last edition (released on 19 October 2017), users were consulted on the following proposed changes to the frequency and nature of releases:

- Quarterly releases to cease after April 2018;
- From 2019, annual data to March will be included in the output currently titled “Woodland Area, Planting and Publicly Funded Restocking” that is released each June.

No objections were received to these proposals so, following the April 2018 edition, Woodland Carbon Code statistics will move to an annual release, presenting results for the year to end March, and will be incorporated with other annual woodland statistics released each June.

## Official Statistics

This is an Official Statistics publication. For more information about Official Statistics and the UK Statistics Authority visit [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk).