

FSC® UK'S RESPONSE TO THE WALES TIMBER INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2025

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Your name: Rosie Teasdale

Organisation (if applicable): FSC UK

email / telephone number: info@fsc-uk.org

Your address: Town Hall, Great Oak Street, Llanidloes. SY18 6BN

Consultation Questions:

1. Increasing timber supply

- i. How can the sustainable forest resource grown in Wales, be increased to make more timber and wood fibre available for the future?

We welcome the focus on sustainability in this question. There is the potential to bring more smaller/community woodlands into active sustainable management, particularly if the other ecosystem services that forests can provide can be recognised and financially rewarded. We would stress that in looking at sustainability this must equally consider the economic, social and environmental aspects/benefits and uses of Welsh Woods / Forests. There will be a need to engage and move forward with the farming/agricultural sectors given the amount of Welsh woods/forest that are part of traditional farms rather than just concentrate on larger forest owners or companies.

- ii. How can volumes of Welsh timber and wood fibre coming to market be increased?

As above, but it is important not to focus on volumes exclusively. Ensuring that timber is sourced from sustainable forests is vital. The carbon sequestration benefits of timber construction can only be claimed in whole life carbon assessments of buildings if that timber is from sustainably managed forests. There is a risk that this, and the wider benefits of responsible forest management, are overlooked in the drive to increase the volume of Welsh timber coming to market. Part of sustainability question for Welsh timber is ensuring that the supply

of Welsh timber can be maintained and is consistent and reliable supply into the market place. This is likely to involve exploring afforestation projects as well as increasing the management of existing woodlands. There will be a need to engage and move forward with the farming/agricultural sectors given the amount of Welsh woods/forest that are part of traditional farms rather than just concentrate on larger forest owners or companies.

2. Increasing resilience in our forests

- i. What actions can be taken in Wales to reduce the risks to our forests posed by climate change and pests and diseases?

To increase the awareness and monitoring of potential and existing tree pests and diseases. To support forest owners to reduce/remove inappropriate grazing and grazing pressure both from deer and also domestic stock across Wales. To ensure that changes in the range and populations of native trees / shrub species are monitored and suitable measures adopted to protect and maintain these important species for their biodiversity, cultural and economic values especially within ASNW and PAWS sites. To ensure that any new species of trees that are considered for future timber use are restricted to new or existing secondary plantations and are assessed for their potential invasive and/or negative environmental properties

- ii. How can growers and nurseries accelerate the implementation of adaptation measures?

Firstly, by ensuring the adaptive changes exhibited by existing tree species/populations within Wales are monitored for and used appropriately. Within Welsh ancient woodlands the use of natural regeneration should be encouraged to facilitate the potential for local adaptation to develop from existing important genetic stock. When looking to new genetic stock or future species to ensure this based on both appropriate scientific evidence of establishment/growth success as well as the suitability of the wood fibre / timber.

3. Resource efficiency and circular economy

- i. What actions could be taken in Wales to encourage reuse and recycling of wood to minimise waste?

Improved segregation of wood at recycling facilities to ensure that higher quality material can be reused as such. To consider the “ease” of recycling of timber products at the design stage.

- ii. How could Wales promote innovation, to design and manufacture wood-based products with increased value, extended durability and climate resilience? Supporting the production of engineered timber products and off site construction techniques to meet Welsh requirements. To support the promotion of Welsh timber and timber products and the skills base needed to deliver this from forest to finished product.

4. Instilling confidence in demand

- i. What actions could be taken in Wales to increase the use of timber and wood fibre in long-term uses, such as construction?

Highlighting to businesses and consumers the benefits of using responsibly sourced timber as a construction material to reduce embodied emissions and using incentives/regulations to support such use. 81% of respondents to FSC UK's 2025 consumer survey think that builders and construction companies should use more sustainable materials and methods, and 75% think that timber can be a sustainable building material, but only 50% support the increased use of wood by the industry. As mentioned above, the carbon sequestration benefits of timber construction can only be claimed in whole life carbon assessments of buildings if that timber is from sustainably managed forests. There is a risk that this, and the wider benefits of responsible forest management, are overlooked in the drive for more bio-based materials in construction.

Education on issues such as fire and water resistance.

Promoting the use of certified timber in public sector buildings.

- ii. How can we use home-grown timber and wood fibre to maximise local supply chain opportunities?
By ensuring and demonstrating consistent quality and quantity of the timber/wood fibre being produced to allow for confidence in the market to invest in the local supply chain.
- iii. How can Wales better align timber supply with market demand?
By demonstrating and providing suitable data across the supply chain from timber production forecasts, investment in new forests through to increasing the specification and procurement of Welsh Timber. To ensure that the quality and suitable end uses of Welsh timber/wood fibre are well understood and with awareness across the supply chain.

5. Developing sector capacity

- i. What challenges need to be addressed to improve recruitment and retention in forestry and timber industries in Wales?
Promotion of forestry and timber construction as careers in schools and further education establishments and supporting suitable apprenticeships. Improving awareness of and the pathways into the industry and sector.
- ii. What gaps are there in forestry and timber training and skills provision in Wales?
- iii. What actions are needed to support the development and adoption of new products, processes and/or technologies?

No comment.

6. Underpinned by behaviour change

- i. What actions are needed to improve public understanding of productive forestry?
It is important that messaging on the benefits of using timber/forest products also addresses the importance of responsible forestry.

There is still a lack of understanding with regards the potential for productive forestry to also provide environmental and social benefits. There is also increasing scepticism and scrutiny of vague environmental/green claims and there is a strong role here for third party verification schemes. Public awareness and basic understanding of certification schemes such as FSC is high and this could

be utilised to improve public understanding. 81% of respondents to FSC UK's 2025 consumer survey believe that trustworthy certification is important to help people choose more sustainable products and 76% recognise the FSC logo. However, 1 in 10 failed to identify that wood comes from trees, with approximately the same number citing flax as a forest product.

- ii. Do you support the proposal to establish an Industry Leadership Group in Wales? Yes/No
- a) If yes, what contribution could it make during the implementation of the Timber Industrial Strategy?
- Yes but it does need to be representative of the full sector and supply chain – from forest contractors to forest owners, from small to large businesses through to end users
- iii. Do you support the proposal to recruit a Chief Forester for Wales? Yes/No
- b) If yes, what added value would the role bring to the forestry sector in Wales?

This depends on the brief, powers, associated funding and how the role would fit within and across the sector. Clearly such a role would need to significantly raise the profile of sustainable forest management, supply chains and use of Welsh Timber while ensuring suitable representation of the end users and consumers.

7. What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the proposals on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.
- i. Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects?
- ii. Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

No comment.

8. In your opinion, could the proposals be formulated or changed so as to:
- have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English; or
 - mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

No comment.

9. We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them. Please enter here:

We would like to reiterate the importance of ensuring responsible forest management and recognising the value of third-party certification of this and this means recognising the reflecting the social, environmental and economics of Welsh woods/forests.

