

Making the case for a Woodland Carbon Code

Despite forestry's contribution to biodiversity, flood control, air quality, wellbeing and particularly climate change mitigation, our woodland owners do not receive remuneration for supplying these public goods to society.

Woodland creation and sustainable forest management have the potential to be a future source of income for growers, through their carbon storage capability. This is now a reality in the UK, through their Woodland Carbon Code, which gives climate change recognition for businesses that provide carbon savings when they promote forestry projects.

The Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA) maintains there is now real potential for establishing a Carbon Code here. This would provide a quality assurance standard for woodland planting projects and generate independently verified carbon units, which could be sold to companies and other enterprises who wish to show that they are mitigating their carbon emissions.

The new European Green Deal aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and safeguard the health and wellbeing of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts. Woodland owners now have a new opportunity to make the case

development that would assist woodland owners in receiving recompense for the carbon they store. The code would work for everyone involved, including:

- Forest owners and managers, who would have clear standards of forest management under such a code, in order to provide reliable estimates of the amount of carbon that will be sequestered or stored in their forests.
- Potential carbon buyers would have reassurance that they have invested in a responsible scheme and a code would assist in marketing the sale of forest carbon units.
- Projects would carry a specific Carbon Code label of approval and could then use their verified status as an attractive selling point to potential customers.

Several new trends are emerging in agroforestry or silvopasture allowing for more environmentally-friendly farming, which could similarly benefit under such a carbon scheme. Tree planting, in whatever form it takes – whether as a complimentary activity to current farming practices such as agroforestry, conventional forestry or Continuous Cover Forestry – have the potential to contribute to the economic sustainability of agriculture and also achieve the future aims of the new CAP and European Green Deal.