



5 - Supplying Sustainable Wood Products

“Our forests support development of the Northern Ireland economy by supplying wood for industrial use. We sold 414,000 cubic metres of logs for £9.95 million, and we estimate that £24 million of value was added by industry in harvesting, timber haulage, and manufacture for construction, fencing, pallet and packaging, and energy. We obtained more of our timber supplies from tree thinning operations as part of our strategy to extend the life of plantations and reduce the impact of forestry operations on the environment.”

Forest Service Annual Report 2015 - 2016

Timber harvesting operations are managed to avoid adverse environmental impacts, particularly preventing movement of sediment and pollutants into watercourses. Since 2014, Armagh forests have produced an average of 27,000 cubic metres (equivalent to 900 lorry loads) of timber per year, mainly from [clearfelling](#).

To provide assurances of [sustainable management](#), Forest Service forests and management are subject to a periodic assessment and annual audits of compliance by an independent certification body. In the UK, certification bodies use the [UK Woodland Assurance Standard](#) (UKWAS) to assess the management of Forest Service forests against the requirements of both the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC)® (Licence code: FSC-C084232), and, the [Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification](#) (PEFC) (Certification code: PEFC/16-40-1924). As a result of FSC® and PEFC forest management and ensuing ‘chain of custody’ certification components, wood products derived from Forest Service forests can be marketed by processors using the logos of the FSC® and PEFC. The logos signify that wood products have come from responsibly managed forests.

Over time, forest plans will seek to reduce the proportion of the total amount of timber produced by [clearfelling](#), and increase timber production from [thinning](#) of plantations that will eventually be clearfelled. Where site conditions are suitable, plantations will be managed using [low impact silvicultural systems](#) (LISS), in which clearfelling is avoided and [continuous forest cover](#) is maintained.

Opportunity: Review the timing and boundaries of planned felling, to complement landscape design and enhance water protection, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools and datasets.

Opportunity: To optimise the supply of timber from thinning and use of LISS, including [continuous cover forestry](#).

Activity: Make use of advanced GIS tools and datasets to improve the design of [felling coupes](#).

Activity: Optimise [thinning](#) in Armagh forests, and enhance planning capability.

Activity: Develop and apply a rationale for identifying further areas where the use of [LISS](#) is appropriate.

Outcomes	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain supply of certified timber - Improved knowledge of future timber availability - Greater resilience of timber availability through the use of alternative silvicultural systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable economic activity in the rural landscape - Industrial output of home produced wood products to a variety of markets, including construction, agriculture, energy, and domestic heating

Map 3 - Supplying Sustainable Wood Products: Opportunity to Review Harvesting Plans in Gosford Forest

