

## **WWF-UK Forest & Trade Network membership benefits, requirements, procedures and communications code of practice**

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## What are the benefits of membership of the WWF-UK Forest and Trade Network?

Any business that can demonstrate a good business case for responsibly sourcing forest products should consider joining the WWF Global Forest & Trade Network. The Network exists to assist those that want to produce or purchase responsibly sourced forest products and to aid this process of change regardless of the starting point of the organisation involved.

Membership of the WWF-UK Forest & Trade Network (WWF-UK FTN) and the association with the WWF Global Forest & Trade Network (GFTN) bring a number of benefits to organisations determined to produce or source forest products more responsibly. These benefits and services include:

- information to Members on good forest management practices and credible certification systems and schemes;
- updates on WWF policy relating to forest certification;
- practical guidance on how to source credibly certified wood and wood products;
- guidance and advice on communicating your commitment to responsible timber procurement to your suppliers and customers;
- annual feedback from WWF on Members' forest product usage reports and progress made;
- access to, and notification of, other NGO reports;
- information on, and market links to, WWF Producer Groups (sources progressing towards credible certification);
- leadership on projects designed to progress to credible certification in particular areas or in particular sectors;
- being a business leader and Member of the leading solutions-based initiative for responsible forest products purchasing;
- being a member of a group (the WWF-UK FTN) used by socially responsible investors as an indicator of responsible purchasing of forest products;
- opportunity to meet like-minded peers and to discuss pertinent issues

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# WWF-UK Forest and Trade Network membership requirements

To remain credible and effective in meeting its objectives, the WWF-UK FTN makes a number of requirements on Members.

A Member shall be required to:

- submit a statement of policies and practices for the promotion of responsible forest management and credible forest certification relevant to its operations;
- submit an annual action plan and targets for implementing the policies and practices described above;
- report to the WWF-UK FTN Manager in the required format annually and agree to random external independent auditing of data (10% annually of the WWF-UK FTN membership);
- submit for inspection details of progress in implementing its action plan to the WWF-UK FTN Manager;
- nominate a senior member of management with responsibility for acting as the operational contact for the Member and for implementing the action plan;
- agree to follow the WWF-UK FTN Communication Code of Practice (see page 10);
- pay a membership fee;
- respect the UK competition and anti-trust laws and have a responsibility not to act in an anti-competitive way

Members who fail to comply with any of the membership requirements will have their membership suspended (see page 6).

**These requirements will now be explained in more detail.**

## Policy

A prospective Member must be able to demonstrate its commitment through the development and pursuit of policies that will precipitate improved forest management. These policies must include reference to:

- the scope of the member's business that is covered by such policies;
- the elimination of illegally harvested wood from supply chains;
- the elimination of wood sourced from high conservation value forests\* that are not independently certified;
- continually increasing the proportion of forest products (as designated within the scope of the policy) that originate from known, legal and credibly certified forests

## Action Plan

Working with the WWF-UK FTN Manager, each Member must develop a series of Action Plans that address deficiencies or weaknesses in achieving the Member's stated policy. Action Plans will be agreed jointly to ensure that the activity and progress can be defined, measured and reported. Each Member will be required to submit an action plan that will lead to significant improvement on an annual basis with respect to the status of the supply base. Once submitted, the WWF-UK FTN Manager will either accept

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\* High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) as identified by processes applying to the HCVF toolkit, or identified by the Member company itself as a potential or actual HCVF.

the Action Plan in its current form, or request improvements if it is unrealistic or fails to address the areas of greatest risk.

## Report

The Member will be required to report to the WWF-UK FTN on its progress towards its targets and compliance with the action plan. Additionally, the Member will be required to report to the WWF-UK FTN on the following aspects of its supply chain for forest products (as designated within the scope of its policy):

- forest(s) of origin for each raw material;
- species of timber or other forest product;
- the volume of this material;
- the certification system the product is certified under (if any);
- an assessment of the status of this material in accordance with a set of defined categories (see below)

Each forest source will require an assessment by the Member, and products will fall into one of seven categories, according to the buyer's knowledge of how and where the wood was grown and harvested:

### Virgin material:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Category 1 | Unknown or unwanted source  |
| Category 2 | Known source  |
| Category 3 | Legal source (legal right to harvest)   |
| Category 4 | In progress to credible certification (e.g. a source working with WWF Producer Group or other similar mechanisms) |
| Category 5 | Credibly certified source   |

### Recycled/reclaimed material:

- |              |                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Category Ri  | Recycled pre-consumer waste sources; |
| Category Rii | Recycled post-consumer waste sources |

NB A significant upward movement of the category of sources will be expected to be shown over a period of time.

The information contained within reports submitted to WWF-UK FTN will be treated as strictly confidential. However, the report does contain optional sections where members are invited to provide information that will be passed on to other staff within WWF GFTN to facilitate market links between FTN members.

Reports must be submitted by 31 March each year via the WWF-UK FTN website and cover the period January to December of the previous year.

## Review

Members' progress towards achieving their action plans and the process of assessment of their supply chain must be available for review by the WWF-UK FTN Manager or suitably qualified agreed third party.

A random sample of Members will be selected for external independent audit to verify the accuracy of the information they submit in their report and action plan. Auditing will be carried out by a GFTN approved auditor, who will be bound by a confidentiality agreement with WWF not to disclose any

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findings further than the WWF-UK FTN Manager. WWF will make available to members a summary report of the auditor's findings. The identity of Members audited will not be revealed within this report.

WWF-UK will publish an annual audited report containing members' aggregated data and such other member information for which prior agreement has been obtained in writing.

### **Senior management**

Each Member of the WWF-UK FTN must agree to have a senior member of management designated as responsible for complying with membership requirements. The senior Manager involved will be responsible for commitments made and must have sufficient seniority to ensure that all commitments are realised.

### **Communications**

The integrity of the WWF-UK FTN and its membership is at risk if Members misrepresent the nature and role of the WWF-UK FTN. Communications guidelines have been developed by GFTN for all FTN Members. The WWF-UK FTN Communications Code of Practice based on these guidelines can be found on page 10.

### **Fees**

The WWF-UK FTN requires Members to pay an annual fee for membership. This fee is used to fund events, production of materials and other activities for Members. It is also used to create awareness about the threats to the world's forests and how to achieve improved forest management, and to fund research into forest trade issues. Members are required to pay their fees on time and can expect the WWF-UK FTN to be accountable for monies raised in this manner.

### **Competition law**

Members of the WWF-UK FTN must respect EU/UK competition and anti-trust regulations and laws. Members must not use any forum arranged under the auspices of the WWF-UK FTN to discuss mutual suppliers or activities that may in any way be construed as being anti-competitive.

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# Procedures for WWF-UK FTN Membership

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. An Organisation that meets the membership requirements for the WWF-UK FTN may apply for membership by submitting an Application Form to the WWF-UK FTN Manager.
2. The WWF-UK FTN Manager will undertake an initial risk assessment (due diligence) and, if required, seek guidance from the GFTN secretariat, WWF International Business & Industry Group and the WWF-UK Business & Industry Core Group before proceeding. The initial risk assessment will include:
  - a. assessment of the company's board, management and strategic orientation, publicly available information on convictions, ongoing litigation, bad press, environmental record, environmentally insensitive practices, environmentally irresponsible marketing, social/human rights disputes;
  - b. assessment of real or perceived implications of the proposed membership for WWF's policies and activities

If the WWF-UK FTN Manager is satisfied that the organisation meets the membership requirements and has completed a satisfactory action plan, the WWF-UK FTN Manager will write an acceptance letter. Once the letter of acceptance has been received the organisation may publicise its membership subject to the WWF-UK FTN Communications Code of Practice.

## SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP

The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall recommend suspension of an organisation's membership for a limited period based on the conditions listed under the Procedures for Suspension & Termination (see below) in cases such as:

- a. action plan activities not adequately completed within the designated time limit;
- b. suspension of forest or chain of custody certification;
- c. misuse of the WWF-UK FTN name or logo, misrepresentation of membership, or misuse of membership certificate not corrected by suitable retractions or other appropriate remedial measures by the Member;
- d. misleading environmental claims regarding forest products made by the Member, his agent or supplier and not corrected or retracted;
- e. inaccurate information supplied by the Member to the WWF-UK FTN Manager in respect of material used or activities under the FTN membership (when deemed deliberately misleading in the opinion of the WWF-UK FTN Manager);
- f. lack of payment of membership fees or for services rendered under WWF-UK FTN membership for which additional payment was due;
- g. change in the Member's management where compliance with membership requirements is uncertain;
- h. agreement by the Member to suspend trading activities for a specified period of time (for example due to insolvency or receivership)
- i. any contravention of the membership requirements, for example:
  - failure to submit annual report on time;
  - inadequate improvement of performance based on the agreed scheduled action plan;
  - lack of demonstration of compliance with local & national regulations

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## PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND REINSTATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP:

1. The WWF-UK FTN Manager will confirm in writing to the Member the intention to suspend Membership.
2. At the same time, the WWF-UK FTN Manager will indicate the reasons for the proposed suspension.
3. The Member shall have 10 working days from receipt to offer mitigation.
4. The WWF-UK FTN Manager will consider the mitigation offered and take a decision whether or not to proceed with the suspension of Membership.
5. If suspension is to proceed, the WWF-UK FTN Manager will confirm in writing to the Member the suspension of Membership.
6. At the same time, the WWF-UK FTN Manager will indicate the conditions under which the suspension will be removed; (Note: Members have a right to an appeal, see *Appeals and Arbitration*).
7. The Manager will notify the other WWF-UK FTN Members and all relevant organisations within the GFTN of the suspension of the membership. Other stakeholders may be notified if deemed appropriate by the WWF-UK FTN Manager.
8. A Member shall not identify itself as a Member while suspended.
9. Prior to the end of the suspension period, an investigation will be carried out to determine whether the indicated conditions for reinstating the membership have been fulfilled.
10. On fulfilment of these conditions, the suspension will be lifted and the Member notified of the membership reinstatement. If the conditions are not fulfilled the membership will be terminated.
11. WWF-UK FTN Members, GFTN and other stakeholders if appropriate will be notified of the reinstatement or termination of membership.

## TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 1 Membership of the WWF-UK FTN may be terminated if the Member:
  - a. takes inadequate measures in case of suspension or goes out of business;
  - b. fails to conform to the conditions of suspension as referred to in the Suspension and Termination document;
  - c. continues to publicly claim membership under a suspended membership; or
  - d. gives notice in writing to terminate the agreement to the WWF-UK FTN Manager
- 2 In any case, the WWF-UK FTN Manager has the right to withdraw membership by informing the Member in writing. The Member may give notice of appeal (see *Appeals and Arbitration*).
- 3 In cases of termination no reimbursement of fees shall be given.
- 4 Termination of the membership will be notified to all appropriate organisations and may be published if deemed appropriate by the WWF-UK FTN Manager and the GFTN Secretariat.

## APPEALS & ARBITRATION

1. If, for any reason, a Member is notified that its membership may be suspended or terminated, the Member has the right of appeal.

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2. Notification of the intention to appeal must be made in writing and received by the WWF-UK FTN Manager within seven days of receipt of the notification of suspension or termination of membership. An Appeals Form will be sent to the Member for completion and must be returned to the WWF-UK FTN Manager within 14 days of receipt, supported by relevant facts and data for consideration during the appeals procedure.
3. All appeals received by the WWF-UK FTN Manager shall be placed before a GFTN appointed mediator.
4. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall submit evidence to support the decision to suspend or terminate the membership.
5. The decision of the GFTN-appointed mediator shall be final and binding on both the Member and the WWF-UK FTN Manager. Once the decision regarding an appeal has been taken, no counter-claim by either party in dispute can be made to amend or change this decision.
6. In instances where the appeal has been successful and the membership reinstated, no claim can be made against the WWF-UK FTN Manager for reimbursement of costs or any other losses incurred as a result of the withholding, suspension or withdrawal notification.
7. No external communications shall be made by any party until the appeals and arbitration process is concluded.

## COMPLAINTS

1. If a member or other stakeholder wishes to make a complaint against the WWF-UK FTN Management, a letter of complaint shall be addressed to the WWF-UK Head of Forest and Trade Policy, who shall inform the WWF GFTN secretariat.
2. If a Member or other stakeholder has cause to complain regarding the programme or conduct of employees of the GFTN approved auditor, the complaint shall be made in writing, without delay, to the WWF-UK FTN Manager and it shall be dealt with in accordance with the complaints procedure (see Complaints Procedure below).
3. If a Member wishes to make a complaint against another Member, the complaint shall be made in writing, without delay to the WWF-UK FTN Manager and it shall be dealt with in accordance with the complaints procedure.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

### ***Complaint concerning the WWF-UK FTN Management:***

1. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall confirm in writing to the Member or other stakeholder that the complaint has been received.
2. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall inform the WWF-UK Head of Forest and Trade Policy, the GFTN Regional Coordinator and the GFTN Secretariat.
3. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall submit evidence to address the complaint to the WWF-UK Head of Forest and Trade Policy, the GFTN Regional Coordinator and the GFTN Secretariat.
4. The WWF-UK FTN Manager, WWF-UK Head of Forest and Trade Policy, GFTN Regional Coordinator and the GFTN Secretariat shall agree the appropriate response to the complainant

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5. If the complainant is not satisfied, the complaint shall be addressed by the GFTN Executive Management Group.
6. The decision of the GFTN Executive Management Group shall be final and binding on all parties.

***Complaint concerning the GFTN Approved Auditor:***

1. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall confirm in writing to the Member or other stakeholder that the complaint has been received.
2. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall raise the issue in writing with the approved auditor.
3. The approved auditor shall be asked to reply within 14 days and submit evidence to address the complaint.
4. If the complainant is not satisfied, the WWF-UK FTN Manager shall ask the GFTN Secretariat to arbitrate.
5. The decision of the GFTN Secretariat shall be final and binding on all parties.

***Complaint concerning a WWF-UK FTN Member:***

1. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall confirm in writing to the Member or other stakeholder that the complaint has been received.
2. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall raise the issue in writing with the Member concerned.
3. The Member shall reply within 14 days and shall submit evidence to address the complaint.
4. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall respond to the complainant within 14 days (i.e. within 28 days of receipt of the initial complaint).
5. The WWF-UK FTN Manager shall inform the WWF-UK Head of Forest and Trade Policy and the GFTN Regional Coordinator of the response.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied, the WWF-UK FTN Manager shall ask the GFTN Secretariat to arbitrate.
7. The decision of the GFTN Secretariat shall be final and binding on all parties.

# WWF-UK FTN Communication Code of Practice

## INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice relates to claims and communications concerning participation in the WWF-UK Forest & Trade Network.

It is essential to the long-term credibility of the WWF-UK FTN that claims relating to participation are adequately controlled to ensure that they are accurate and verifiable. This Code of Practice defines obligations of WWF-UK FTN Management and Members with regard to their external communication.

This Code of Practice is based upon standard ISO 14020, to the extent that permitted communications relating to WWF-UK FTN Members are intended to ensure that all claims will be “*accurate, verifiable and not misleading*”.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WWF-UK FTN MANAGER

Information concerning the procedures, requirements, objectives and activities of the WWF-UK FTN is publicly available.

The current register of WWF-UK FTN Members is publicly available.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF WWF-UK FTN MEMBERS

Member status may not be promoted through any on-product claims. Communication of “Member” status is limited to off-product statements and promotional material, all of which must be signed off by the WWF-UK FTN staff. This covers all communications materials (brochures, leaflets, annual reports, presentations, videos, press releases, websites and any other similar published media and any written communication to the public including letters from customer services). Members are advised to use the following approved statements for communication of membership:

- “Member of the WWF-UK Forest & Trade Network.”
- “WWF-UK Forest & Trade Network Members have committed to working with WWF-UK to increase the proportion of forest products that they trade in or consume from well-managed forests that have been credibly, independently certified.”
- “As a Member of the WWF-UK FTN (company name) has committed to implement a responsible purchasing policy for forest products.”

WWF-UK FTN Members must not make misleading environmental claims either on or off products and must adhere to the Green Claims Code. Please go to:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/gcc/index.htm>.

If WWF-UK FTN Members make any claim to external audiences about the percentage of their purchases or sales that are certified, they must be clear as to exactly what purchases or sales are included in the scope of that statement and as to which certification scheme.

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Any publication material that uses the WWF-UK FTN logo must be approved in writing prior to publication by the WWF-UK FTN management. All logo use must comply with the guidelines issued with the logo, which is obtainable from the FTN Manager.

The WWF-UK FTN membership certificate is for internal use only and may not to be copied or provided as assurance that timber traded by the Member is from a well-managed or legal source. It is not to be sent out to potential customers. This can be misleading and is not acceptable.

Members do not have the right to use the WWF Panda logo or any other WWF copyrighted or trademarked material without the permission of WWF. The right to use a WWF trademark is granted to a company entering into a Licensing Agreement with WWF-UK and needs to be arranged separately with WWF-UK Company Fundraising. Contact: 01483 426444.

*For approval of WWF-UK FTN membership statements and logo use contact:*

*WWF-UK FTN Manager, Tel: 01483 412579,*

*WWF-UK FTN Coordinator, Tel: 01483 412578,*

*Email: [fn@wwf.org.uk](mailto:fn@wwf.org.uk)*

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