



1 The Vision

The **Scottish Government** has a vision of a Scotland which makes its public data open and available for reuse by anyone for any purpose from general interest to commercial exploitation. All public bodies are required to commit to the development and implementation of their own **Open Data publication plans**:

“An open data publication plan will set out the organisation’s commitment to making its data open and identify how and when they will achieve this, including the data that will be made open.”¹

Forestry Commission Scotland and Forest Enterprise Scotland share this commitment. For the purposes of this document FCS includes both Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES).

The two main parts of the Forestry Commission in Scotland are Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES). The latter is an agency of the Forestry Commission. Both FCS and FES are funded by the Scottish Government and operate as part of the Scottish Governments Environment & Forestry Directorate.

2 The Key Characteristics of Open Data

The Scottish Government Open Data Strategy defines Open Data as:

- non-personal and non-commercial data;
- accessible to anyone, via the internet, free of charge and restriction on re-use;
- in a machine readable form across a wide spectrum of technologies.

The key characteristics of open data are that it needs to be Discoverable, Viewable and Downloadable.

- **Discoverable** means not only is it easy to find but the potential user is also informed what the data are about. This ‘metadata’ will typically provide the potential user with a description of the data, where it came from, what its purpose is for the owning organisation, what standard of quality can be reasonably be expected and what type of licence covers its use.

¹ Scottish Government Open Data Strategy <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/6614/0>

- **Viewable** means that the potential user can look at the data on screen using any internet browser to see what the data or portions thereof look like in order to assess its suitability for purpose. Data such as geographical data may need to be viewed using some kind of application such as a map viewer.
- **Downloadable** means that a potential user is able to export the data from the host platform to his own local machine without any manual assistance from the data owner. The “level of openness” is an essential aspect of the open data vision. Open data should be readable by any non-proprietary software.

This means it must fall into the 3-star or above data type category in the [five star schema](#):

★	Data available online with open license permitting re-use. Examples – Tables and charts in PDF document or scanned images.
★★	Data available online in a machine readable format, with open license permitting re-use. Examples – Excel tables and charts.
★★★	Data is available online, in non-proprietary machine readable format, with open license permitting re-use. Examples – Comma Separated Values (CSV) Extensible Markup Language (XML).
★★★★	Data is available online, in non-proprietary machine readable format, with open license permitting re-use. Data is described in a standard way and uses unique reference indicators, so that people can point to your data.
★★★★★	Data is available online, in non-proprietary machine readable format, with open license permitting re-use. Your data uses unique references and links to other data to provide context.

[Sir Tim Berners-Lee](#)

3 Forestry Commission Scotland's (FCS) Approach

FCS is currently involved in a process of organisational change, and therefore this is an interim document, guiding a process which can be confirmed when the situation is more stable.

From this starting point, FCS will develop the current published data offerings to comply with the minimum requirements of the open data vision, add new data to the catalogue and move towards at least 3-star openness in an appropriate way. As the collection and management of new data falls within FCS's areas of responsibility, open publication of data will become embedded in its business as usual processes.

FCS will collaborate with colleagues across the public sector, including Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (RAFE) partners, to share experience, with a particular focus on metadata standards and common publishing platforms.

Selecting the data: Data requests come into FCS on a regular basis from private and public bodies; these requests are continually reviewed to identify potential future data for publication; candidate data for open publication will be prioritised for action based on its perceived usefulness and the level of demand from external individuals and groups.

Licensing reuse: Open data publication excludes personal and commercially sensitive data; it is FCS's objective to publish all other data under the open government licence (OGL) which permits unlimited use.

Level of openness: FCS will create processes to make currently published datasets available at the 3- star level and above; usefulness, demand and ease of upgrade will be the factors used to prioritise this activity

Data publication: FCS is adapting to ongoing restructuring, but for now the data will continue to reside on the FCS servers, and will be accessible in a number of ways; via FC Scotland's main web page (<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/>), spatial datasets can be downloaded from the FC Data Download page (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/datadownload>), and some maps are viewable through

the FCS Map Viewer (<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/communication-consultation/map-viewer-guidance>). In addition selected datasets will also be available on:

- Scotland's Environment web site (SEWeb), <http://www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/>;
- Scottish Spatial Data Metadata Catalogue (SSDI), <http://scotgovsdi.edina.ac.uk/geonetwork/apps/tabsearch/> ;
- UK Government's data web site, <https://data.gov.uk/>.

4 Priorities and timescale

The publication of open data by FCS will be in accordance with relevant Scottish Government guidelines, including but not limited to those listed in **Annex I**. The documents will be compatible with screen reading software across all platforms and devices. This is outlined in **Annex 2**. The scheduling of open data publication will be informed by:

- *importance* – statutory ahead of discretionary;
- *urgency* – demand driven release based on data of most interest to users;
- *opportunity* – capability and capacity.

In reviewing and framing our data policies we shall aim to:-

1. *Publish our data free of charge under Open Government Licence;*
2. *Utilise and develop our dataset asset register;*
3. *Specify Open Data when creating, commissioning or buying new data;*
4. *Provide clear licensing information – e.g. attribution / share-alike;*
5. *Promote transparency around charging for value-added services;*
6. *Resolve data restrictions within partnership agreements;*
7. *Negotiate exemption from embedded licencing restrictions in derived data;*
8. *Overcome blocks to applying open data standards retrospectively;*
9. *Identify gaps and improvements in our processes;*
10. *Implement an action plan to deliver the 2017 Open Data target.*

All currently available spatial data on the schedule will be made available as at least 3-star level of openness with an Open Government Licence (OGL) by the end of **Q4 2017**. We will review non-spatial data during the same period with a view to making any new data available to at least 3-star level from Q4 2017.

5 Dataset Publication Progress

FCS datasets currently available include:-

- National Forest Inventory;
 - Including woodland map and reports based on sampling points on, for example, woodland structure, composition, condition, and associated Timber Production Forecast data.
- National Forest Estate;
 - Boundaries;
 - Stock Map;
 - Roads;
 - Recreation routes and sites;
- Grants and Regulations Data;
 - Including SRDP grant scheme proposals, Forest Plans and Felling Licences;
- Scottish Native Woodlands;
 - Including native woodland map and reports based on site surveys on, for example, degree of semi-naturalness, tree species composition and structural diversity;
- Plant Health;
 - Including information on forest pests and diseases, including Statutory Plant Health Notices, management zones and guides to actions;

- Forest Reproductive Materials;
 - Including Seed Stands;
- Annual reports;
 - Including Accounts, Corporate Plans, National and Regional Forest Strategies.

FCS datasets available in the near future include these Forestry Grant Scheme spatial datasets:

- Woodland creation;
- Long term forest plans;
- Agroforestry;
- Tree health.
- WIG and SMF option boundaries

Note that there is a range of GB-wide non-spatial data not covered in this document, such as the long-running publication of annual forest statistical reports. Forestry Commission works closely with DEFRA on making this data available through DATA.GOV.UK.

Note also that FCS has ongoing work on identifying further potential datasets for publication, and on developing common metadata standards with partners.

Annex 1 – Statutory framework

The publication of open data by FCS will be in accordance with relevant statutes, including but not limited to the following:

Freedom of Information (UK) Act 2000 and where applicable the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA)

- The right to ask for information held by a Scottish public authority;
- Enforced by either the Information Commissioner or the Scottish Information Commissioner as appropriate.

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and where applicable the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR)

- Requests for environmental information may be verbal;
- Enforced by either the Information Commissioner or the Scottish Information Commissioner as appropriate.

Data Protection Act 1998

- Eight data protection principles for the protection of personal data.

INSPIRE (Scotland) Regulations 2009

- Standards for publishing spatial datasets within 34 data themes;
- Discovery – view – download.

Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015

- Information made available for re-use under open licence at marginal or no cost.

Annex 2 – Data Standards

We will publish our data in a format of ★★ ★ or above by 2017.

All documentation will be published in a format appropriate to the nature of the information contained and anticipated use. Full details of the recommended formats are available online - [Government Service Design Manual – Choosing Appropriate Formats](#)

Three main categories of data are considered:

- written reports and documents
- structured data
- spatial data

Written Reports

Written reports will be available in tagged PDF (PDF/A , an ISO-standardised version of the Open PDF Portable Document Format) or HTML. To create tagged PDFs, an accessible source document should be prepared in Word using the required format and structure which can include table of contents, numbered lists, data tables and image descriptions. File conversion to PDF creates a PDF tag tree which reflects the structure of the document and enables screen readers to navigate the document. Instructions for this are available online - [Government Service Design Manual - Creating Accessible PDF's](#)

Online guidance is also freely available on how to create accessible PDFs:

- [create accessible PDFs](#)
- [accessibility checker](#)
- [creating accessible Word documents](#)
- [creating accessible Excel workbooks](#)
- [creating accessible PowerPoint presentations](#)

Structured (non-spatial) Data

Structured data will be made available in CSV or XML format. This ensures accessibility to the data by screen readers, and the capability to sort and filter the data. Excel format will be provided as an additional option.

Spatial Data

Spatial data will be compliant with the [INSPIRE Directive](#), including data discovery, download and web services.

Our current GIS Data format availability ratings are as follows:

Data Format	Data Type	OGC Standard	★ Rating	Comments
KML (originally Keyhole Markup Language)	Spatial Data	Yes	3	
Web Map Service (WMS)	Web Service	Yes	3	
GEMINI – AGI/UK Location	Metadata	N/A	N/A	GEMINI is a universally recognised metadata standard.
GeoJSON	Spatial Data	No (but open data)	3	
Comma Separated Values (CSV)	Tabular data	No (but open data)	3	
Shapefiles (ESRI)	Spatial Data	No (Not Open)	1 or 2	Not included in OGC standard listing but still widely preferred format for many users

Document Control

Document Title	Forestry Commission Scotland: Open Data Publication Plan
Author(s)	Jonathan Taylor , Head of Secretariat, FCS Howard Davies , GIS Delivery Manager, FCS Brent Meakin , Head of Business Support Services, FES Policy & Advice Officer / Data Manager
Document Status	Live
Approved By	FCS and FES Management Boards
Date of Approval	10/01/ 2017
Version Number	1.0
Review Frequency	Annual
Next Review Date	December 2018

Document Amendments

Date	Status	Reason for Amendment	Approved By

Contents

1. The Vision
2. The Key Characteristics of Open Data
3. The FCS Approach
4. Priorities and timescale
5. Dataset Publication Progress

Annex 1 – Statutory framework

Annex 2 – Data Standards

