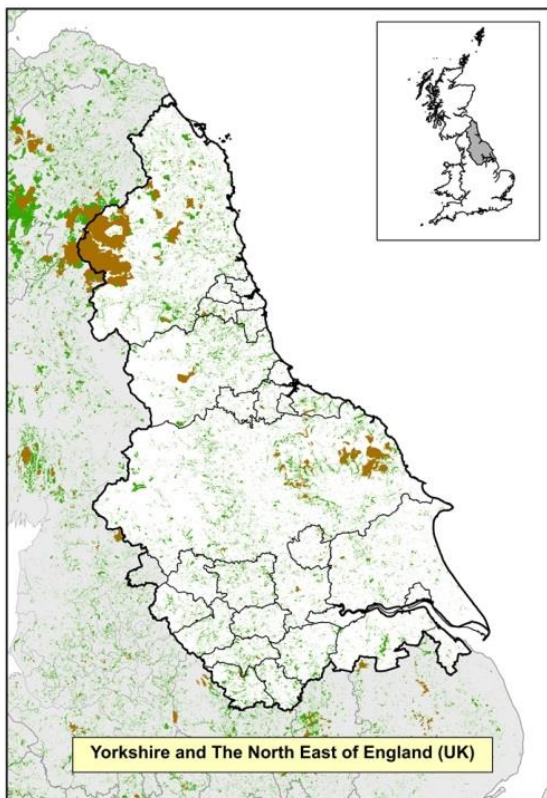


Focus on Yorkshire and North East England

Background

The Yorkshire and North East model region covers 23,981km² and comprises 4 National Parks and 4 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a population of nearly 8 million inhabitants.



Source: Rural Development Initiatives Ltd

The woodland cover is around 238,250 ha, about 10% of the land covering (National Forest Inventory, 2012).

37% of the woodland cover is owned by the state (Forestry Commission), 41% of woodland is privately owned; with the rest being made up of local government, industrial private owners and non-industrial private multiple owners.

Mainly privately owned woodlands are small and fragmented, with an average woodland size of 13ha. The ownership of many of these woodlands is unknown; however it is likely that a large percentage

of these private woodland holdings will be less than 5 ha.

45% of the regions forest cover is conifer with the main species being *Picea sitchensis* and 34% of the forest cover is broadleaved with the main species being *Quercus petraea*, *Acer pseudoplatanus* and *Betula spp.*



Photo: Andrew Kitching

Many private forests are primarily used to provide wood production (woodfuel) and recreational activities in terms of game management as well as biodiversity.

SIMWOOD's work in the region

Project activities within the region are being conducted within the wider context of Roots to Prosperity, a strategy produced in 2013 and led by the forest industries across the entire forestry and wood processing sector and provides very good linkages with the SIMWOOD project.

The SIMWOOD project will be focussing on the barriers and opportunities for wood mobilisation amongst these small undermanaged private woodland holdings as this represents an untapped resource in terms of timber volume.

Regional Learning Lab

The first Regional Learning Lab comprised of 30 participants and was made up of woodland owners, forest managers, policy advisors, processors, contractors and biomass users.

The regional learning lab enabled the SME to identify the barriers to wood mobilisation of small private woodlands and to help support the development of the focus study, as well as the pilot projects.



Photo: Chloe Bellamy

Focus study: Forestry Skills Assessment

Pilot Project 1: Investigating alternative harvesting methods to maximising woody biomass product breakout from harvesting sites

Pilot Project 2: Bringing undermanaged small farm/estate woodlands into productive and sustainable management.

Focus Study

The aim of the focus study was to better understand the skills and knowledge levels of the woodland owners and manager/contractors as there is concern from across the sector with regards a shortage of suitable contractors and woodland owners when looking at the management of small and complex sites.

Information gathered during the focus study enabled the SME to adapt and amend the pilot project to better understand the audience it will need to target to provide the greatest opportunity for wood mobilisation.

Pilot Projects

Results from the focus study showed that the proposed pilot projects needed to be adjusted to concentrate on areas of the sector which are not disengaged; whilst better meeting the demand of the sector, providing greater engagement and a legacy to the SIMWOOD project.

The pilot project which the SME will concentrate on 'bringing under managed small privately owned woodlands into productive and sustainable management by adopting a market brand'

The revised objective of the pilot project is to support the mobilisation of timber from small and undermanaged woodlands by creating a regional timber marketing group for woodland owners,

woodfuel producers/traders and small scale saw millers with the adoption of a brand for their products.



Photo: Andrew Kitching

The marketing group will provide users of woodlands and timber products as assurance brand that the timber has been grown in the UK in accordance with the UK Government Timber Procurement Policy.

This brand will compliment and integrate with other well proven forest certification schemes such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme of Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

Discussions with organisation within the sector have shown there is an enthusiasm for this type of UK brand awareness.



Photo: Andrew Kitching

Who to contact in the region

The SIMWOOD local team includes staff from Forest Commission Research Agency.

To get involved in SIMWOOD's activities, please contact:

Andrew Kitching (Rural Development Initiatives Ltd)
(andrew.kitching@ruraldevelopment.org.uk)