

Woodland Carbon Code – A New Carbon Savings Standards

March 2012

BMI Environmental Consultancy Limited

Increasingly people are aware of the principle of sustainability to seek a balance among economic, environmental and social objectives to meet the needs of today without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. While modern people take every effort to reduce the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in their living environment, tree planting can play a leading role by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) is introduced in UK as a voluntary scheme which encourages a consistent approach to woodland carbon projects, and offers transparency to customers about carbon savings that their contributions may achieve.

Mechanism

Forest and woodlands planting can offset greenhouse gas emissions released as a result of burning fossil fuels. Carbon dioxide is captured by forests and stored as wood and in soil organic matter. Oxygen will then be released back into the atmosphere. It provides a chain of benefits for society and the biodiversity, such as providing new habitat for wildlife and opportunities for recreation.

Some individuals and companies are eager to participate in tree-planting schemes to help compensate for their carbon emissions. This WCC can provide an answer to people about the carbon savings that the tree-planting projects claim.

Requirements

To meet the requirement of the Code, projects must be registered with the Forestry Commission by stating the exact location, long-term objectives and management plan. The projects must comply with national forestry standards to ensure sustainably and responsibly managed. Standard methods are used to estimate that carbon will be sequestered. It must also be demonstrated that the project delivers additional carbon benefits than would otherwise have been the case.

Benefits

WCC projects are beneficial to the investors, carbon companies and the landowners. By participating in the WCC projects, *investors* can enjoy cost effectiveness to reduce net emissions and support UK emissions reduction targets. The returns of WCC projects are reliable and counter-cyclical to other investments. It can broaden the investors' investment portfolio.

Carbon companies are allowed to demonstrate high standards as their projects are adhered to government backed standards for woodland carbon projects. They can demonstrate confidence to investors of the quality of the projects they are investing in and are assured that the carbon they claimed will be sequestered.



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Certifying woodlands under the Code gives *landowners* the future possibility of an additional income upfront to help with the establishment of the woodland, and future income from the carbon sequestered in the woodland and from timber projects such as saw logs to woodfuel.

Participants of WCC projects can also address corporate and social responsibility objectives and demonstrate leadership in high-quality environmental investment by providing a wide range of social and environmental benefits such as enhancement of

local landscape or restore degraded landscapes, provision of shelter for animals or humans; provision of timber which can then continue to store carbon in long-lasting timber products, etc.

All in all, WCC projects can deliver clear verifiable benefits, both carbon sequestration and wider environmental benefits to consumers and investors. It is a good alternative to achieve sustainability other than taking initiatives to reduce CO₂ in our daily activities.

Contact Us

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