

# Woodland Carbon Code Statistics

Data to September 2017

**Release date:** 19 October 2017

**Coverage:** United Kingdom

**Geographical breakdown:** Country

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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 (see Annex; Net changes in projects).

*Woodland Carbon Code Statistics* are released on a quarterly basis. Figures to September 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.

A change is proposed to the frequency of releases from April 2018. Further details on the proposal, along with information on how to submit your views, 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 253 projects were registered under the Woodland Carbon Code at 30 September 2017, covering an area of 16.4 thousand hectares of woodland and projected to sequester 6.0 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime<sup>1</sup>.
- Of these projects, 145 projects had been validated by end September 2017, covering an area of 5.0 thousand hectares and projected to sequester 2.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime<sup>1</sup>.
- Validated projects were predicted to sequester 918 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide in England, 1,342 thousand tonnes in Scotland, 164 thousand tonnes in Wales and 3 thousand tonnes in Northern Ireland over their lifetime<sup>1</sup>.
- Five projects, all located in Scotland, were verified by the end of September 2017. These projects cover an area of 257 hectares and are projected to sequester 120 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide 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 September 2017

A total of 253 projects were registered under the Woodland Carbon Code at 30 September 2017, covering an area of 16.4 thousand hectares of woodland and projected to sequester 6.0 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over their life time of up to 100 years (Table 1). Most of the registered projects were in England (122) and Scotland (102), 28 were in Wales and one in Northern Ireland.

145 projects had been validated by end September 2017, covering an area of 5.0 thousand hectares and projected to sequester 2.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime. Five projects, all located in Scotland, were verified by the end of September 2017; these projects are projected to sequester 120 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide over their lifetime.

**Table 1: Woodland Carbon Code projects in the UK at 30 September 2017**

|  | England | Scotland | Wales | Northern Ireland | UK     |
|--|---------|----------|-------|------------------|--------|
| <b>Number of projects<sup>1</sup></b>  |         |          |       |                  |        |
| Awaiting validation  | 55      | 31       | 17    | 0                | 103    |
| Validated  | 67      | 66       | 11    | 1                | 145    |
| Verified   | 0       | 5        | 0     | 0                | 5      |
| Total  | 122     | 102      | 28    | 1                | 253    |
| <b>Area of woodland (hectares)</b>   |         |          |       |                  |        |
| Awaiting validation  | 621     | 10,408   | 92    | 0                | 11,122 |
| Validated  | 1,659   | 3,065    | 313   | 9                | 5,046  |
| Verified   | 0       | 257      | 0     | 0                | 257    |
| Total  | 2,281   | 13,730   | 405   | 9                | 16,424 |
| <b>Projected carbon sequestration<sup>2</sup> (thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)</b> |         |          |       |                  |        |
| Awaiting validation  | 347     | 3,106    | 39    | 0                | 3,492  |
| Validated  | 918     | 1,342    | 164   | 3                | 2,427  |
| Verified   | 0       | 120      | 0     | 0                | 120    |
| Total  | 1,265   | 4,568    | 203   | 3                | 6,039  |

Source: Forestry Commission.

Note:

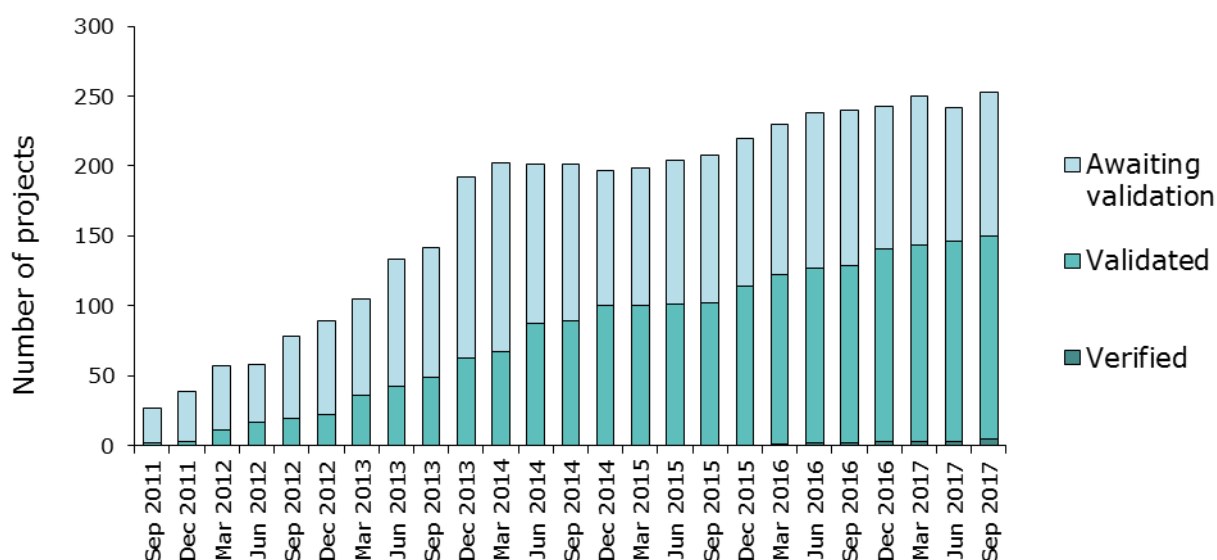
- (1) Projects can be validated/verified individually or come together as part of a group. The statistics presented here show the number of projects validated or verified whether they were put through the process individually or as part of a group.
- (2) Figures for carbon sequestration indicate the 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 then stabilised, before increasing at a slower rate in more recent periods. The total number of projects has increased by 5% in the latest quarter and by 5% over the past year.

The number of validated projects has risen consistently since the Code was launched. The 145 validated projects at September 2017 represents a 14% increase from the September 2016 total of 127.

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



Source: Forestry Commission.

Note:

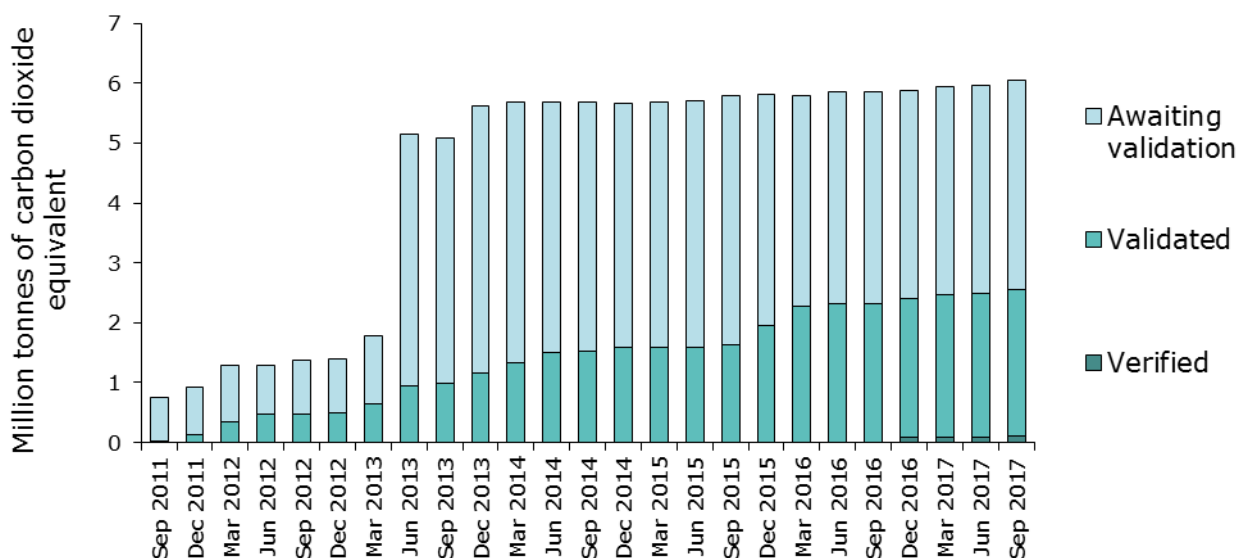
- (1) Projects can be validated/verified individually or come together as part of a group. The statistics presented here show the number of projects validated or verified whether they were put through the process individually or as part of a group.
- (2) **Awaiting validation:** is when a project or 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.

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Total projected carbon sequestration has increased by 1% since the previous quarter and by 3% in the year since September 2016 (Figure 2).

For validated projects, there has been a 5% increase in projected carbon sequestration in the year since September 2016.

Figure 2: 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 CO2 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.

### Net changes in projects

The figures presented here report net changes in registered projects (i.e. additions less deletions). Over the last quarter there were 11 new projects registered and no projects were removed from the registry.

### 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.



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**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.

## 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 September 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 June 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>.

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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/infd-7aqdgc](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7aqdgc).

## Release schedule

Woodland Carbon Code statistics are currently published quarterly, in the month after each quarter ends.

The next editions will be released on the following dates:

*Woodland Carbon Code Statistics: data to December 2017* will be published on 25 January 2018.

*Woodland Carbon Code Statistics: data to March 2018* will be published on 19 April 2018.

Summary results for the period to end June are also published in September in *Forestry Statistics*, available from the [Forestry Commission website](#).

## Proposed change to frequency of releases

Now that the Woodland Carbon Code has been in operation for several years, and uptake of the Code has stabilised, the need to monitor results on a quarterly basis has reduced. We therefore propose to make the following changes to the frequency and nature of releases:

- Quarterly releases will 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.

Please note that, under this proposal, the releases already pre-announced for January and April 2018 (see Release Schedule, above) will continue as planned;

We would welcome any views on the proposed changes. Please send your comments by 31 December 2018 to: [statistics@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

## 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).