



# NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Lithuania

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**Title: NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Lithuania**

**Approved by: FM Program Manager**

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# 1. Introduction

A key purpose of NEPCon is to recognize good forest managers through credible independent certification of forestry practices. NEPCon is a certification body accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council®. The purpose of these standards are to provide forest managers, landowners, forest industry, scientists, environmentalists and the general public with information on the aspects of forest management operations that NEPCon evaluates to make certification decisions in the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) certification system. These standards are the default starting point for the development of region-specific NEPCon Interim Standards that shall be developed in all locations where there are no existing, approved FSC standards. The principles, criteria and indicators<sup>1</sup> in this document are applicable for assessing all forest management operations (FMEs) with wood production as a major (though not exclusive) objective. These standards are global in application, for all forest types. This Standard will be reviewed annually and revised if needed to ensure continued conformance with all approved FSC policies, standards, directives, guidelines and advice notes that apply to the interpretation of the FSC Principles and Criteria

## 2. Background

Forests can be managed for many different objectives and products. Such management can occur in natural forests or plantations, for timber or non-timber forest products, include mechanized or manual harvesting, and managed by a large industrial operation or a local community or landowner cooperative. Many combinations are possible. A critical question has been - how to evaluate the wide range of ecological, socioeconomic and silviculture impacts of forest management activities in a clear and consistent fashion, based on a combination of scientific research and practical experience?

## 3. Public Comment

The certification process has both public and private aspects. Certification assessments are not public documents unless specifically required by law (e.g. for some public forests) or approved for public distribution by the certified operation. However, three public documents are available for each and every certified FME:

1. A public stakeholder consultation document that announces each certification assessment 45 days prior to field work;
2. The certification standard used; and,
3. A public certification summary that is produced with the results of each separate forest certification.

The public stakeholder consultation document informs the public about the assessment at least 45 days prior to it taking place. This document is distributed publicly prior to or during an assessment. The document is typically distributed by hand delivery, FAX, mail, or email and is posted to the NEPCon website at [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org). The specific NEPCon standard for each assessment is also publicly available before and during the assessment and is a part of the public record for every forest certification. The public certification summary is produced as a final step of the certification process and is available only after an operation has been approved for certification. For copies of any public stakeholder consultation document or NEPCon interim Forest Management standard, visit our website at [nepcon.net](http://nepcon.net). For public certification summaries visit the FSC certified organization website at <http://info.fsc.org/>, or contact NEPCon, headquarters (NEPCon | Guldsmædgade 34, 1. I DK-8000 Aarhus). **We strongly encourage you to give us your**

<sup>1</sup> It is NEPCon philosophy to keep the certification process as straightforward and simple as possible, without sacrificing technical quality, in order to foster the value of certification as an educational, policy, and training tool. In practice this means writing as clearly as possible and keeping scientific terms to a minimum.

**input, either positive or negative, on our candidate or certified operations, certification standards, or certification procedures.**

#### **Note on the use of this standard**

All aspects of this standard are considered to be normative, including the scope, standard effective date, references, terms and definitions, tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated.

## **4. Regional Standards**

FSC working groups around the world are developing country- or region-specific forest certification standards. NEPCon fully supports, encourages and participates wherever possible in such processes. Our experience is that the regional standard setting process is vital. Regional standard setting is an excellent way of engaging the public in important, broad ranging discussions on the future of forests and human communities. In other words, the regional standards setting process should not be seen just as a technical standards setting process, but also as a process of outreach on the topic of sustainable forest management.

As part of the FSC process, regional standards are developed by a regional working group, field-tested, revised and approved by the regional working group, and then submitted to the FSC's international headquarters for approval. The final product, if approved, is an "FSC accredited standard". Once accredited, all FSC-approved certifiers (like NEPCon) must use the endorsed regional standard as the fundamental starting point for FSC certification in that country/region. Certifiers may choose to be more rigorous than the regional standard, but they cannot be less rigorous.

In all countries or regions not covered by an FSC accredited forest stewardship standard, NEPCon will develop a locally adapted or interim standard for use in evaluating forest management operations in that designated geographic area. The adapted standard is developed from the NEPCon generic standard with modification to certification indicators to take into account the national context (e.g. legal requirements, environmental, social and economic perspectives). This draft will be translated to the official language of the country in which the FME to be evaluated is located and is submitted for consultation at least 45 days prior to the start of fieldwork for a full assessment. Distribution to key stakeholders occurs via the Internet (email and posted on the NEPCon website), mailings and face to face meetings.

Operations certified under a previous FSC or NEPCon standard have a minimum of one year to meet any newly endorsed FSC regional standard.

Rainforest Alliance have also used other sources as basis for and inspiration for developing the indicators and verifiers of the Interim Standard. Among the documents that have been reviewed and considered in developing this Interim Standard are:

- FSC-STD-01-001 (version 4-0) FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
- FSC-STD-20-002 (version 3-0) Structure, content and local adaptation of certification body generic Forest Stewardship Standards.
- FSC-POL-30-401 FSC certification and ILO conventions.
- FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria
- Rainforest Alliance Generic Standards for Assessing Forest Management", Rainforest Alliance, March 2012January 2008



- Rainforest Alliance Global Non Timber Forest Product Certification Addendum, Rainforest Alliance 2012

## 5. NEPCon Standards Structure

The NEPCon generic standards are based directly on the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship (**FSC-STD-01-001**) and include specific generic indicators for each criterion to create a global NEPCon standard. These indicators are the starting point from which region-specific "NEPCon Interim Standards" are developed for use in the forest by forest auditors to evaluate the sustainability of forest management practices and impacts of candidate FME.

The standards are divided into the following ten principles:

- 1.0 Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles
- 2.0 Tenure and Use Rights & Responsibilities
- 3.0 Indigenous Peoples' Rights
- 4.0 Community Relations and Workers' Rights
- 5.0 Benefits from the Forest
- 6.0 Environmental Impact
- 7.0 Management Plan
- 8.0 Monitoring and Assessment
- 9.0 Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests
- 10.0 Plantations

In the standard, each FSC principle and its associated criteria is stated, along with the NEPCon generic indicators. All criteria in all principles must be evaluated in every assessment; unless certain principles are deemed not applicable by NEPCon auditors (e.g. Principle 10 will not be applicable if there are no plantations).

## 6. Indicators for Small and Large FMEs

As required under FSC policy NEPCon has developed indicators for certain criteria<sup>2</sup> that are specific to certain sizes of operations. Clear quantitative definitions for small versus large FMEs are included in regionalized NEPCon Interim Standards. Where these NEPCon regional thresholds are not established, large FME should be considered those larger than 50,000 ha. Small FME definition is determined by FSC regional thresholds set for small and low intensity managed forests (SLIMF) which have been set either globally by FSC (100 ha) or by FSC National Initiatives.

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<sup>2</sup> Criteria 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 9.1, 10.5 and 10.8.

## **7. Contents**

### **A Scope**

This standard shall be the basis for FSC forest management certification of forest management enterprises in Lithuania.

### **B Standard effective date**

This standard shall be effective from 12 August 2014.

### **C References**

FSC-STD-01-001 v. 4.0 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship

FSC-STD-01-002 (v1-0) FSC Glossary of Terms

### **D Terms and definitions**

See annex A for glossary.

Acronyms:

FME: Forest management enterprise

FSC: Forest Stewardship Council

HCVF: High conservation value forests

SLIMF: Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests

## **NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Lithuania**

<b>PRINCIPLE 1.COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES</b>
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Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

Criteria	Indicators
1.1 Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.	<p>1.1.1. The staff shall be aware of relevant requirements of legislation and their responsibilities.</p> <p>1.1.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: relevant legislation shall be available in head office for the staff.</p> <p>1.1.3. <i>Discovered non compliances with legislation and state administrative system requirements</i> shall be recorded.</p> <p>1.1.4. Corrective actions shall be implemented in case non-compliance is identified.</p> <p>1.1.5. FMO shall meet all national, state/provincial and local environmental, labour, environment and forestry laws (all laws applicable to FMO).</p>
1.2. All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.	<p>1.2.1. FMO shall be aware of applicable fees, royalties and taxes.</p> <p>1.2.2. Evidence shall exist of on-time payment of any applicable financial charges.</p> <p>1.2.3. In case of discrepancies related to applicable fees, royalties and taxes, FMO shall maintain a full documentation related to the discrepancies and solving them.</p>
1.3. In signatory countries, the provisions of all binding international agreements such as CITES, ILO Conventions, ITTA, and Convention on Biological Diversity, shall be respected.	<p>1.3.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall be aware of and respect applicable international conventions.</p> <p>1.3.2. No workers under the age of 14 shall be employed in the forests.</p> <p>1.3.3. No workers under the age of 18 shall be employed for operations when the work has higher profession risk.</p> <p><i>Note: Applicable international conventions are covered within Lithuanian legislation as well as other parts of the standards.</i></p>
1.4. Conflicts between laws, regulations and the FSC Principles and Criteria shall be evaluated for the purposes of certification, on a case by case basis, by the certifiers and the involved or affected parties.	<p>1.4.1. Perceived conflicts between laws and present standard shall be identified and recorded by the FMO.</p> <p>1.4.2. Any conflicts identified between national legislation and FSC principals, criteria and requirements of this standard during certification</p>



	process shall be resolved by working in conjunction with appropriate regulatory bodies and other parties (including FSC national representatives).
1.5. Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.	<p>1.5.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall establish a monitoring system with formal documented periodic inspections for prevention of illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.</p> <p>1.5.2. The FMO shall take all reasonable preventive legal measures to prevent illegal and inappropriate usage of the forests or natural resources (hunting, trapping and collection).</p> <p>1.5.3. Illegal harvest, settlements and other unauthorized usage of the forest shall be reported to the responsible authorities.</p>
1.6. Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.	<p>1.6.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: for large operations, FMO shall have a publicly available policy or statement committing the organization to adhere to the FSC requirements within the certified forest area.</p> <p>1.6.2. FMO shall have the list of the territories which are not included in the scope of certification but are under some degree of management responsibilities of FMO.</p> <p>1.6.3. According to the FSC partial certification policy FMO shall not implement activities that blatantly conflict with the FSC P&amp;C on forest areas outside of the forest area under assessment.</p> <p>1.6.4. FMO shall ensure that applicable staff knows and implements requirements of this standard in daily work.</p> <p>1.6.5. Contractors shall be informed about FSC requirements and FMO shall control how these requirements are upheld.</p>
<b>PRINCIPLE 2. TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	
Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
2.1. Clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land (e.g. land title, customary rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated.	2.1.1. FMO shall possess legal documents proving its legal rights of ownership or long term rights to manage the forest area.

	2.1.2. Property borders shall be marked or otherwise clearly delineated (e.g. follow natural boundaries).
2.2. Local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights shall maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over forest operations unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.	<p>2.2.1. FMO shall ensure that local communities have access to the forest for use of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) such as berries and mushrooms, medicine plants and honey as well as traditional recreational resources for own consumption.</p> <p>2.2.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO should ensure that communities have access to buy wood for own consumption.</p> <p>2.2.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: If forest usage or restrictions for using it are negatively influencing local communities' lifestyle and economic viability, then usage or restrictions shall be reviewed during stakeholder consultation.</p> <p>2.2.4. FMO shall not make restrictions for local communities in relation to legal or customary rights, unless these restrictions are agreed with local communities or restrictions are required by national legislation.</p>
2.3. Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified	<p>2.3.1. FMO shall use mechanisms for resolving disputes over tenure claims and use rights that respectfully involve the disputants and are consistent in process.</p> <p>2.3.2. FMO shall not be involved in outstanding disputes of substantial magnitude on the forest area that involves a significant number of interests.</p> <p>2.3.3. FMO shall demonstrate significant progress achieved to resolve major disputes of ownership and usage rights.</p>
<b>PRINCIPLE 3. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS</b>	
Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
3.1. Indigenous peoples shall control forest management on their lands and territories unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.	Criteria considered not applicable since Lithuanians are native people in their homeland.
3.2. Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples.	Criteria considered not applicable since Lithuanians are native people in their homeland.

3.3. Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in cooperation with such peoples, and recognized and protected by forest managers.	Criteria considered not applicable since Lithuanians are native people in their homeland.
3.4. Indigenous peoples shall be compensated for the application of their traditional knowledge regarding the use of forest species or management systems in forest operations. This compensation shall be formally agreed upon with their free and informed consent before forest operations commence.	Criteria considered not applicable since Lithuanians are native people in their homeland.
<b>PRINCIPLE 4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKERS' RIGHTS</b>	
Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
4.1. The communities within, or adjacent to, the forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services.	<p>4.1.1. Local communities and residents shall be given equal opportunities in forest management activities in terms of employment, training or performing in other services.</p> <p>4.1.2. Evidence of efforts made for providing stable employment for all staff shall exist.</p> <p>4.1.3. No evidence of discrimination in labor practices, including hiring, advancement, dismissal, remuneration and employment-benefits shall exist.</p>
4.2. Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.	<p>4.2.1. Employees, including contractors, shall be aware of and shall implement safe working practices.</p> <p>4.2.2. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Appropriate health and safety equipment including noise reducing helmet, ear protection, high visibility clothing, safety boots, safety trousers, mobile means of communication and first aid kit shall be used in the field by chain saw operators, harvesting companies, FMO employees and contractors.</p> <p>4.2.3. Any employee of FMO or contractor entering an on-going logging site shall wear a protection helmet and high visibility clothing.</p> <p>4.2.4. Chain saws shall be kept in good condition and safety equipment shall not be defect.</p>

	<p>4.2.5. Workers involved in dangerous work such as storm damage removal, logging of large trees and tree climbing shall never work alone.</p> <p>4.2.6. Workers shall be instructed about procedures in case of emergency situation such as accident, fire, strong wind, impacted logged tree or oil spill, etc.</p> <p>4.2.7. FMO and contractor technics working in the forests shall be adapted to the work in the forests including safety equipment.</p> <p>4.2.8. FMO should conduct regular checks and long term monitoring to ensure that all safety procedures are consistently observed in the field.</p> <p>4.2.9. Warning signs shall be posted at access roads to sites with on-going logging operation.</p> <p>4.2.10. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall maintain a register of accidents (including those among the contractors working on the FMO territory) and documented steps taken to minimize risk of further accidents.</p> <p>4.2.11. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have written procedures for health and safety in the work, where responsible staff is indicated, preventive measures and control system are defined.</p> <p>4.2.12. Workers who are staying overnight in the forests should have appropriate sleeping and hygienic facilities, sufficient supply of clean water.</p> <p>4.2.13. Indicators under criterion 4.2 are also applicable for workers family members in case they are present at the operational sites.</p>
<p>4.3. The rights of workers to organize and voluntarily negotiate with their employers shall be guaranteed as outlined in Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labor Organisation (ILO).</p>	<p>4.3.1. All workers shall be able to form and join a trade union of their choice without fear of intimidation or reprisal.</p> <p>4.3.2. Collective bargaining with representative trade unions shall be carried out in good faith and with best efforts to come to an agreement.</p> <p>4.3.3. Problems related to MTV employees and their rights must be resolved through social dialogue.</p>

<p>4.4. Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups directly affected by management operations.</p>	<p>4.4.1. All interested parties shall have access to relevant information related to planned and on-going forest activities.</p> <p>4.4.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have an up-to-date list with contacts of stakeholders to be informed in connection with management planning and fulfilment of other stakeholder consultation requirements.</p> <p>4.4.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: Consultations in the management planning process shall be maintained with people and communities directly affected by management operations.</p> <p>4.4.4. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: New management plans shall be available for consultation at least 20 days prior to the public consultation process.</p> <p>4.4.5. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall demonstrate that input from community participation was considered and/or responded to during management planning and implementation process.</p> <p>4.4.6. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Areas of special economic, ecological, cultural or religious value for local communities shall be identified and documented, and management takes considerations to these values.</p>
<p>4.5. Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed for resolving grievances and for providing fair compensation in the case of loss or damage affecting the legal or customary rights, property, resources, or livelihoods of local peoples. Measures shall be taken to avoid such loss or damage.</p>	<p>4.5.1. FMO shall make all reasonable efforts to avoid losses and damages affecting local people, and in resolving grievances related to their legal rights, damage compensation and negative impacts of forest operations.</p> <p>4.5.2. Damage shall be compensated for affected parties of local community, individuals or legal entities if damage is a result of forestry activities.</p>

#### **PRINCIPLE 5. BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST**

Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

Criteria	Indicators
<p>5.1. Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the</p>	<p>5.1.1. FMO shall have a financial plan detailing funding for silvicultural operations, conservation, forest protection and regeneration measures. <i>Budgets shall include provision for environmental and social costs as well as cost related to recovering and</i></p>

investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.	<p><i>strengthening forests</i> recourses.. 5.1.2. In cases when environmental restrictions pose serious threat to FMO's economic viability, discussion should be held among relevant parties to find the best solution.</p> <p>5.1.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: When evaluating the economic viability of FMO shall be considered on the value of the standing stock, costs of forests regeneration, management, protection as well as environmental restriction cost and cost related to ecological and social needs.</p>
5.2. Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.	<p>5.2.1. Forest management shall support optimal uses of forest resources, such as hunting, recreation and non-timber forest products.</p> <p>5.2.2. Economically valuable hard leave trees depending on their viability should have reached maturity during logging operations.</p>
5.3. Forest management should minimize waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.	<p>5.3.1. Harvesting techniques shall be designed to avoid losses of merchantable volumes and damage to remaining trees or damage shall be minimal.</p> <p>5.3.2. Waste generated through harvesting operations, wood extraction and on-site processing shall be minimized.</p> <p>5.3.3. The layout of skidding trails shall be prepared according to the logging site relief and natural conditions as well as stand structure..</p>
5.4. Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.	<p>5.4.1. FMO's forest products manufacturing shall consider needs of Lithuanian processing industry and other wood buyers.</p> <p>5.4.2. FMO shall support increased different local value added processing the forests, where it is possible.</p>
5.5. Forest management operations shall recognize, maintain, and, where appropriate, enhance the value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.	<p>5.5.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO or the management plan shall assess the impact of forest management on the multiple services produced in the forest such as outdoor life, watersheds, NTFP (fishing, hunting, berries and mushrooms), protection of cultural and biological values in written.</p> <p>5.5.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: Negative impacts identified by assessment as described in 5.5.1 should be minimized.</p>



	5.5.3. FMO shall consider areas important for mushrooms and berry picking; hunting and recreation when planning forest operations.
5.6. The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained	<p>5.6.1. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Annual allowable cut (AAC), by area or/and volume, shall be set based on conservative and well-documented estimates of growth and yield recourses.</p> <p>5.6.2. <u>SLIME</u>: Minimum recommended rotation age for final felling shall be observed.</p> <p>5.6.3. Actual annual harvest shall be strictly documented, including site, species, quantities, assortments, date and terms.</p> <p>5.6.4. FMO-s shall document commercial harvest of NTFP such as seeds, Christmas trees, greenery and game.</p> <p>5.6.5. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: shall participate in the game bag planning process.</p> <p>5.6.6. Commercial harvest of NTFP shall not exceed sustainable use levels.</p> <p>5.6.7. Boundaries of harvesting areas shall be clearly marked or clearly distinguishable.</p> <p>5.6.8. <u>Large FMO</u>: The overall proportion of pre-mature and mature stands shall not be below 20 %. If it is bellow, a long term strategy to improve situation shall be prepared.</p>
<b>PRINCIPLE 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</b>	
Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
6.1. Assessment of environmental impacts shall be completed -- appropriate to the scale, intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources -- and adequately integrated into management systems. Assessments shall include landscape level considerations as well as the impacts of on-site processing facilities. Environmental impacts shall be	<p>6.1.1. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall request and create conditions for forest management project preparation team to conduct environmental impact assess with plan of measures to reduce possible negative impact.</p> <p>6.1.2. Measures to minimize negative environmental impacts of forest operations shall be followed in the field, e.g. wet soil types shall be handled with precaution to avoid soil damages, sensitive bird habitats shall not be intervened in birds nesting period, except means that were recommended by</p>

<p>assessed prior to commencement of site-disturbing operations.</p>	<p>State Forest Service, in case of potential mass spread of forest pests or disease, or if these are already spread.</p> <p>6.1.3. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have a clearly defined written procedure for conducting environmental impact assessments and use it prior to major forest management activities such as constructions of new roads or maintenance of drainage systems.</p> <p>6.1.4. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: FMO shall identify and take steps to avoid negative environmental impacts prior to road construction, road maintenance and drainage systems renovation and maintenance.</p> <p>6.1.5. Environmental impacts of on-site processing facilities such as mobile sawmills shall be assessed and controlled (e.g. waste, construction impacts, etc.).</p> <p>6.1.6. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Landscape level impacts of forest management shall be considered. (i.e., cumulative effects of forest operations within and nearby the FMO, e.g. establishing forests shall be consider on overall open area composition and size in FMO as well as avoid large open area concentration during planning of clear cuttings, etc.) .</p>
<p>6.2. Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting shall be controlled.</p>	<p>6.2.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have a written list and implement protection means of threatened, rare, and endangered species or ecosystems identified within their forest area.</p> <p>6.2.2. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO should be aware of and conserve the officially registered protected species in the forest area.</p> <p>6.2.3. Conservation zones and their buffer zones shall be demarcated on forest maps and if relevant also marked in the field.</p> <p>6.2.4. Operations in the conservation zones or nearby shall be conducted so that the conservation values are not harmed or endangered in any way.</p> <p>6.2.5. Large FMO-s: In collaboration with authorized institution measures shall be taken to prevent illegal use of forest resources.</p>

<p>6.3. Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including:</p> <p>a) Forest regeneration and succession.</p> <p>b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.</p> <p>c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p>	<p>6.3.1. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: According to the side conditions, special efforts shall be taken to increase the share of native noble hardwoods (a, b).</p> <p>6.3.2. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: Special efforts shall be taken to maintain the share of native noble hardwoods (a, b).</p> <p>6.3.3. Natural regeneration and local provenances should be preferred (a, b, c).</p> <p>6.3.4. Thinning and harvesting operations shall favour the development of mixed stands (a, b, c).</p> <p>6.3.5. Forest areas not affected by existing drainage ditches shall not be drained, except cases when new roads are being built.</p> <p>6.3.6. Preparing the soil for afforestation (only in temporally wet and wet soil types forests) the maximum deep of the furrow shall be up to 70 cm if needed.</p> <p>6.3.7. Hollow standing trees and trees with big bird nests shall be preserved.</p> <p>6.3.8. Biologically valuable dead wood (snags, lying dead wood) of various decay stages shall be preserved with consideration of national requirements on work safety as well as safety along major roads and recreational sites. <i>The amount of dead wood should be at least 5% of the cut commercial wood volume in the stand.</i> Cutting remaining that are generated during logging operation can be removed for economical purposes.</p> <p>6.3.9. At least 10 living biodiversity trees (7 in case of noble hardwood) per hectare shall be selected and left in final felling (including clear cutting, selective cutting and step wise cutting) and shall be left until natural decay (b). These trees shall be selected before logging operations.</p> <p>6.3.10. Biodiversity trees shall be chosen from wide variety of species with larger diameter among the most biologically valuable and wind stable trees. (6.3 b). Hollow standing trees and trees with big bird nests can be counted as biodiversity trees.</p> <p>6.3.10. Spatial location of biodiversity trees in clear cutting areas should promote their long term survival and benefit endangered rare biodiversity forms.</p>
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<p>6.4. Representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape shall be protected in their natural state and recorded on maps, appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations and the uniqueness of the affected resources.</p>	<p>6.4.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall leave representative samples of existing rare and/or endangered ecosystems for natural succession in their natural state covering at least 5 % of the total forest area. Strict nature reserves located inside or bordering to the FMO may be included in the estimation of the 5 %.</p> <p>6.4.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: in case the same forest owner has got several FSC certified FMOs, then in some FMOs less than 5 % of area can be set aside (see 6.4.1.) while all together certified FMOs of the same owner fulfil the requirement of indicator 6.4.1. Set aside areas can be distributed unevenly with intention to select the most valuable and representative sites of certified forests.</p> <p>6.4.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: selection of forest areas to be preserved as required in 6.4.1 shall be based on the identification of key biological areas identified through consultation with stakeholders, including non-governmental environmental organizations.</p> <p>6.4.4. Sites or their borders selected under 6.4.1 can be changed with stakeholder, including non-governmental environmental organizations, consultation. When forest operations are planned nearby protected territories and when the borders are not clear in the field, before the beginning of forest operations they shall be marked.</p> <p>6.4.5. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall protect all representative samples of existing rare and/or endangered ecosystems in their natural state.</p> <p>6.4.6. No timber harvesting shall take place in areas protected as required in 6.4.1, unless specified in legal acts regulating management of these areas with the aim of increasing the conservation values and conditions of rare and high conservation value habitats, or in case of positive recommendations of scientists or environmental organisations.</p> <p>6.4.7. Existing drainage systems shall be maintained in protected areas only in such way that conservation values are not threatened.</p>
<p>6.5. Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to: control erosion; minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all</p>	<p>6.5.1. FMO shall have information needed to classify areas suitable for all-weather harvesting, winter,</p>

<p>other mechanical disturbances; and protect water resources.</p>	<p>spring, summer and autumn harvesting in order to avoid the soil damages.</p> <p>6.5.2. Measures shall be taken to avoid the intensive soil and forest litter damage during harvesting operations. During harvesting operations measures shall be taken to minimize soil damage (for instance: pressure, damage of forest litter, mixing the soil layers, etc.) and erosion. Extraction of stumps as forest operation is not allowed except in forest plantations.</p> <p>6.5.3. Written guidance to field staff shall cover technical specifications for skid trail and extraction roads (location, width and density), log landing, maintaining buffer zones, protection of biodiversity and dead wood as well as road design.</p> <p>6.5.4. No road fill or waste material (e.g. rocks, brush) from site preparation or other activities shall be placed in stream courses.</p> <p>6.5.5. Buffer zones in clear cuts shall be left along water bodies and open landscape to ensure stability for forest ecosystems and microclimate.</p>
<p>6.6. Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides. World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.</p>	<p>6.6.1. Efforts shall be taken to avoid the use of chemicals in the forest management. Increased causes of chemicals need shall be analysed and justified before starting to use.</p> <p>6.6.2. All uses of chemical substances shall be recorded including information on the name of the chemical, the purpose, the site, the date and the amount used at minimum.</p> <p>6.6.3. Chemical storage, mixing and application practices shall meet applicable health protection and other requirements.</p> <p>6.6.4. FMOs responsible employees shall be aware of and able to implement emergency procedures for clean-up following spillages and other accidents with chemicals.</p> <p>6.6.5. Chemicals banned according to FSC's pesticides policy shall never be used, except cases when there is temporary derogation received from FSC.</p>
<p>6.7. Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel</p>	<p>6.7.1. Chemical, container, liquid and solid non-organic waste shall be disposed in an</p>

<p>and oil shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.</p>	<p>environmentally appropriate and legal manner at off-site locations, whether from forest operations or processing facilities.</p> <p>6.7.2. Efforts shall be taken to control and minimize disposal of all types of waste in the forest including garbage left from visitors.</p> <p>6.7.3. Absorbent kit or other means appropriate to absorb the spilled oil products shall be available in the machinery working in the forests and forest nursery.</p> <p>6.7.4. Appropriate oil absorbent kit or spill proof tanks shall be used at chain saws filling points.</p> <p>6.7.5. Only well maintained forest machinery shall be used. No significant oil/fuel leakage shall be observed.</p> <p>6.7.6. Biodegradable oil shall be preferred, for chainsaws and hydraulic oil in forest machinery.</p>
<p>6.8. Use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimized, monitored and strictly controlled in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols. Use of genetically modified organisms shall be prohibited.</p>	<p>6.8.1. Biological control agents may only be used in exceptional and justified cases.</p> <p>6.8.2. Any use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimized, monitored and strictly controlled in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols.</p> <p>6.8.2. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) shall not be used.</p>
<p>6.9. The use of exotic species shall be carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.</p>	<p>6.9.1. Native forests shall not be converted to stands of exotic tree and bushes species or its hybrid plantations, except in case of positive scientific recommendations.</p> <p>6.9.2. The spread of invasive exotic species or its hybrids that have been historically introduced shall be monitored and if necessary, actions shall be taken to control or eliminate the species.</p> <p>6.9.3. Species that naturally grow in Middle Europe and have a potential possibility to move to Lithuania because of climate change can be tolerated in case of positive scientific recommendations.</p>
<p>6.10. Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur,</p>	<p>6.10.1. The enterprise shall clearly identify in written any plots of the FMO that are scheduled for</p>



<p>except in circumstances where conversion:</p> <p>a) entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit;</p> <p>b) does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and</p> <p>c) will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure long term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.</p>	<p>conversion from natural or semi-natural forest to non-forest use.</p> <p>6.10.2. The areas scheduled for conversion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- shall not damage High Conservation Values, AND (one of the two):</li> <li>- EITHER total less than 5% of the total area of the FMO and shall be very limited in scale and shall enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation benefits across the forest management unit (see FSC-DIR-20-007-ADV-10);</li> <li>- OR shall be converted in order to restore pre-existing characteristics of "High Conservation Value" habitat.</li> </ul> <p>6.10.3 The FMO shall have all necessary approvals for the conversion, in line with national requirements.</p> <p>6.10.4. Forests and forestland with high conservation values cannot be converted to non-forest land.</p>
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## PRINCIPLE 7. MANAGEMENT PLAN

A management plan -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations -- shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.

Criteria	Indicators
<p>7.1. The management plan and supporting documents shall provide:</p> <p>a) Management objectives;</p> <p>b) Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands;</p> <p>c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories;</p> <p>d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection;</p>	<p>7.1.1. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have a valid management plan prepared according to national legislation and a written description of the management objectives.</p> <p>7.1.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO management plan or appendices or reference documents, shall include presentation of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Management objective;</li> <li>b) A general description of the history, including ownership and use of the forest management area;</li> <li>c) A stand level description of the forest resources including area, site type/forest type, species, age class distribution, height, site class, average diameter and volume;</li> <li>d) Summaries for the total forest area including total area (ha), forest cover percentage, area by site types/forest type,</li> </ul>

<p>e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics;</p> <p>f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments;</p> <p>g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species;</p> <p>h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership;</p> <p>i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used;</p>	<p>age class distribution, total annual increment and average volume per hectare;</p> <p>e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and resources dynamics;</p> <p>f) Description and justification of the management system used, including types of silvicultural systems used;</p> <p>g) General description of monitoring activities implemented to ensure conservation of protected areas and high conservation value forests (HCVF);</p> <p>h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership;</p> <p>7.1.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: The forest management plan shall be technically prepared and sufficiently detailed, given the size of the forest operation, complexity and intensity of forest operations.</p> <p>7.1.4. Maps should be of sufficient quality to effectively guide field activities.</p>
<p>7.2. The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.</p>	<p>7.2.1. Management plan revision or adjustments shall occur in timely manner (with revision period not more than 15 years).</p> <p>7.2.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: Management plan revisions shall incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information regarding changing silvicultural, environmental, social and economic conditions.</p> <p>7.2.3. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: Management plan revisions shall follow national procedures.</p>
<p>7.3. Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.</p>	<p>7.3.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: Forest managers and supervisors shall have appropriate qualification, preferably nationally recognized, ensuring that they are able to plan and organize forest operations and other elements of the management plan.</p> <p>7.3.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall give the possibility to its staff to participate in training courses related to their qualification requirements. The documents which prove the participation of FMO staff in the training courses shall be kept in FMO.</p>

	<p>7.3.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: Relevant staff shall receive training in biodiversity protection issues.</p> <p>7.3.4. Forest Management Plan, harvesting operation plan and other activities' plans shall be available for staff and used in everyday work.</p> <p>7.3.5. All workers, as well as contractors and their workers should be sufficiently educated and trained in the tasks they are assigned to and preferably hold relevant skill certificates.</p>
7.4. While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the primary elements of the management plan, including those listed in Criterion 7.1.	<p>7.4.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall produce a public summary of the management plan including those elements <i>listed under Criterion 7.1</i> that is available in printed versions and/or published on the Internet.</p> <p>7.4.2. FMO shall be willing to provide access to relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who have justified interest in the forest management activities of FMO (e.g. neighbouring landowners and local inhabitants).</p>
<b>PRINCIPLE 8. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT</b>	
Monitoring shall be conducted -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management -- to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
8.1. The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations as well as the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change.	<p>8.1.1. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have monitoring procedures for consistent monitoring of the aspects mentioned in 8.2, which allows comparison of the results and assessment of changes.</p> <p>8.1.2. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: The frequency and intensity of monitoring shall be based on the size and intensity of the operation, as well as the fragility and complexity of the resources under management.</p> <p>8.1.3. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: FMO shall conduct monitoring in connections with harvesting operations and re-forestation.</p>
8.2. Forest management shall include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators:  a) Yield of all forest products harvested.	<p>8.2.1. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Monitoring plan shall identify/describe observed changes in conditions in terms of:</p> <p>a) growth rates, regeneration area and species and age and species composition of forest resources, (typically part of the standard management plan) (b, c);</p>

<p>b) Growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest.</p> <p>c) Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna.</p> <p>d) Environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations.</p> <p>e) Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.</p>	<p>b) commercial harvest including harvest of NTFP such as seeds, seedling, game, greenery and Christmas trees (a);</p> <p>c) environmental changes affecting flora, fauna, soil and water resources (e.g. erosion, outbreak of pest, spreading of invasive species, observed nesting sites for endangered bird species) (c, d);</p> <p>d) socioeconomic aspects (e.g. forest management costs, volumes of all products, accident rates (a, d, e) and changes in community and worker relations or conditions);</p> <p>e) The changes of HCV forest areas.</p> <p>8.2.2. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have records of commercially harvested products.</p> <p>8.2.3. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: FMO shall ensure that inventory data is regularly updated with periodic management plan revision.</p>
<p>8.3. Documentation shall be provided by the forest manager to enable monitoring and certifying organizations to trace each forest product from its origin, a process known as the "chain of custody."</p>	<p>8.3.1. FMO has established and implemented procedures according to FM-35 Chain-of-Custody Standard for Forest Management Enterprises (FMOs).</p> <p>8.3.2. Illegally logged, extracted or stolen wood reclaimed by the operation shall not be sold as certified.</p>
<p>8.4. The results of monitoring shall be incorporated into the implementation and revision of the management plan.</p>	<p>8.4.1. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Monitoring data as required per 8.2.1 shall be considered for management plan revision.</p> <p>8.4.2. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: FMO shall ensure that the management plan is reviewed periodically according to national legislation.</p>
<p>8.5. While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the results of monitoring indicators, including those listed in Criterion 8.2.</p>	<p>8.5.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall produce a public summary of the monitoring results including indicators listed in 8.2 and make it available in printed versions and/or publish on the internet.</p> <p>8.5.2. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall be willing to provide access to relevant parts of the summary of monitoring results to stakeholders who have justified interest in the forest management activities of FMO (e.g. neighbouring landowners and local inhabitants)</p>
<p><b>PRINCIPLE 9. MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS</b></p>	

Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.	
Criteria	Indicators
9.1. Assessment to determine the presence of the attributes consistent with High Conservation Value Forests will be completed, appropriate to scale and intensity of forest management.	<p>9.1.1. Information on officially protected areas and woodland key habitats shall be included on maps and protection reasons described in written.</p> <p>9.1.2. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall periodically carry out an assessment of the FMO sufficient to identify all parts of the FMO that have any of the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) HCV1. Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia).</li> <li>b) HCV2. Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance, such as intact forest landscapes.</li> <li>c) HCV3. Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems, such as Natura 2000 sites and Woodland Key Habitats.</li> <li>d) HCV4. Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control), such as areas important for drinking water.</li> <li>e) HCV5. Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).</li> <li>f) HCV6. Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).</li> </ul> <p>9.1.3. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have the written procedures for identification and registration of new HCVF.</p> <p>9.1.4. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall carry out an assessment of HCVF considering the scope and intensity of forest operations in such forests.</p>
9.2. The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified	9.2.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : Local people and stakeholders including environmental NGOs shall be consulted to identify HCVF.

conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance thereof.	<p>9.2.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall document the stakeholder consultation process in written.</p> <p>9.2.3. Stakeholder consultations should indicate that FMO consistently considers and protects HCVF values.</p>
9.3. The management plan shall include and implement specific measures that ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of the applicable conservation attributes consistent with the precautionary approach. These measures shall be specifically included in the publicly available management plan summary.	<p>9.3.1. If HCVF values are present, planning documents shall provide site-specific information which describes the measures taken to protect or restore such values consistent with a precautionary approach.</p> <p>9.3.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: Summary of measures to protect HCVF values and officially protected areas shall be described in written public summary.</p> <p>9.3.3. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: The FMO shall be willing to provide access to the information on protection measures of HCV forest areas in the FMO forests upon request.</p>
9.4. Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.	<p>9.4.1. A system for continuous monitoring of HCVF values shall be incorporated into the FME's planning, monitoring and reporting procedures.</p> <p>9.4.1. A system for continuous monitoring of HCVF values shall be incorporated into the FME's planning procedures in order to ensure the regular monitoring of HCVF.</p> <p>9.4.2 The monitoring of HCVF shall be constantly implemented in order to avoid any forest activity which could cause damage to these values.</p>
<b>PRINCIPLE 10. PLANTATIONS</b>	
Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1-9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
10.1. The management objectives of the plantation, including natural forest conservation and restoration objectives, shall be explicitly stated in the management plan, and clearly demonstrated in the implementation of the plan.	10.1.1. Objectives of forest plantations shall be explicit in the forest management plan, with clear statements regarding the relationship between forest plantations and the silvicultural, socio-economic and environmental (i.e. forest conservation and restoration) realities in the region.



	<p>10.1.2 Management measures for conservation of natural forest and restoration shall be described in the forest management plan.</p> <p>10.1.3 Management measures, specifically those related to natural forest conservation and restoration shall be demonstrated in FMOs activities.</p>
<p>10.2. The design and layout of plantations should promote the protection, restoration and conservation of natural forests, and not increase pressures on natural forests. Wildlife corridors, streamside zones and a mosaic of stands of different ages and rotation periods shall be used in the layout of the plantation, consistent with the scale of the operation. The scale and layout of plantation blocks shall be consistent with the patterns of forest stands found within the natural landscape.</p>	<p>10.2.1 FMOs shall demonstrate through action their commitment to protect, restore and conserve key areas of natural forest within the ownership.</p> <p>10.2.2 Buffer zones along watercourses and around water bodies shall be established according to regional best management practices or local laws and regulations. Buffer zones should be indicated on maps.</p> <p>10.2.3 FMO shall establish wildlife habitat and corridors, suitably located across plantation areas, in consultation with acknowledged experts.</p> <p>10.2.4 Plantations shall be designed so as to maintain or enhance the visual character of the landscape.</p>
<p>10.3. Diversity in the composition of plantations is preferred, so as to enhance economic, ecological and social stability. Such diversity may include the size and spatial distribution of management units within the landscape, number and genetic composition of species, age classes and structures.</p>	<p>10.3.1 Plantation management shall maintain or enhance landscape diversity by varying block size and configuration, species, genetic diversity, age class and structure.</p> <p>10.3.2 Emphasis should be placed on planting and/or applied research on forest species native to the region.</p> <p>(Note: Also see Criteria 6.4 and 6.10. )</p>
<p>10.4. The selection of species for planting shall be based on their overall suitability for the site and their appropriateness to the management objectives. In order to enhance the conservation of biological diversity, native species are preferred over exotic species in the establishment of plantations and the restoration of degraded ecosystems. Exotic species, which shall be used only when their performance is greater than that of native species, shall be carefully monitored to detect unusual mortality, disease, or insect outbreaks and adverse ecological impacts.</p>	<p>10.4.1 Plantation species shall be selected based on suitability to site conditions (soils, topography and climate) and management objectives.</p> <p>10.4.2 Where exotic species or its hybrids have been selected, the FMO shall explicitly justify this choice demonstrating that their performance is greater than that of native species.</p> <p>10.4.3 No exotic species or its hybrids shall not be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site and that invasive characteristic, if any, can be controlled.</p>

	<p>10.4.4 When exotic species or its hybrids are used the specific measures to prevent spontaneous regeneration outside plantation areas, unusual mortality, disease, insect outbreaks or other adverse environmental impacts shall be documented . In case the plantation area is more than 1 ha, at least 20% of the plantation area shall consist of native species.</p>
<p>10.5. A proportion of the overall forest management area, appropriate to the scale of the plantation and to be determined in regional standards, shall be managed so as to restore the site to a natural forest cover.</p>	<p>10.5.1 <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Representative samples of existing natural ecosystems shall be protected or restored to their natural state, based on the identification of key biological areas, consultation with stakeholders, including environmental NGO. (Note: Also see Criterion 6.4.)</p> <p>10.5.2 Applicable to <u>SLIMF FMOs only</u>: (note: above indicator does not apply): Plantation design and management practices shall protect ecological values, especially around conservation features or protected areas.</p>
<p>10.6. Measures shall be taken to maintain or improve soil structure, fertility, and biological activity. The techniques and rate of harvesting, road and trail construction and maintenance, and the choice of species shall not result in long term soil degradation or adverse impacts on water quality, quantity or substantial deviation from stream course drainage patterns.</p>	<p>10.6.1 Explicit measures shall be taken to maintain or enhance the soil in terms of structure, fertility and biological activity.</p> <p>10.6.2 Plantation design and management shall not result in long term soil degradation.</p> <p>10.6.3 Forest operations shall not degrade water quality or negatively impact local hydrology.</p> <p>10.6.4 Where a negative impact on soil or water resources is identified, FMO shall take steps to reduce or eliminate such impacts.</p>
<p>10.7. Measures shall be taken to prevent and minimize outbreaks of pests, diseases, fire and invasive plant introductions. Integrated pest management shall form an essential part of the management plan, with primary reliance on prevention and biological control methods rather than chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Plantation management should make every effort to move away from chemical pesticides and fertilizers, including their use in nurseries. The use of chemicals is also covered in Criteria 6.6 and 6.7.</p>	<p>10.7.1 Measures shall be taken in the forest to prevent outbreaks of pests, disease, fire and invasive plant introductions.</p> <p>10.7.2 A plan should exist for forest fire prevention and control.</p> <p>10.7.2. FMO should have a plan for forest fire prevention and control.</p> <p>10.7.3 An integrated pest management plan shall exist that identifies pests, determines acceptable injury or action thresholds, and the methods of addressing threats.</p> <p>10.7.3. FMO shall have an integrated pest management plan that identifies pests, determines</p>

	<p>acceptable injury or action thresholds, and the methods of addressing threats.</p> <p>10.7.4 FMO shall have a plan to minimize use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers.</p>
<p>10.8. Appropriate to the scale and diversity of the operation, monitoring of plantations shall include regular assessment of potential on-site and off-site ecological and social impacts, (e.g. natural regeneration, effects on water resources and soil fertility, and impacts on local welfare and social well-being), in addition to those elements addressed in principles 8, 6 and 4. No species should be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site, are not invasive, and do not have significant negative ecological impacts on other ecosystems. Special attention will be paid to social issues of land acquisition for plantations, especially the protection of local rights of ownership, use or access.</p>	<p>10.8.1 <u>Applicable to all except to SLIME</u>: Monitoring of plantations shall include evaluation of direct and indirect potential onsite and off-site ecological and social impacts of plantation activities (also see criterion 8.2).</p> <p>10.8.2 <u>SLIME FMO-s</u>: FMO shall document negative environmental or social impacts and design and implement measures to address the impacts.</p> <p>10.8.3 The purchase of lands or land leases for plantation establishment, shall not adversely impact the community and/or resource use by local people, especially in relation to their rights for ownership, use and protection.</p> <p>(Note: For exotic or invasive species or its hybrids issues, see Criterion 10.4).</p>
<p>10.9. Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994 normally shall not qualify for certification. Certification may be allowed in circumstances where sufficient evidence is submitted to the certification body that the manager/owner is not responsible directly or indirectly of such conversion.</p>	<p>10.9.1 The plantation shall not occupy land converted from natural forest since November 1994, unless clear evidence presented to the certification body that the current manager/owner was not directly or indirectly responsible for the conversion of natural forests into plantations.</p> <p>(Note: See also Criterion 6.10.)</p>

## Annex 1: FSC Glossary of terms

**Biological diversity:** The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (See Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992)

**Biological control agents:** Living organisms used to eliminate or regulate the population of other living organisms.

**Biological diversity values:** The intrinsic, ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic values of biological diversity and its components. (see Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992)

**Chain of custody:** The channel through which products are distributed from their origin in the forest to their end-use.

**Chemicals:** The range of fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, and hormones which are used in forest management.

**Criterion (pl. Criteria):** A means of judging whether or not a Principle (of forest stewardship) has been fulfilled.

**Customary rights:** Rights which result from a long series of habitual or customary actions, constantly repeated, which have, by such repetition and by uninterrupted acquiescence, acquired the force of a law within a geographical or sociological unit.

**Ecosystem:** A community of all plants and animals and their physical environment, functioning together as an interdependent unit.

**Endangered species:** Any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

**Exotic species:** An introduced species not native or endemic to the area in question.

**Forest integrity:** The composition, dynamics, functions and structural attributes of a natural forest.

**Forest management/manager:** The people responsible for the operational management of the forest resource and of the enterprise, as well as the management system and structure, and the planning and field operations.

**Forest management unit (FMU):** a clearly defined forest area with mapped boundaries, managed by a single managerial body to a set of explicit objectives which are expressed in a self-contained multi-year management plan.

**Forest stewardship:** forest management which, in conformity with the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship, is environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable.

**Genetically modified organisms:** Biological organisms which have been induced by various means to consist of genetic structural changes.

**Indicator:** a quantitative or qualitative variable which can be measured or described, and which provides a means of judging whether a forest management unit complies with the requirements of an FSC Criterion. Indicators and the associated thresholds thereby define the requirements for responsible forest management at the level of the forest management unit and are the primary basis of forest evaluation.

**Indigenous lands and territories:** The total environment of the lands, air, water, sea, sea-ice, flora and fauna, and other resources which indigenous peoples have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. (Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Part VI)

**Indigenous peoples:** "The existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them and, by conquest, settlement, or other means reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial situation; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form a part, under State structure which incorporates mainly the national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant." (Working definition adopted by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples).

**High Conservation Value Forests:** High Conservation Value Forests are those that possess one or more of the following attributes:

- a) forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant : concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia); and/or large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance
- b) forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
- c) forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control)
- d) forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

**Landscape:** A geographical mosaic composed of interacting ecosystems resulting from the influence of geological, topographical, soil, climatic, biotic and human interactions in a given area.

**Local laws:** Includes all legal norms given by organisms of government whose jurisdiction is less than the national level, such as departmental, municipal and customary norms.

**Long term:** The time-scale of the forest owner or manager as manifested by the objectives of the management plan, the rate of harvesting, and the commitment to maintain permanent forest cover. The length of time involved will vary according to the context and ecological conditions, and will be a function of how long it takes a given ecosystem to recover its natural structure and composition following harvesting or disturbance, or to produce mature or primary conditions.

**Native species:** A species that occurs naturally in the region; endemic to the area.

**Natural cycles:** Nutrient and mineral cycling as a result of interactions between soils, water, plants, and animals in forest environments that affect the ecological productivity of a given site.

**Natural Forest:** Forest areas where many of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems such as complexity, structure and diversity are present, as defined by FSC approved national and regional standards of forest management.

**Non-timber forest products:** All forest products except timber, including other materials obtained from trees such as resins and leaves, as well as any other plant and animal products.

**Other forest types:** Forest areas that do not fit the criteria for plantation or natural forests and which are defined more specifically by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship.

**Plantation:** Forest areas lacking most of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems as defined by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship, which result from the human activities of either planting, sowing or intensive silvicultural treatments.

**Precautionary approach:** Tool for the implementation of the precautionary principle.

**Principle:** An essential rule or element; in FSC's case, of forest stewardship.

**Silviculture:** The art of producing and tending a forest by manipulating its establishment, composition and growth to best fulfil the objectives of the owner. This may, or may not, include timber production.

**SLIMF (small or low intensity managed forest):** a forest management unit which meets specific FSC requirements related to size and/or intensity of timber harvesting, and can therefore be evaluated by certification bodies using streamlined evaluation procedures. The applicable FSC requirements are defined in *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria*.

**Stakeholder:** individuals and organizations with a legitimate interest in the goods and services provided by an FMU; and those with an interest in the environmental and social effects of an FMU's activities, products and services. They include: those individuals and organizations which exercise statutory environmental control over the FMU; local people; employees; investors and insurers; customers and consumers; environmental interest and consumer groups and the general public [modified from Upton and Bass, 1995].

**Succession:** Progressive changes in species composition and forest community structure caused by natural processes (nonhuman) over time.

**Tenure:** Socially defined agreements held by individuals or groups, recognized by legal statutes or customary practice, regarding the "bundle of rights and duties" of ownership, holding, access and/or usage of a particular land unit or the associated resources there within (such as individual trees, plant species, water, minerals, etc.).

**Threatened species:** Any species which is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.



**Use rights:** Rights for the use of forest resources that can be defined by local custom, mutual agreements, or prescribed by other entities holding access rights. These rights may restrict the use of particular resources to specific levels of consumption or particular harvesting techniques

## **Annex 2: List of national and local forest and related laws and administrative requirements which apply in Lithuania**

All the legislation acts are available at the website of Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas by <http://www.lrs.lt/> , and website of Environment Ministry of the Republic of Lithuania <http://www.am.lt/VI/index.php#r/1278> .

### **List of main forest and related laws**

The Constitution of Republic of Lithuania  
Law on Forest  
Law on Land  
Law on Land reform  
Law on civil tenure rights to the restoration of Real Estate  
Law on Territory Planning  
Law on Protected Areas  
Law on protected animal, plant, fungi species and habitats  
Law on wild flora  
Law on Phytosanitary  
Law on Plant National Genetic Resources  
Law on hunting  
[Law on taxes related to use of natural resources](#)  
Law on municipalities' environment protection support program  
Law on environment risk assessment  
Penal code  
Executive code  
Special conditions for land and forest use  
Regulation on private forest management

## Annex 3: List of the multilateral environmental agreements and ILO Conventions that Lithuania has ratified

### Multilateral environment agreements ratified

No.	Name of convention (protocol)	Date of adoption
1.	Framework Convention on Climate Change	1995 02 23
1.1.	Kyoto Protocol	2002 11 19
2.	Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna Convention)	1994 12 19
2.1	Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (Montreal Protocol)	1994 12 19
2.2	The London and Copenhagen Amendments of the Montreal Protocol	1997 12 09
2.3	The Montreal and Beijing Amendments to the Montreal Protocol	2004 01 15
3.	Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution	1993 10 27
3.1	Protocol on Long-Term Financing of the Cooperative Program for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-Range Transmission of Air Pollution in Europe (EMEP)	2003-09-18
3.2	Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone	2004-02-05
3.3	Protocol on Heavy Metals	2004-09-14
3.4	Protocol on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions	2005-05-12

No.	Name of convention (protocol)	Date of adoption
3.5	Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides or Their Transboundary Fluxes	2006-03-30
3.6	Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants	2006-05-09
3.7	Protocol on the Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or Their Transboundary Fluxes by at Least 30 per cent	2006-12-21
3.8	Protocol Concerning the Control of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds or Their Transboundary Fluxes	2007-04-05
4.	Convention on Biological Diversity	1995 07 03
4.1	Cartagen Protocol on Biosafety	2003-09-18
5.	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention)	1993 06 10
6.	Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitat (Bern convention)	1996 06 01
7.	Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention)	1998 12 22
7.1	Amendment to the Convention (Decision III/1 of the Conference of the Parties)	2003-09-18
8.	Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention)	1997 02 25
8.1	Amendments to Annex IV "Prevention of Pollution from Ships" to the Helsinki Convention (HELCOM Recommendation No 22E/5)	2004 07 15
8.2	Agreement between the Governments of the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Finland, the Federal	2004 07 15

No.	Name of convention (protocol)	Date of adoption
	Republic of Germany, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Poland, the Russian Federation and the Kingdom of Sweden on the Privileges and Immunities of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission	
8.3	Amendments to Annex IV "Prevention of Pollution from Ships" to the Helsinki Convention (HELCOM Recommendations No 21/2 and 24/8)	2005 06 23
8.4	Amendments to Annex III „Criteria and Measures Concerning the Prevention of Pollution from Land-Based Sources” of the 1992 Helsinki Convention(HELCOM Recommendations No 21/1)	2007 04 05
9.	Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes	2000 02 17
9.1	Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.  Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.  Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters.	2003-05-23
10.	Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (ESPOO Convention)	1999 10 07
10.1	Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention).  Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.	2003-05-23
11.	Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	2001 07 10
11.1	Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	2008 12 16

No.	Name of convention (protocol)	Date of adoption
	Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.	
11.2	Amendment to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	2007 06 21
12.	Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES)	2001 05 22
12.1	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Amendment to Article XXI	2004 04 22
13.	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention)	2001 05 22
13.1	Sutartis dėl šikšnosparnių apsaugos Europoje (Londono) Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe	2001 09 25
13.2	Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds	2004 06 29
13.3	Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas	2005 04 21
14.	European Landscape Convention	2002 10 03
15.	Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	2006-10-10
16.	Multilateral Agreement on the Exchange of Radiation Monitoring Data	2002 03 26
17.	Convention to Combat Desertification	2003-07-03
18.	Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade	2003-12-16



No.	Name of convention (protocol)	Date of adoption
19.	International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling	2008-10-14

## ILO Conventions ratified

Number	Year and name	Ratified
1	Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919	1931 06 19
4	Night Work of Women (Industry) Convention, 1919*	1931 06 19
6	Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1919	1931 06 19
11	Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921	1994 09 26
14	Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921	1931 06 19
19	Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925	1934 09 28
24	Sickness Insurance (Industry) Convention, 1927	1931 06 19
27	Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels) Convention, 1929	1934 09 28
29	Forced Labour Convention, 1930	1994 09 26
47	Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935	1994 09 26
73	Medical Examination (Seafarers Convention, 1946	1997 11 19
79	Night Work of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946	1994 09 26
80	Final Articles Revision Convention, 1946	1994 09 26
81	Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	1994 09 26
88	Employment Service Convention, 1948	1994 09 26

90	Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948	1994 09 26
98	Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	1994 09 26
100	Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1994 09 26
105	Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	1994 09 26
108	Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958	1997 11 19
111	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1994 09 26
116	Final Articles Revision Convention, 1961	1994 09 26
122	Employment Policy Convention, 1964	2004 03 03
127	Maximum Weight Convention, 1967	1994 09 26
131	Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970	1994 09 26
135	Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971	1994 09 26
138	Minimum Age Convention, 1973	1998 06 20
142	Human Resources Development Convention, 1975	1994 09 26
144	Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	1994 09 26
147	Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976	2006 07 14
149	Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977	2007 06 12
154	Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981	1994 09 26
156	Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981	2004 05 06
159	Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983	1994 09 26
160	Labour Statistics Convention, 1985	1999 06 10
171	Night Work Convention, 1990	1994 09 26

173	Protection of Workers' Claims (Employer's Insolvency) Convention, 1992	1994 09 26
181	Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997	2004 03 19
182	Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2003 09 29
183	Maternity Protection Convention, 2000	2003 09 29

\*Denounced 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1998 by Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania. Denunciation registered by ILO Director-General on 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2003.

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## **Annex 4: List of officially endangered species in Lithuania**

List of strictly protected species in Lithuania is approved by Environment Ministry Republic of Lithuania, order of Environment Minister No D1-130. 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2010,

This document can be downloaded from Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas website by [www.lrs.lt](http://www.lrs.lt)

## **Annex 5: Summary of the Certification Assessment Process<sup>3</sup>**

The certification assessment process begins with a candidate operation submitting an application to NEPCon. Based upon a review of the application, the scope of the area to be certified and discussions with the candidate, NEPCon will propose a certification process that includes either a preassessment and then a main assessment, or goes directly to a main assessment. Every candidate operation is assigned a NEPCon task manager who will liaise with the assessment lead auditor and the candidate to schedule and perform the evaluations.

NEPCon auditors are provided with detailed guidance on the certification process, including pre-assessment briefings (either in person or by telephone) and access to a written NEPCon handbook for forest assessment. The purpose of these briefings and the manual is to ensure that a consistent and thorough certification process is followed.

In addition to following the NEPCon procedures outlined in our forest evaluation handbook, there are three other ways in which we ensure accuracy and fairness in our certifications:

1. The assessment must involve individuals who are familiar with the particular region and type of forest management operation under evaluation. It is NEPCon policy to involve local specialists in all assessments.
2. Team members must be familiar with NEPCon certification procedures. Each NEPCon certification assessment has a designated lead auditor who must have participated in a formal NEPCon auditor-training course or previously participated in other NEPCon forest management assessments or audits.
3. The assessment must use region-specific standards (i.e. accredited FSC standard or a “regionalized” NEPCon Interim Standard, based on this NEPCon Generic Standard).

Team Selection and Planning – NEPCon selects a qualified lead auditor and other team members to participate in the assessment. The lead auditor’s first task is to ensure that all team members understand the scope and intent of the assessment process. Responsibility for evaluation of different sections (i.e. specific criteria and indicators) of the standard are assigned to different team members, depending on their particular training and expertise. All team members can provide input into any principle, but lead responsibility is assigned for data collection, analysis and writing for each criterion and indicator.

Stakeholder notification: At least 45 days prior to forest evaluation, NEPCon notifies stakeholders of the pending assessment and requests stakeholders’ observations or comments with regard to the operations conformance with the certification standard.

Fieldwork and Data Collection – Evaluation of conformance with the standard is based upon data collection by the auditors through review of FME management documentation, interviews with staff and stakeholders, and field observations and measurements. The team organizes opening meetings with the FME staff to review the assessment scope and procedures and certification standards. Documentation review and interview with FME staff begin immediately. The assessment process then moves quickly to the field phase. Inspections are made to sites chosen by NEPCon auditors based on a comprehensive review of the candidate FME’s forest holdings and management activities, discussions with interested/affected parties, and identification of critical issues or challenging sites. Site visits occur in the forest, at processing facilities, and in surrounding communities. Visits emphasize management activities of all types and phases and different biological or physical conditions.

Team members meet independently with stakeholders. All assessments solicit and incorporate input (confidential and/or

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<sup>3</sup> For detailed information about procedures, contact our headquarters or regional offices through [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org).

open) from directly affected and/or knowledgeable stakeholders, including local communities, adjoining landowners, local forest industry, environmental organizations, government agencies, and scientific researchers. During these consultations, assessment team members explain the assessment process, solicit opinions, and gather impressions about the field performance of the operation being assessed.

Data Analysis and Decision making – Throughout the assessment the team meets independently to discuss progress in gathering information, and discuss preliminary findings. The assessment team works in a consensus fashion to analyze information and evidence gathered, evaluate conformance and reach agreement on their findings as to the certification of the candidate operation.

The assessment team evaluates performance by the FME at the indicator level of the standard. Any nonconformances are analyzed and classified as either minor or major. A nonconformance is considered major if it results in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant criterion in the standard. Conversely, a nonconformance is considered minor if the impacts are limited in scale, prompt corrective action has been taken to ensure it will not be repeated and it does not result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant criterion. For each area of nonconformance identified, the assessment team develops a nonconformity report (NCR) which is classified as follows:

- **Major Nonconformity Report (NCR)** is issued to document a major nonconformance with an indicator(s)/criterion that the candidate FME must correct before NEPCon certification is granted;
- **Nonconformity Report (NCR)** is issued to document a minor nonconformance that candidate FME must correct by a specific deadline (i.e. short term - usually within one year) during the renewable five-year certification period (which is the standard FSC certification contract period); and,
- **Observation** is a very minor problem or the early stages of a problem which do not of itself constitute a nonconformance, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future nonconformance if not addressed by the client. An observation may be a warning signal on a particular issue that, if not addressed, could turn into a nonconformance in the future.

Report Write-up – following the forest evaluation, the team prepares the certification assessment report. This report follows a standardized format and includes detailed findings of performance and proposes pre-conditions (major nonconformances), NCRs or observations.

Review of Assessment Report by Candidate Operation, Independent Peer Reviewers and NEPCon Decision Review – the candidate operation, at least one peer reviewer, and NEPCon regional staff, review each certification assessment report.

Certification Decision – Once the above steps are completed, the applicable NEPCon regional office coordinates a certification decision process. If a certification decision is to approve certification, a five-year certification contract will be executed which requires annual on-site audits. If an operation is not approved, the certification decision will establish what must be done in order for the operation to achieve certified status in the future.