NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Bulgaria
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Cover picture: FSC certified forest in Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain. Mateo Carriño/NEPCon
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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. The NEPCon Generic Standards for Assessing Forest Management 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 indicators1 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 mechanised 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 silvicultural 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 including the results of each separate forest certification.

The stakeholder consultation document is typically distributed by hand delivery, fax, mail, or email and is also posted at the NEPCon website www.NEPCon.net. The specific NEPCon standard used 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 report 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 www.NEPCon.net. For public certification summaries, visit the FSC database

1 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.
http://info.fsc.org/ or contact NEPCon’s certification headquarters (NEPCon | Filosoofi 31 I 50108 Tartu, Estonia, email estonia@NEPCon.net, phone +372 7 380 723). We strongly encourage you to give us your 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 endorsed 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 be 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.

NEPCon 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
- NEPCon Generic Standards for Assessing Forest Management”
- NEPCon Global Non Timber Forest Product Certification Addendum
5. Structure of the NEPCon Standards

The NEPCon generic standards are based directly on the global FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship (FSC-STD-01-001). They 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 auditors who evaluate the sustainability of forest management practices and impacts of candidate FMEs.

The standards are divided into the following ten principles:

1. Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles
2. Tenure and Use Rights & Responsibilities
3. Indigenous Peoples' Rights
4. Community Relations and Workers' Rights
5. Benefits from the Forest
6. Environmental Impact
7. Management Plan
8. Monitoring and Assessment
9. Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests

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 that are specific to certain sizes of operations. Clear quantitative definitions for small versus large FMEs are included in regionalised 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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2 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 of the standard

A Scope

This standard shall be the basis for FSC forest management certification of forest management enterprises in Bulgaria. This standard shall be applied within all forests and forest types located in Bulgaria.

Some indicators are only applicable for either small and/or low intensity managed forests (SLIMF), medium size or large forest management operations/enterprises (FME) or a combination of them. For the purpose of this standard the thresholds for SLIMF, Medium and Large FMEs is following:

SLIMF FMEs: a) FMEs managing forest area below 500 hectares;
               b) FMEs where the rate of harvest is less than 20% of mean annual increment and total annual harvest is less than 5000 cbm;

Medium size FMEs: FMEs managing forest area of 500 to 10 000 hectares;

Large size FMEs: FMEs managing forest area over 10 000 hectares.

B Standard effective date

This standard shall be effective from 19 December 2014

C References

FSC-STD-01-001 (v4-0) FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship

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

D Terms and definitions

See Annex 1 for glossary.

Acronyms:

FME: Forest Management Enterprise
FSC: Forest Stewardship Council
HCVF: High Conservation Value Forests
SLIMF: Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests
PRINCIPLE #1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES

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.

1.1 Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.

1.1.1. The staff is aware of relevant to their responsibilities laws and regulations.

1.1.2. There is no evidence of non-compliance with requirements of related national and local environmental, labor and forestry laws and regulations.

1.1.3. Large and Medium FME: Access to relevant legislative documents shall be available for the staff in the head office.

1.1.4. Discovered non-compliances with legislation shall be documented and corrective actions shall be implemented to prevent their recurrence.

1.2 All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.

1.2.1. FME shall demonstrate records confirming up-to-date in payment of applicable fees, taxes, timber rights or leases, royalties and other charges.

1.2.2. Where FME is not up-to-date on payments, a plan for completing all payments shall have been agreed to with the relevant institution.

1.2.3. When discrepancies arise, FME shall have full documentation related to that, including the corrective actions that had been taken to solve it.

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.

1.3.1. Large and Medium FME: FME shall be aware of and understand the legal and administrative obligations with respect to relevant international agreements.

1.3.2. FMEs shall meet the intent of applicable conventions including CITES, Convention on Biological Diversity and ILO conventions (29, 87, 98, 100, 105, 111, 138, 182 and other binding conventions).

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.

1.4.1. Perceived conflicts between laws, FSC P&C and international treaties or conventions shall be identified by FME.

1.4.2. FME SHOULD work in conjunction with the appropriate regulatory bodies, FSC National Partner (or respective FSC body) and other parties to resolve conflicts between laws/regulations and FSC Principles or Criteria.

1.5 Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorised activities.

1.5.1. Large and Medium FME: A monitoring system, including periodic inspections, shall exist for protection of the forest management unit(s) from illegal harvesting, settlement, occupation, poaching or other...
unauthorised activities.

1.5.2. The forest manager shall take reasonable legal measures to prevent unauthorised harvesting activities, settlement, occupation, poaching.

1.5.3. Instances of illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities shall be documented and reported to the responsible authority (e.g. police, prosecution, forestry and environmental authorities).

1.6 Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.

1.6.1. Large and Medium FME: FME shall have a publicly available policy or statement committing the organisation to adhere to the FSC certification standards on the forest under assessment.

1.6.2. FME shall not implement activities that blatantly conflict with the FSC P&C on forest areas outside of the forest area under assessment.

1.6.3. FME shall disclose information on all forest areas over which the FME has some degree of management responsibility to demonstrate conformance with current FSC policies on partial certification and on excision of areas from the scope of certification.

PRINCIPLE #2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

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. FME shall have documented evidence of legal, long term (at least one rotation length or harvest cycle) rights to manage the lands and to utilise the forest resources for which certification are sought.

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.

2.2.1. Recognized legal or customary tenure or use rights to the forest resource of all local communities shall be clearly documented by the forest managers.

2.2.2. If any local community or other interested party claim certain rights over the land, such claims are legally proven.

2.2.3. FME shall provide evidence that free and informed consent to management activities affecting use rights has been given by local communities or affected parties.

2.2.4. Large and Medium FME: FME shall ensure that local communities have access to the forest for collection of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) such as berries, mushrooms, herbs for own consumption.

2.2.5. Large and Medium FME: FME shall ensure that local communities have controlled access to take or buy wood for their own consumption (e.g. firewood) at a reasonable price.

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.

2.3.1 Records shall be maintained of disputes and claims over tenure and use rights.

2.3.2 FME shall use mechanisms for resolving conflicts over tenure claims and use rights that respectfully involve the disputants aiming to achieve agreement or consent.

2.3.3 Disputes, which are not resolved through agreement or consent with the disputants, shall be solved in independent courts.

2.3.4 FME shall not continue its activities that had caused the dispute unless the dispute is solved through achieved agreement or court decision.

PRINCIPLE #3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognised and respected.

Not applicable for Bulgaria

PRINCIPLE #4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKER’S RIGHTS

Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.

4.1 The communities within, or adjacent to, the forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services.

4.1.1 FME ensures to local communities and residents equal opportunities in terms of employment, promoting, dismissal, remuneration, training and other benefits or opportunities.

4.1.2 Evidence of efforts made for providing stable employment for all staff shall exist.

4.1.3 There is no evidence of limiting access of staff and local residents to basic forest functions and social services such as health, education, leisure and tourism.

4.2 Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.

4.2.1 Wages and other benefits (health, retirement, worker’s compensation, housing, food) for full-time staff and contractors shall be consistent with (not lower than) prevailing local standards.

4.2.2 FME shall implement a program of worker safety with health and safety measures complying with national minimum requirements.

4.2.3 Large and Medium FME: FME shall maintain up to date records of work-related accidents (staff and contractors) and documented steps taken to minimize risk of further accidents.

4.2.4 Compensations are granted to the workers in case of accidents.

4.2.5 Workers (staff and contractors) shall be instructed about procedures in case of emergency situation such as accident, fire or oil spill.
4.2.6 Workers (staff and contractors) shall be aware of and shall implement safe working practices.

4.2.7 Chain saw operators (staff and contractors) shall be provided and use on the field appropriate health and safety equipment, including: hard helmet with hearing and eyes protection, high visibility vest/jacket, steel toe boots and chainsaw proof chaps.

4.2.8 Other workers, than chain saw operators, shall be provided with safety equipment in good working order, relevant to the tasks of worker and the equipment used (e.g. according to national norms and/or to ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Forestry).

4.2.9 Workers involved in tree felling and dangerous work such as storm damage removal, tree climbing shall never work alone.

4.2.10 Any person entering an ongoing logging site shall wear a helmet and high visibility vest.

4.2.11 Durably equipped first aid kit shall be available for workers (staff and contractors) on the on-going logging sites.

4.2.12 Tractors and other self-propelled machinery for forest works shall be equipped with secure cabin compliant with the legislative requirements.

4.2.13 Warning signs shall be posted at main access roads to sites with ongoing logging operation.

4.2.14 Workers who are staying overnight in the forest shall have appropriate sleeping and toilet facilities and sufficient supply of drinking water.

4.2.15 The requirements of criterion 4.2 shall also apply to workers’ family members in case of their presence on work area.

4.3 The rights of workers to organise and voluntarily negotiate with their employers shall be guaranteed as outlined in Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

4.3.1 FMEs, by their actions and policies, shall respect the rights of workers (staff and contractors) to organise or join trade unions and to engage in collective bargaining as outlined in ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

4.4 Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups (both men and women) directly affected by management operations.

4.4.1 Large and Medium FME: In conjunction with local stakeholders and other interested parties, the FME shall evaluate socio-economic impacts associated with forest management activities, e.g. including:

4.4.1.1 identification of affected groups;

4.4.1.2 consultation with affected groups;

4.4.1.3 identification of the main impacts of the operation on affected groups;

4.4.1.4 specification of mitigation measures for identified negative impacts;
4.4.1.5 monitoring of effectiveness of measures in consultation with the affected groups.

4.4.2 Large and Medium FME: FME has in place a system to document stakeholder concerns and request followed by relevant FME’s responses.

4.4.3 SLIMF: FME shall conduct and keep records of stakeholders’ consultation regarding social, social-economic and cultural values that might be affected by the scale of forest management.

4.4.4 FME shall demonstrate that input from community participation (socio-economic assessments, consultations) was considered and/or responded to during management planning and operations.

4.4.5 Areas of special economic, ecological, cultural or spiritual values for local communities shall be mapped and management shall take these values into considerations.

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.

4.5.1 FME shall make all reasonable efforts to avoid losses and damages affecting local peoples, and in resolving grievances related to legal rights, damage compensation and negative impacts.

4.5.2 Procedures for consistently and effectively resolving grievances and determining compensation for loss or damage in consultations with the affected parties in order to reach an agreement shall be implemented.

4.5.3 Large and Medium FME: FME shall have a documented procedure for implementation of the requirements in 4.5.1 and 4.5.2.

(Note: See Criterion 2.3 for resolution of land tenure (e.g. property or use rights) challenges.)

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.

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 investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.

5.1.1 Budgets shall include provision for environmental and social as well as operational costs necessary to maintain certifiable status (e.g. all due taxes, fees, other obligations required by the law, management planning, road maintenance, silvicultural treatments, long-term forest health, growth and yield monitoring, investments for maintaining biological productivity of the forest and conservation investments).

5.1.2 The income predicted in the operating budgets shall be based upon sound assumptions (e.g. the legally approved levels / rate of harvest and the evolution of the market).

5.2 Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest’s diversity of products.

5.2.1 FME shall seek the “highest and best use” for individual tree and timber species.
5.2.2 Considering local and regional economic needs, FME shall produce and introduce to the market a wide range of forest products, encouraging utilisation of frequently occurring, lesser known, or less-commonly utilised plant species.

5.2.3 Non-timber forest products (NTFPs), e.g. seeds, berries, mushrooms, herbs, resin, greenery, Christmas trees and game, should be considered during forest use and processing.

5.2.4 Large and Medium FME: FMEs shall emphasise local enterprises, making at least proportion of their production available to the local small-scale industries and processing operations.

5.3 Forest management should minimise waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.

5.3.1 The system of existing and planned forest roads, bridges, and logging trails shall be appropriate to the scale and intensity of management operations and shall take into account environmental constraints.

5.3.2 Harvesting, extraction and transportation techniques shall be designed to avoid log breakage, timber degradation and damage to the forest stand, to other forest resources and to the soil.

5.3.3 Harvested and processed wood/products on-site shall be transported from the forest before any deterioration occurs.

5.3.4 FME shall remain as much as possible of useless biomass in the forest, and shall limit practice of whole tree harvesting to minimize the waste generated through harvesting operations and on-site processing.

(Note: See Principle 6 for assessing damage to forest resources)

5.4 Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.

5.4.1 FME shall foster product diversification and exploration of new markets and products.

5.4.2 FME shall support local value added processing, considering in its marketing and sales policy the needs of local market.

(Note: See also Criterion 5.2)

5.5 Forest management operations shall recognise, maintain, and, where appropriate, enhance the value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.

5.5.1 FME shall consider and maintain the full range of forest services associated with the defined forest area including: municipal watersheds, commercial and recreational fisheries (or the supply of water to downstream fisheries), visual quality, contributions to regional biodiversity, recreation and tourism.

5.5.2 FME shall protect riparian zones along all watercourses, streams, pools, springs and lakes/ponds, consistent with the requirement of national regulations or best management practices.

5.5.3 FME should map riparian protection zones that enhance the value of forest services and resources, such as watershed and fisheries (See also Criterion 9).

5.6 The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained.

5.6.1 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations, estimates of total periodic timber growth on the defined forest area - by species categories - shall be generated through a combination of empirical data and published literature.
5.6.2 Allowable harvest levels shall be based on well-documented and most current estimates of growth and yield in accordance with the valid regulations for forest management planning.

5.6.3 Harvesting shall be based on a calculated periodic allowable harvest (e.g. annual allowable cut) and actual harvests do not exceed calculated replenishment rates over the long term.

5.6.4 Harvested volumes shall be strictly documented, including site description, dates, species, quantities, assortments, client, and terms and conditions of harvesting.

5.6.5 Large and Medium FME: FME shall document commercial harvest of NTFP such as seeds, mushrooms, herbs, berries, Christmas trees, greenery, game and fishing.

PRINCIPLE #6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

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.

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 assessed prior to commencement of site-disturbing operations.

6.1.1 Large and Medium FME: Environmental assessments shall be completed during management planning, including designation of mitigation measures in forestry planning and harvesting documentation.

6.1.2 Large and Medium FME: Environmental assessments shall consistently occur prior to site disturbing activities and the potential impact shall be addressed during the performance of the activities (e.g. silviculture system used, constructions of new roads, maintenance of drainage systems, time and terms of harvesting, wet soil types handling with precautions, sensitive bird habitats not intervening in the nesting period, etc.).

6.1.3 Large and Medium FME: Landscape level impacts of forest management (e.g. cumulative effects of forest operations within and nearby the FMU) shall be considered.

6.1.4 SLIMF FME (note: above indicators do not apply): Before initiating any operation (as harvesting, planting, construction in forest, road building), the possible negative environmental impacts shall be identified and the operation is designed to minimise them, taking into account the existing officially registered protected species, HCVs, wet soils and watercourses. Assessments do not need to be documented unless legally required.

6.1.5 Environmental impacts of on-site processing facilities shall be controlled (e.g. waste, construction impacts, etc.).

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.

6.2.1 Large and Medium FME: The likely presence of rare, threatened or endangered species and their...
habitats (e.g. nesting and feeding areas) shall be assessed on the basis of the best available information. A written list of identified species and habitats shall be available.

6.2.2 Large and Medium FME: Appropriate to the scale and intensity of management, conservation zones or other protection measures shall be established, located in areas where they can offer a maximum contribution to the biodiversity conservation goals (e.g. the zones could include areas assigned under requirement of 6.4.1, officially designated Protected Areas, old-growth-forests, area of threatened, rare and endangered species or ecosystems in the FME, marginal forest habitats - forest belts, riparian and stream-side vegetation, vegetation on rocky areas, NEPConamps and heaths, non-forested areas like wetlands, meadows, grasslands or other areas excluded from operation or valuable for biodiversity).

6.2.3 Large and Medium FME: Officially designated Protected Areas and the zones assigned by the FME for conservation and protection SHOULD be demarcated on maps, and where feasible, on the ground.

6.2.4 Large and Medium FME: Effective procedures shall be implemented during forest operations in conservation zones to ensure protection of identified values, species and their habitats.

6.2.5 SLIMF FME (note: above indicators do not apply): FME shall be aware of the officially registered protected species in the forest area, as well as where information exists on other rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats. The FME shall use this information to protect these resources.

6.2.6 Timber species on either local and/or international endangered or threatened species lists (e.g. CITES Appendix 1, national lists) shall not be harvested.

6.2.7 Hunting, fishing, trapping and NTFP collecting shall be controlled in the forest. FME shall avoid hunting, fishing, trapping or collecting of protected species.

6.3 Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including:

a) Forest regeneration and succession.

b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.

c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.

6.3.1 The forest manager shall have site-specific data or published analyses of local forest ecosystems that provides information on the FMU with regards to:

6.3.1.1 Regeneration and succession

6.3.1.2 Genetic, species and ecosystem diversity

6.3.1.3 Natural cycles that affect productivity.

6.3.2 Forest management systems shall maintain, enhance or restore ecological functions and values of the FMU based on the data in 6.3.1. Management systems shall include:

6.3.2.1 Silvicultural and other management practices which are appropriate for forest ecosystem function, structure, diversity and succession

6.3.2.2 Where appropriate, a program for the restoration of degraded sites

6.3.2.3 Natural regeneration, unless data shows that enrichment planting or artificial reforestation will enhance or restore genetic, species or ecosystem diversity.
6.3.4 Use of clear cuts in the FME shall be discouraged and carefully controlled, but if it is planned, the area of clear-cuts in natural and semi-natural forests of native species shall not exceed 2 hectares in size. In forest plantations and in stands of non-native species, the area of clear-cuts shall not exceed the scope of the related sub-compartment. Felling sites with clear cut in neighbor stands (sub-compartments) shall not be merged or shall not be implemented in one and same time period. Recurrence of cuts (between each cut and between neighbor stands) in all types of forests shall not be shorter than 5 years.

6.3.5 The scale of final phases of shelterwood/step-wise system (open gaps, coupe size) in natural and semi-natural forests of native species shall not exceed 2 ha in area. Recurrence of cuts shall not be shorter than 5 years.

6.3.6 The scale of regeneration gaps (coupe size), different than in final phases of shelterwood/step-wise system, shall resemble the natural dynamics in the native forest types (e.g. 0.1-0.3 ha but not exceed 0.5 ha in area).

6.3.7 Natural elements of forest ecosystems (hollow and old standing trees, nesting trees, snags, pioneer tree species, wild fruit trees, etc.) shall not be eliminated and shall be kept uncut at the site, with consideration of national requirements on work safety.

6.3.8 FME shall leave dead and decaying wood, standing and fallen, diverse in their size and species, with consideration of national requirements on work safety. Amount of the dead wood is based on scientific evidence, shall refer to local conditions and dominant function of the forest, as well as shall be spatially differentiated (greater amounts shall be left in nature reserves, conservation zones, areas out of use, xylobiont’s sites).

6.3.9 FME shall maintain with limited interventions the marginal forest habitats (forest belts, riparian forests, vegetation on rocky areas, NEPConamps and heaths).

6.3.10 At least 10 living biopte trees per hectare shall be left in clear cuts and shall be left uncut forever. Biotope trees should be selected preferably in groups in consistency with 6.3.7, 6.3.8, 6.3.9.

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.

6.4.1 Large and Medium FME: Representative samples of existing ecosystems on at least 5% of the forest land shall be mapped and protected in their natural state, being entirely excluded from timber harvesting, unless forest health and sanitary regulations require intervention. Selection of those areas shall be based on the identification of existing rare, threatened or endangered forest ecosystems and old-growth-forests, and/or throughout consultation with environmental stakeholders, local government and scientific authorities.

6.4.2 Large and Medium FME: In conjunction with experts, protection and restoration activities shall be defined, documented, and implemented in the forest.

6.4.3 SLIMF FME (note: above indicators do not apply): Where representative samples of ecosystems are known to exist in the FMU these shall be protected.

6.5 Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to: control erosion; minimise forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbances; and protect water resources.

6.5.1 Large and Medium FME: All forest operations with a potential for negative environmental impact (as
identified in 6.1) shall have written guidelines defining acceptable practices for implementation. Such operational guidelines shall be available to the related staff and contractors and shall meet or exceed national norms, taking into consideration:

6.5.1.1 Constructions in forest and building roads are avoided in environmentally sensitive areas, as steep, narrow valleys, slip-prone or other unstable areas, in valley bottom and stream sides. Existing roads in streambeds or in other environmentally sensitive areas shall be closed and replaced with alternative road outside such areas;

6.5.1.2 Buffer zones with limited interventions in at least a tree height shall be left along permanent water courses/bodies and open landscape;

6.5.1.3 Maps and/or work plans shall be produced at a scale that allows effective supervision of soil and water resource management and protection activities;

6.5.1.4 New roads and logging operations are traced/planned in advance on the maps and/or work plans, which allows effective supervision of soil and water resource management and protection activities;

6.5.1.5 Wherever possible roads are located on natural benches, ridges and flatter slopes;

6.5.1.6 Drains, ditches, bridges, planting for soil fixation or other necessary measures are planned as road attributes in order to avoid erosion;

6.5.1.7 Stream crossings are planned and registered on maps before the construction works begin. Number of stream crossings is kept to a minimum and they are designed perpendicular to the stream;

6.5.1.8 Drains do not flow into the water streams and where possible silt traps / water buffers are designed;

6.5.1.9 Culverts are designed in order to avoid obstruction of fish-migration and creation of fast water velocities or other unsuitable for fish streambeds.

6.5.2 SLIMF FME (note: above indicator do not apply): FME shall be aware of soil types appropriate for logging in different seasons (winter, spring, summer or autumn) to avoid soil damage.

6.5.3 Harvesting documentation shall include descriptions, maps and/or work plans, specifying areas suitable for all-weather harvesting or dry-weather only; and indicating locations for extraction (or haul) roads, loading ramps (or log yards), main skid (or equivalent) trails, drainage structures, buffer zones, and conservation areas.

6.5.4 Operational guidelines to the field staff and contractors shall cover technical specifications for skid trail (location, width and density), log landing, buffer zones, maintenance and protection of forest stands, species and habitats.

6.5.5 Training shall be given to FME staff and contractors to meet guidance requirements.

6.5.6 The need to minimize damage to soils, residual trees, regeneration and other forest resources shall be taken into account when new harvesting and extraction machinery is selecting for use or purchase (See also 5.3.2).

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 Organisation 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 minimise health and environmental risks.

6.6.1 Forest managers shall employ silvicultural systems, integrated pest management and vegetation control strategies that result in the least adverse environmental impact. Pesticides are used only when non-chemical management practices have been proven ineffective or cost prohibitive.
6.6.2 If chemicals are used, the following requirements apply:

6.6.2.1 A complete inventory of chemicals shall be provided by the FME and detailed inspections of storage areas or other facilities validate that inventory is complete and in accordance with the applicable national norms;

6.6.2.2 Transportation and storage are made in safe and sealed/leak proof spaces/conditions;

6.6.2.3 Records shall be kept of all chemical used by the FME including name of the product, location and method of application, total quantity of chemical used and dates of application.

6.6.2.4 Safe handling, application (using proper equipment) and storage procedures shall be followed;

6.6.2.5 Chemical treatments are prohibited at a distance of less than 20 m from water streams and 30 m from water tanks/reservoirs and lakes;

6.6.2.6 Chemical treatments are prohibited during the periods when the soil is frozen, covered with snow, rainy periods or severe draught;

6.6.2.7 The introduction of chemically treated saplings is prohibited in water streams, NEPConamps, wells or carst areas;

6.6.2.8 Prior to apply the treatments there shall be taken actions to warn the animal breeders and the bee-masters in the area; and,

6.6.2.9 Staff and contractors shall receive training in handling, application, storage and accident procedures.

6.6.3 Chemicals prohibited by the FSC (FSC-POL-30-601) or those banned in Europe and nationally, or World Health Organisation Type 1A or 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides shall not be used. The exception is when a formal derogation has been granted by the FSC. In such cases, the FME follows the terms of the approved derogation.

6.7 Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.

6.7.1 Chemical, container, liquid and solid non-organic waste shall be disposed of off-site in an environmentally sound and legal manner, whether from forest operations or processing facilities.

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.

6.7.3 Appropriate oil absorbent kit shall be available in forest machinery.

6.7.4 Appropriate oil absorbent kit or spill proof tanks shall be used at chainsaw’s filling points.

6.7.5 Biodegradable oil SHOULD be used for chainsaws and for hydraulics of the forest machineries.

6.8 Use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimised, monitored and strictly controlled in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols. Use of genetically modified organisms shall be prohibited.

6.8.1 Use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimised, monitored and strictly controlled.

6.8.2 Use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) shall be prohibited.

6.9 The use of exotic species shall be carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.

6.9.1 Use of exotic species shall be discouraged and carefully controlled, i.e. when used it is for well-justified and specific purposes (e.g. environmental benefit) and monitored for environmental impact.
6.9.2 Exotic species shall not be newly introduced and cultivated in natural forest.

6.9.3 Where exotic species are planted, measures shall occur to prevent spontaneous regeneration outside plantation areas, unusual mortality, disease, insect outbreaks or other adverse environmental impacts.

6.9.4 Native fungi species shall be used for seedling mycorhisation.

6.10 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in circumstances where conversion:

a) Entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and,

b) Does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and,

c) Will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.

6.10.1 FME shall not convert forests, or threatened non-forested habitat to plantations or non-forest land uses, except where the conversion is result from legally established procedures over responsibility of the forest manager and meets the conditions of 6.10.2 - 6.10.4.

6.10.2 If conversion occurs, it shall be very limited in scale and not exceed 5% of the forest management unit over any 5 year period. (See FSC-DIR-20-007-ADV-10)

6.10.3 If conversion occurs, the forest manager shall demonstrate that any conversion produces long term conservation benefits across the FMU.

6.10.4 If the conversion occurs, plantations or non-forest uses shall not replace high conservation value forest.

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.

7.1 The management plan and supporting documents shall provide:

a) Management objectives.

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.

c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories.

d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection.

e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics.

f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments.

g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.

h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and


land ownership.

i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.

7.1.1 Large and Medium FME: FME Management plan, or appendices or reference documents, shall include presentation of the following components:

7.1.1.1 Management objectives;
7.1.1.2 Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socioeconomic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands;
7.1.1.3 Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories;
7.1.1.4 Description and justification for use of different harvesting techniques and equipment;
7.1.1.5 Description and justification of forest management prescriptions and their silvicultural and ecological rationale i.e. based on site specific forest data or published analysis of local forest ecology or silviculture;
7.1.1.6 Rate of harvest of forest products (timber or non-timber, as applicable) and species selection including justification;
7.1.1.7 Measures for identifying and protecting rare, threatened and endangered species and/or their habitat;
7.1.1.8 Maps(s) describing the forest resource including forest types, watercourses and drains, compartments/blocks, roads, log landings and processing sites, protected areas, unique biological or cultural resources, and other planned management activities;
7.1.1.9 Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments (see criterion 6.1);
7.1.1.10 Action plan and maps regarding the areas with high fire risk; and,
7.1.1.11 Plans for monitoring of forest growth, regeneration and dynamics.

7.1.2 SLIMF FME (note: above indicators do not apply): A written management plan exists that includes at least the following:

7.1.2.1 The objectives of management;
7.1.2.2 A description of the forest resources;
7.1.2.3 How the objectives will be met, harvesting methods and silviculture systems to ensure sustainability;
7.1.2.4 Sustainable harvest limits (which must be consistent with FSC criteria 5.6);
7.1.2.5 Conservation of rare species and any high conservation values;
7.1.2.6 Maps of the forest, showing protected areas, planned management and land ownership.

7.1.3 NTFP resources and uses SHOULD be inventoried and their management considered during planning.

7.1.4 Maps that are presented shall be accurate and sufficient to guide forest activities (also see Criterion 6.5).

7.1.5 Management plans or related annual operating or harvesting plan shall be available to staff and used in the forest.

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.

7.2.1 Large and Medium FME: Management plan revisions shall occur based on national norms and shall incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information regarding changing
silvicultural, environmental, social and economic conditions.

7.2.2 SLIMF FME (note: above indicator do not apply): Management plan shall be reviewed according to the national norms and updated, if necessary, incorporating the results of monitoring to plan and implement future management.

7.2.3 Management plan revision/adjustment shall occur in timely manner with revision period not more than 10 years.

7.3 Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.

7.3.1 Large and Medium FME: A formal training plan for staff and forest workers related to the management plan and its implementation shall be documented (e.g. including sylviculture elements, HCV and biodiversity issues, etc.).

7.3.2 Evidence of formal or informal training of forest workers on proper implementation of the management plan and the related annual operating and harvesting plans shall exist in the FME.

7.3.3 For harvesting and other specific forestry activities, FME shall use workers (staff and contractors) that are sufficiently educated/trained in the tasks they are assigned to and hold relevant skill certificates/licenses/registration documents.

7.3.4 FME shall provide adequate supervision of forest workers to ensure proper implementation of the management plan and the related annual operating and harvesting plans.

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.

7.4.1 Large and Medium FME: FME shall make publicly available a summary of the management plan including information on elements listed in criterion 7.1, within the accepted norms of commercial confidentiality.

7.4.2 SLIMF FME (note: above indicator do not apply): Upon request, FME shall make available relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who are directly affected by the forest management activities of FME (e.g. neighbouring landowners, local inhabitants, social and environmental stakeholders).

PRINCIPLE #8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

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.

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.

8.1.1 Large and Medium FME: A plan and design, based on consistent and replicable procedures, shall exist and be implemented for periodic monitoring and reporting.

8.1.2 Large and Medium FME: The frequency and intensity of monitoring shall be based on the size and complexity of the operation and the fragility of the resources under management.
8.1.3 SLIMF FME (note: above indicators do not apply): FME shall conduct regular and consistent monitoring in connection with harvesting operations and reforestation.

8.1.4 FME maintains the monitoring records accessible, up-to-date and preferably in standard forms.

8.2 Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators:

a) Yield of all forest products harvested.

b) Growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest.

c) Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna.

d) Environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations.

e) Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.

8.2.1 Large and Medium FME: The monitoring plan shall be technically sound and identify/describe observed changes in conditions in terms of:

8.2.1.1 Silviculture (growth rates, regeneration and forest condition, typically as part of a suitable continuous forest inventory system);

8.2.1.2 Commercial harvest including NTFPs;

8.2.1.3 Environment (environmental changes affecting flora, fauna, soil and water resources) (outbreak of pest, invasive species, nesting sites for endangered bird species);

8.2.1.4 Socioeconomic aspects (forest management costs, yields of all products, and changes in community and worker relations or conditions, accident rates); and,

8.2.1.5 Identified high conservation value forest attributes.

8.2.2 SLIMF FME (note: above indicator do not apply): FME shall at a minimum monitor and record information on the following:

8.2.2.1 Amount of products harvested;

8.2.2.2 Regular monitoring of any identified high conservation values;

8.2.2.3 Invasive exotic species;

8.2.2.4 Growth and regeneration of managed species;

8.2.2.5 Post-harvest inspection for erosion and estimate of residue on the basal area; and,

8.2.2.6 Inventory update with the periodic management plan revision (10 years).

8.3 Documentation shall be provided by the forest manager to enable monitoring and certifying organisations to trace each forest product from its origin, a process known as the "chain of custody."

8.3.1 Forest products commercialized from certified forests shall be readily identifiable. Harvesting and transportation documents of the wood originated from certified forests shall specify the following data:

8.3.1.1 the source of the timber;

8.3.1.2 the date of sale;

8.3.1.3 the quantity of certified product sold out;

8.3.1.4 species;

8.3.1.5 size / quality;

8.3.1.6 the location wherefrom the buyer shall take over the control on the chain of custody over the certified timber.
8.3.2 Volume and source data on harvested forest products (as per 8.3.1) shall be available in the forest, in transport, at intermediate storage yards (e.g. log yards), and processing centres controlled by FME.

8.3.3 Invoices, waybills and other applicable documentation related to transport and sale of forest products shall be kept in a head office and/or shall be easily available for inspection.

8.3.4 Written procedure shall be in place to ensure that certified status of sold products is clearly indicated on sales invoices, waybills and other applicable documentation related to transport and sale of certified products. Sales and transportation documents for certified products shall include the chain of custody certificate code in the correct format (e.g. NC-FM/COC-XXXXXX).

8.3.5 Certified forest products shall be clearly distinguished from non-certified products through marks or labels, separate documented storage, and accompanying invoices up to the point of sale (i.e. up to the “forest gate”).

8.4 The results of monitoring shall be incorporated into the implementation and revision of the management plan.

8.4.1 Large and Medium FME: FME shall demonstrate that monitoring results are incorporated into revisions of the management plan.

(Note: For SLIMF see criterion 7.2)

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.

8.5.1 Large FME: Results of monitoring shall be incorporated (within the accepted norms of commercial confidentiality) into summaries and other documents that are publicly available (See also indicator 7.4.1).

8.5.2 Medium and SLIMF FME (note: above indicator do not apply): Upon request, FME shall make available monitoring results that are relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who are directly affected by the forest management activities of FME (See also indicator 7.4.2).

PRINCIPLE 9: MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS

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.

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.

9.1.1 Large and Medium FME: FMEs shall have conducted an assessment to identify HCVs on their territory based on the “National guide for identification, management and monitoring of HCVF in Bulgaria”, taking into account:

9.1.1.1 Consultation with conservation databases and maps;
9.1.1.2 Consideration of primary or secondary data collected during forest inventories on the designated forest area by FME staff, consultants or advisors;
9.1.1.3 Interviews with environmental/biological specialists, local communities, and scientific experts, etc.;
9.1.1.4 Documentation of threats to HCVs; and,
9.1.1.5 If threats to HCVs or HCVF exist, identification of actions to address the threats.
9.1.2 Large and Medium FME: The assessment for identification of HCVs shall include written HCVF report describing the identified HCVs/HCVF in the territory and recommendations for necessary actions to address HCVs/HCVF protection and/or threat reduction (i.e. management and monitoring measures to be taken).

9.1.3 SLIMF FME (note: above indicators do not apply): Consultations shall have occurred with environmental stakeholders, government or scientists to identify HCVs and/or HCVF. If HCVs or HCVF are present in their territory, FME shall take all reasonable steps to protect these values and/or reduce threats.

9.2 The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance thereof.

9.2.1 Large FME: The stakeholder consultation for HCVF recommendations development, and actions taken in response to such consultation, shall be documented.

9.2.2 FME consultations with stakeholders shall clearly outline identified conservation attributes, as well as recommendations for their maintenance or threat reduction.

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.

9.3.1 If HCVF or HCVs are present, planning documents shall provide site-specific information, which describes the measures taken to protect or restore such values.

9.3.2 Measures to protect HCVF shall be available in public documents or in the FME management plan summary.

9.4 Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.

9.4.1 Based on recommendations of the “National guide for identification, management and monitoring of HCVF in Bulgaria” a system for continuous monitoring of HCVF shall be incorporated into the FME’s planning, monitoring and reporting procedures.

9.4.2 Large and Medium FME: The monitoring results are documented in standard forms and they are used for updating of the measures for maintenance of the related HCVs.

PRINCIPLE # 10: PLANTATIONS

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.

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 setting plantation or forestation of non-forested (post agricultural) areas shall be explicit in the management plan, with clear statements regarding the relationship between tree planting and the silviculture, socioeconomic and environmental (i.e. forest conservation and restoration) realities in the region.

10.1.2 Management objectives for conservation of natural forest and restoration shall be described in the management plan.
10.1.3 Management objectives, specifically those related to natural forest conservation and restoration, shall be demonstrated in forest management activities.

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.

10.2.1 Natural forest and areas with natural vegetation shall be considered for protection when plantations are designed and established.

10.2.2 Buffer zones with natural vegetation along watercourses and around wetlands shall be established and/or protected. Buffer zones SHOULD be indicated on maps.

10.2.3 FME shall consider need to ensure wildlife habitat and corridors, suitably located across plantation areas, in consultation with acknowledged experts.

10.2.4 Plantations shall be designed so as to maintain or enhance the visual character of the landscape (i.e. design is based on the scale and intensity of natural patterns of disturbance and planting and harvest regimes within the region).

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.

10.3.1 Plantation management shall maintain and/or enhance landscape diversity by varying block size and configuration, species, genetic diversity, age class and structure.

10.3.2 Emphasis should be placed on planting and/or applied research on forest species native to the region.

10.3.3 The size of monoculture plantations shall correspond to the size of naturally occurring forest stands in the landscape.

(Note: Also see Criteria 6.4 and 6.10.)

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.

10.4.1 Plantation species shall be selected based on suitability to site conditions (soils, topography and climate) and management objectives.

10.4.2 FME shall promote the indigenous tree species over exotic species in plantation, in forestation of post agriculture land and in ecosystem restoration activities.

10.4.3 Invasive exotic species and those that cross breed with local species shall not be used in stand composition.

10.4.4 No species shall be used in plantations, in forestation of post agriculture land and in ecosystem restoration activities until historical experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site.
10.4.5 Where exotic species have been selected, the FME shall explicitly justify this choice demonstrating that their performance is greater than that of native species.

10.4.6 When exotic species 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.

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.

10.5.1 Large and Medium FME: Consistent with 6.4.1, at least 5% of the plantations areas shall be managed with a goal to restore in time the natural fundamental forest type or with a goal of biodiversity conservation of native species and habitats.

10.5.2 SLIMF FME (note: above indicator do not apply): At least 5% of the plantations areas shall be based on cultivation of for the region native tree species and shall be managed according to the same silvicultural system used for the management of the natural fundamental forest type.

(Note: Also see Criterion 6.4.)

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.

10.6.1 Explicit measures shall be taken to maintain or enhance the soil in terms of structure, fertility and biological activity.

10.6.2 Plantation design and management shall not result in soil degradation.

10.6.3 Forest operations shall not degrade water quality or negatively impact local hydrology.

10.6.4 Where negative impacts on soil or water resources is identified, FME shall take steps to reduce or eliminate such impacts.

10.7 Measures shall be taken to prevent and minimise 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 fertilisers. Plantation management should make every effort to move away from chemical pesticides and fertilisers, including their use in nurseries. The use of chemicals is also covered in Criteria 6.6 and 6.7.

10.7.1 Measures shall be taken in the forest to prevent outbreaks of pests, disease, fire and invasive plant introductions.

10.7.2 A plan should exist for forest fire prevention and control.

10.7.3 An integrated pest management plan shall exist that identifies pests, determines acceptable injury or action thresholds, and alternative methods of addressing threats.

10.7.4 FME shall have a policy and strategy to minimise use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers.

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.

10.8.1 For recently set plantations with a compact surface larger than 500 ha, monitoring shall include evaluation of potential onsite and off-site ecological and social impacts of plantation activities. (Also see criteria 4.4, 6.1).

10.8.2 Amount and types of yield, scale of increment and production, health conditions and soil conditions of the plantations shall be observed regularly (Also see criteria 8.1, 8.2).

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.

(Note: For exotic or invasive species issues, see Criterion 10.4.)

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.

10.9.1 The plantation shall not occupy land converted from natural forest since November 1994, unless clear evidence exists that the current manager/owner was not directly or indirectly responsible.

(Note: See also Criterion 6.10.)
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 fertilisers, 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 fulfill 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 organisations 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 organisations 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, recognised 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 Bulgaria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Name of law/regulation</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Legal rights to harvest</td>
<td>Farmland Ownership and Use Act; Forest Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Land tenure and management rights</td>
<td>Farmland Ownership and Use Act; Forest Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Concession licenses</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Management and harvesting planning</td>
<td>Forest Act; Ordinance for Forestland Inventory and Forest Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Harvesting permits</td>
<td>Forest Act; Ordinance for Felling in Forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Taxes and fees</td>
<td>Forest Act; Ordinance on terms and conditions for assignment implementation of activities in forest areas - state and municipal property, and for use of wood and forest products</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1 Payment of royalties and harvesting fees</td>
<td>Value Added Tax Act</td>
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<td>2.2 Value added taxes and other sales taxes</td>
<td>Value Added Tax Act</td>
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<td>2.3 Income and profit taxes</td>
<td>Personal Income Tax Act; Corporate Income Tax Act; Local Taxes and Fees Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Timber harvesting activities</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Act; Protected Areas Act; Biological Diversity Act; Fisheries and Aquaculture Act; Waters Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Timber harvesting regulations</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Act; Protected Areas Act; Biological Diversity Act; Fisheries and Aquaculture Act; Waters Act</td>
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<td>3.2 Protected sites and species</td>
<td>Protected Areas Act; Biological Diversity Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 Environmental requirements</td>
<td>Protected Areas Act; Biological Diversity Act; Fisheries and Aquaculture Act; Waters Act</td>
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<td>3.4 Health and safety</td>
<td>Law on Health and Safety at Work; Forest Act, Provision on Health and Safety at Work in Forest</td>
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<td>3.5 Legal employment</td>
<td>Labour Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Third parties’ rights</td>
<td>Law of Protection of Consumers</td>
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<td>4.1 Customary rights</td>
<td>Code of Civil Procedure</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Free prior and informed consent</td>
<td>Code of Civil Procedure</td>
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<td>4.3 Indigenous peoples rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Trade and transport</td>
<td>Forest Act; Ordinance for Control and Protection of Forestland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Classification of species, quantities, qualities</td>
<td>Forest Act; Ordinance for Control and Protection of Forestland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Trade and transport</td>
<td>Forest Act; Ordinance for Control and Protection of Forestland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Offshore trading and transfer pricing</td>
<td>Accountancy Act; Corporate Income Tax Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.4 Custom regulations</td>
<td>Customs Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 CITES</td>
<td>Biological Diversity Act</td>
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</table>
Annex 3: List of the multilateral environmental agreements and ILO Conventions that Bulgaria has ratified

List of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Conventions that have an impact on forestry operations and practices:

- Biological Diversity Convention (1996)
- Directive (EC) 92/43/EIS (Habitats Directive)
- Directive (EC) 2009/147/ES (Birds Directive)
- RAMSAR (1976)
- World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention (1976)
- CITES 1990 (1991)
- ACCOBAMS (1999)
- AEWA (2000)
- EUROBAT (1999)

List of ILO Conventions that have an impact on forestry operations and practices:

- C29* Forced Labour Convention, 1930
- C87* Freedom of association and protection of the right to organize conventions, 1948.
- C97 Migration for employment (revised) convention, 1949.
- C98* Right to organize and collective bargaining convention, 1949.
- C100* Equal remuneration convention, 1951.
- C105* Abolition of forced labour convention, 1957.
- C111* Discrimination (occupation and employment) convention, 1958.
- C141 Rural workers organizations convention, 1975.
- C142 Human Resources Development Convention, 1975
- C143 Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975
- C155 Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981
- C169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989
- C182* Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999
- ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Forestry Work.
- Recommendation 135 Minimum Wage Fixing Recommendation, 1970

All other ILO Conventions that have been ratified in Bulgaria:

- C1 Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919
- C3 Maternity Protection Convention, 1919
- C6 Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1919
- C8 Unemployment Indemnity (Shipwreck) Convention, 1920
- C9 Placing of Seamen Convention, 1920
- C11 Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921
- C12 Compensations for Accidents (Agriculture), 1921
- C13 White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921
- C14 Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921
- C16 Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921
- C32 Closure Dockworkers Against Accidents (Revised), 1932
- C35 Concerning Insurance Age (Industry, etc), 1933
- C36 Concerning Insurance Age (Agriculture), 1933
- C37 On Disability Insurance (Industry, etc), 1933
- C38 On Disability Insurance Contributions (Agriculture), 1933
- C39 On Death Insurance (Industry.), 1933
- C40 On Death Insurance (Agriculture), 1933
- C42 On Benefits For Occupational Diseases (Revised), 1934
- C43 On Glass Enterprises For Flat Glass, 1934
- C44 On Unemployment, 1934
- C45 For Underground Work (Women), 1935
- C49 On Glass Bottle Enterprises, 1935
- C52 On Paid Leave, 1936
- C53 On The Licenses Of Officers, 1936
- C55 Shipowners' Liability Sick And Injured Seamen, 1936
- C56 On Disease Security Of Seafarers, 1936
- C62 On Technical Safety (Construction) 1937
- C68 Food and Catering (Ships' Crews) Convention, 1946
- C69 On The Certificate Of Professional Competence ship's cook, 1946
- C71 On Pensions For Sailors 1946
- C73 Concerning Medical Examinations Of Seafarers, 1946
- C77 On The Medical Examinations Of Adolescents (Industry), 1946
- C78 On The Medical Examinations Of Adolescents (Non-Industrial Activities) 1946
- C79 On Night Work Of Adolescents (Non-Industrial Activities) 1946
- C80 For Revisions Of Final Provisions, 1946
- C81 Labour Inspection Convention, 1947
- C94 On Labour Clauses (Administrative Contracts), 1949
- C95 Protection of Wages Convention, 1949
- C106 Concerning The Week Holiday (Trade And Office Service), 1957
- C108 Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958
- C108 Of The Council of Europe for the Protection of Individuals with Automatic Processing of Personal Data, 1981
- C113 Concerning Medical Examination Of Fishermen, 1959
- C116 Final Articles Revision Convention, 1961
- C120 On Hygiene in the Trade and Cantor, 1964
- C123 Of Minimum Age For Admission Of Underground Work In Mines, 1969
- C124 Medical Examination Of Young People With A View To Their Release For Underground Work In Mines, 1969
- C127 Maximum Weight Convention, 1967
- C144 Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976
- C146 Concerning For Annual Paid Leave For Seafarers, 1976
- C147 Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (and its Protocol)
- C156 Concerning Equal Opportunities And Equal Treatment Of Workers From Both Sexes Employees With Family Responsibilities
- C163 Seafarers' Welfare Convention, 1987
- C164 Of The International Labour Organization Concerning Health Protection And Medical Care Of Seafarers, 1987
- C166 On Repatriation Of Seafarers
- C173 Concerning The Protection Of Workers 'Claims In The Event Of Insolvency Of Employer, 1992
- C178 On Inspection Of Working Conditions And Life Of Sailors, 1996
- C179 Concerning The Recruitment And Appointment Of Seamen
- C180 Concerning Seafarers' Hours Of And Equipment Of Ships
- C183 On Maternity Protection, 2000
Annex 4: List of officially endangered species in Bulgaria

IUCN Red List species (2007) native to Bulgaria

1. VERTEBRATES
   MAMMALIA
   INSECTIVORA

   1. VERTEBRATES
   MAMMALIA
   INSECTIVORA
   Erinaceidae
   Erinaceus concolor
   Soricidae
   Suncus etruscus
   CHIROPTERA
   Rhinolophidae
   Rhinolophus blasii
   Rhinolophus euryale
   Rhinolophus ferrumequinum
   Rhinolophus hipposideros
   Rhinolophus mehelyi
   Molossidae
   Tadarida teniotis
   Vespertilionidae
   Barbastella barbastellus
   Eptesicus nilssonii
   Eptesicus serotinus
   Hypsugo savii
   Miniopterus schreibersi
   Myotis alcatheo
   Myotis aurescens
   Myotis bechsteini
   Myotis blythi
   Myotis brandti
   Myotis capaccinii
   Myotis dasycneme
   Myotis daubentoni
Мустакат нощник
Трицветен нощник
Голям нощник
Нощник на Натерер
Голям вечерник
Малък вечерник
Ръждив вечерник
Кафяво прилепче
Малко кафяво прилепче
Прилеп на Натузий
Средиземноморско прилепче
Кафяв дългоух прилеп
Сив дългоух прилеп
Двуетъчен прилеп
РАЗРЕД ГРИЗАЧИ
Сем. Сънливци
Мишевиден сънливец
Лешников сънливец
Сем. Скачащи мишки
Скачаща (степна) мишка
Сем. Хомяци
Добруджански (среден) хомяк
Сив (малък) хомяк
Обикновен (голям) хомяк
РАЗРЕД ХИЩНИЦИ
Сем. Мечки
Кафява мечка
Сем. Порови
Видра
Златка
Невестулка
Степен пор
Пъстър пор
Сем. Котки

Myotis mystacinus
Myotis emarginatus
Myotis myotis
Myotis nattereri
Nyctalus lasiopterus
Nyctalus leisleri
Nyctalus noctula
Pipistrellus pipistrellus
Pipistrellus pygmaeus
Pipistrellus nathusii
Pipistrellus kuhlii
Plecotus auritus
Plecotus austriacus
Vespertilio murinus
Gliridae
Myomimus roachi
Muscardinus avellanarius
Dipodidae
Sicista subtilis
Cricetidae
Mesocricetus newtoni
Cricetulus migratorius
Cricetus cricetus
CARNIVORA
Ursidae
Ursus arctos (*)
Mustelidae
Lutra lutra (*)
Martes martes
Mustela nivalis
Mustela eversmanni
Vormela peregusna
Felidae
Felis lynx (*)
Felis silvestris
Phocidae
Monachus monachus (*)
ARTIODACTYLA
Bovidae
Rupicapra rupicapra (*)
CETACEA
Phocoenidae
Phocoena phocoena
Delphinidae
Delphinus delphis (*)
Tursiops truncatus (*)
AVES
GAVIIFORMES
Gaviidae
Gavia stellata
Gavia arctica
Gavia immer
PODICIPEDIFORMES
Podicipedidae
Podiceps auritus
Podiceps cristatus
Podiceps grisegena
Podiceps nigriceps
Tachybaptus ruficollis
PROCSELLARIIFORMES
Procellaridae
Calonectris /Procellaria/ diomedea
Puffinus yelkouan
PELECANIFORMES
Phalacrocoracidae
Phalacrocorax aristotelis
Малък корморан
Сем. Пеликани

Къдроглав пеликан
Розов пеликан
Сем. Рибоядови
Бял рибояд

РАЗРЕД ЩЪРКЕЛОПОДОБНИ
Сем. Чаплови
Гривеста чапла
Ръждива чапла
Сива чапла
Голям воден бик
Биволска чапла
Голима бяла чапла
Малка бяла чапла
Малък воден бик
Нощна чапла
Сем. Щъркелови
Бял щъркел
Черен щъркел
Сем. Ибисови
Бяла лопатарка
Блестящ ибис
Сем. Фламингови
Розово фламинго

РАЗРЕД ГЪСКОПОДОБНИ
Сем. Патицови
Сърпокрила патица
Сива патица
Малка белочела гъска
Посевна гъска
Сива гъска
Снежна гъска
Бялочервеноглава потапница
Сивочервена потапница
Червеногуша гъска
Звъннарка
Ледена потапница
Тундров лебед
Ням лебед
Поен лебед

Phalacrocorax pygmeus (*)
Pelecanidae
Pelecanus crispus (*)
Pelecanus onocrotalus
Sulidae
Morus bassanus
CICONIIFORMES
Ardeidae
Ardea purpurea
Ardea cinerea
Botaurus stellaris
Bubulcus ibis
Egretta alba
Egretta garzetta
Ixobrychus minutus
Nycticorax nycticorax
Ciconiidae
Ciconia ciconia
Ciconia nigra
Threskiornithidae
Platalea leucorodia
Plegadis falcinellus
Phoenicopteridae
Phoenicopterus ruber
ANSERIFORMES
Anatidae
Anas falcata
Anas strepera
Anser erythropus
Anser fabalis
Anser anser
Anser caerulescens
Aythya nyroca
Aythya ferina
Aythya marila
Branta ruficollis
Bucephala clangula
Clangula hyemalis
Cygnus bewickii
Cygnus olor
Cygnus cygnus
Мраморна патица
Мраморная патица
Мраморная патица

Маrmaronetta angustirostris
Меланитта фуска
Меланита нигра
Мергус албьетус
Мергус мергарснер
Мергус сerratо
Нетта рулфина

Оксура леукокофалла
Соматерия моллиссима
Тадорна ферружьйна (*)
Тадорна тадорна

FALCONIFORMES
Пандионидай
Пандион халиаутус (*)
Акципитрідай
Акципитер бревписать
Акципитер gentilis
Акципитер нісус

Аегыпйус монакус (*)
Акула чріясэтос
Акула члнгая
Акула хеліацая
Акула помаріная
Акула рапакс
Бутео бутео
Бутео лагопус
Бутео руфінус

Сіраеetus галікус
Сіруус аерунігінусус
Сіруус ціанеус
Сіруус макроурус
Сіруус пігургус
Еланус цаерлеус

Гіпійаеetus барбатаус (*)
Гіпіус фулвус (*)
Галіаеetus алібіцілла (*)
Гіерапрроетус фасіціатус
Гіерапрроетус пеннатус

Мілвус мігранс
Мілвус мільвус
Неопрроно персапооптус
Перніс апіворус

Фалконідай
Фалко біармікус (*)
Фалко чернуг (*)
Фалко колумбаріус
Фалко еліеонореус
Фалко нойманні
Фалко переґринус (*)
Фалко суббутоо
Фалко тінінцулус
Фалко васпертінус

GALLIFORMES
Філіанідай
Бонаса бонасіа
GRUIFORMES
Груідайд

Антроподіос вірго
Грус грус
Раллідай

Gallinulidae
Галінілідаeus члоропус
Порзнана порзнана
Порзнана порзнана
Порзнана павра
Порзнана пусілла
Раллус агвастікус

Otididae
Отіс тарда
Тетракс тетракс

CHARADRIIFORMES

РАЗРЕД СОКОЛОПОДОБНИ
Сем. Орли рибари
Орел рибар
Сем. Ястребови
Късопръст ястреб
Голям ястреб
Малък ястреб
Черен лешояд
Скалън орел
Голям креслив орел
Кръстат (царски) орел
Малък креслив орел
Степен орел
Обикновен мишелов
Северен мишелов
Белоопашат мишелов
Орел змиер
Тръстикови блатар
Полски блатар
Сем. Соколови
Поскі сокол
Ловен сокол
Малък сокол
Средземноморски сокол
Белошипа ветрушка
Сокол скитник
Орко
Черношипа ветрушка (Керкенез)
Вечерна ветрушка
РАЗРЕД КОКОШОПОДОБНИ
Сем. Фазанови
Лещарка
РАЗРЕД ЖЕРАВОПОДОБНИ
Сем. Жеравови
Момин жерав
Сив жерав
Сем. Дроплови
Дропла
Стрепет
РАЗРЕД ДЪЖДОСВИРЦОПОДОБНИ
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Див скален гълъб
Гълъб храалупар
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Канулата куквица
Обикновена куквица
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Забулена сова
Сем. Същински сови
Пернатога кукума вка
Горска ушата сова
Блатна сова
Домашна кукума вка
Бухал
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Снежна сова
Чухал
Горска улулица
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Ястребова сова
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Козодой
РАЗРЕД БЪРЗОЛЕТОПОДОБНИ
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Черен бързолет
Алпийски бързолет
Блед бързолет
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Земердо рибарче
Сем. Синявицови
Синя вица
Сем. Пчелоядови
Зелен пчелояд
Сем. Полукоправи
Патунеч
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Сирийски пъстър кълвач
Среден пъстър кълвач
Белогръб кълвач
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Трипръст кълвач
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Късокръста чучуляга
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Селска лястовица
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Горска бъбрица
Ливадна бъбрица
Тундрова бъбрица
Планинска бъбрица
Лимонена стърчиопашка
Жълта стърчиопашка
Планинска стърчиопашка
Бяла стърчиопашка
Сем. Корпинаркови
Корпинарка
Сем. Водни косове
Водни кос
Сем. Орехчета
Орехче
Сем. Завирушкови
Сивогуша завирушка
Пъстроура завирушка
Сем. Дроздови
Трънковче
Червеноърдка
Северен славей
Южен славей
Синьогушка
Пъстър скален дрозд
Син скален дрозд
Пустинно каменарче
Скалия каменарче
Испанско каменарче
Ориенталско каменарче
Черно каменарче
Сиво каменарче
Черногърбо каменарче
Домашна червеноопашка
Градинска червеноопашка
Ръждивогушо ливадарче
Черногушо ливадарче
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Кос
Черногуш дрозд
Хвоянов дрозд
Поен дрозд
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Тръстиково шаварче
Градинско шаварче
Градински каменарчо
Мустакато шаварче
Водно шаварче
Монурно шаварче
Крайбрежно шаварче
Блатно шаварче
Свилено шаварче
Пъстроопашато шаварче
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Голям маслинов присмехулник
Градински присмехулник
Полски цвъркач
Речен цвъркач
Тръстикцов цвъркач
Планински певец
Жълтоглав певец
Бухов певец
Елов певец
Брезов певец
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Малко черноглаво коприварче
Орфево коприварче
Ястребогушо коприварче
Малко белогушо коприварче
Голямо белогушо коприварче
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Anthus pratensis
Anthus cervinus
Anthus spinolletta
Motacilla citreola
Motacilla flava
Motacilla cinerea
Motacilla alba
Bombystichidae
Bombystichus Garrulus
Cinclidae
Cinclus cinclus
Troglytidae
Troglydites troglodytes
Prunellidae
Prunella modularis
Prunella collaris
Turdidae
Cercotrichas galactotes
Erithacus rubecula
Luscinia luscinia
Luscinia megarhynchos
Luscinia svecica
Monticola saxatilis
Monticola solitarius
Oenanthe deserti
Oenanthe finchii
Oenanthe hispanica
Oenanthe isabellina
Oenanthe leucura
Oenanthe oenanthe
Oenanthe pleschanka
Phoenicurus ochruros
Phoenicurus phoenicurus
 Saxicola rubetra
Saxicola torquata
Turdus torquatus
Turdus merula
Turdus ruficollis
Turdus pilaris
Turdus philomelos
Turdus iliacus
Turdus viscivorus
Sylviaea
Acrocephalus agricola
Acrocephalus arundinaceous
Acrocephalus dumetorum
Acrocephalus melanopogon
Acrocephalus paludicola
Acrocephalus palustris
Acrocephalus schoenobaenus
Acrocephalus scirpaceus
Cettia cetti
Cisticola juncidis
Hippolais pallida
Hippolais olivetorum
Hippolais icterina
Locustella naevia
Locustella fluvialitis
Locustella luscinoides
Phylloscopus bonelli
Phylloscopus proregulius
Phylloscopus sibilatrix
Phylloscopus collybita
Phylloscopus trochilus
Sylvia cantillans
Sylvia melanocephala
Sylvia hortensis
Sylvia nisoria
Sylvia curruca
Sylvia communis
Сем. Крылоецинсти жаби
Червенокрімейна букушка
Жълтокорімейна букушка
Сем. Жаби дълбеници
Жаба дълбеница
Сем. Чесновници
Обикновена чесновница
Балканска чесновница
Сем. Водни жаби
Глътака дългопрах жаба
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Немска есетра
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Сем. Костурови
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КЛАС НАСЕКОМИИ
РАЗРЕД ВОДНИ КОНЧЕТА
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Офиогомфус
Сем. Кордугегастриди
Кордугегастер
Сем. Кобички, либелулиди
Леукорния
РАЗРЕД ПРАВОКРИЛИ
Сем. Обикновени дългопипални скакалци
Малка сага
Сем. Катантопди
Одонатолозизма
Обикновен паракалоптенус
РАЗРЕД ТВЪРДОКРИЛИ
Сем. Бръмбари бегачи
Карабус
Карабус
Бръмбар рогач
Алпийска розалия
Сем. Листороги, торни бръмбари
Осмодерма
Сем. Сечкови
Обикновен сечко
РАЗРЕД ПЕПЕРУДИ
Аполон червен
Черен аполон
Зеринция
Сем. Белянки
Лептидеа
Балканска жълтушка
Жълтушка
Сем. Синевици
Лицена
Полюмамут
Гигантска синевица
Макулинейа
Сем. Многоцветници
Родопска кадифянка
Сатирче
Анатура
Хидриас
Лофиней
Било-в
Сем. Пазиокампиди
Торбонездица
Сем. Педомерки
Лигнотерга
Сем. Вечерици

Discoglossidae
Bombina bombina
Bombina variegata
Hylidae
Hyla arborea
Pelobatidae
Pelobates fuscus
Pelobates syriacus balcanicus
Ranidae
Rana graeca
PISCES
Acipenseriformes
Acipenser nudibentris
Acipenser sturio
PERCIFORMES
Percidae
Gymnocephalus baloni
2. INVERTEBRATES
ARTHROPODA
INSECTA
ODONATA
Gomphidae
Ophiogomphus cecilia
Cordulegastridae
Cordulegaster heros
Libellulidae
Leucorhinia pectoralis
ORTHOPTERA
Tettigoniidae
Sagae pedo
Catantopidae
Odontopodisma rubripes
Paracalopterus caloptenoides
COLEOPTERA
Carabidae
Carabus hungaricus
Carabus variolosus
Lucanus cervus
Rosalia alpina
Scarabaeidae
Osmoderma eremita
Cerambicidae
Cerambyx cerdo
LEPIDOPTERA
Papilionidae
Parnassius apolo
Parnassius mnemosyne
Zerynthia polyxena
Pieridae
Leptidea morsei
Collas balcanica
Collas myrmidon
Lycaenidae
Lycaena dispar
Polyommatus eordius
Maculinea arion
Maculinea nausithous
Nymphalidae
Erebia rhodopensis
Coenonympha oedipus
Apatura metis
Hypodryas maturna (Euphydryas maturna)
Lophinga achine
Nymphalis vaualbum
Lasiocampidae
Eriogaster catax
Geometriidae
Lignyoptera fumidaria
Sphingidae
Прозерпина

Розово нощно пауново око

РАЗРЕД ЦИПОКРИЛИ

Сем. Бисерици

Бисерна мида

3. РАСТЕНИЯ

ОТДЕЛ ПЛАУНООБРАЗНИ

Сем. Шилолистни

Езерен шилолист

ОТДЕЛ ПАПРАТОВИДНИ

Сем. Адиантови

Венерин косъм

Сем. изтравничеви

Клиновидно изтравниче

Сем. Скритолинейникови

Къдрав скритолинейник

ОТДЕЛ ГОЛОСЕМЕННИ

Сем. Кипарисови

Дървовидна хвойна

Сем. Ефедрови

Катерлива ефедра

Сем. Борови

Калабрийски бор

Сем. Таксови

Пинус бруита

Сем. Таксови

Таксус баксиа

ОТДЕЛ ПОКРИТОСЕМЕННИ

Сем. Страшникови

Бодлив страшник

Сем. Странични

Акантоносейлус

Сем. Нитроцинови

Cupressaceae

Juniperus excelsa

Ephedraeae

Ephedra campylododa

Pinoideae

Pinus brutia

Taxaceae

Taxus baccata

MAGNOLIOPHYTA (ANGIOSPERMAE)

Acanthaceae

Acanthus spinosus

Aceraceae

Acer heldreichii ssp. visianii

Alismataceae

Caldesia parrasifolia

Amaryllidaceae
Елвезиево кокиче — Galanthus elwesii
Снежно кокиче — Galanthus nivalis
Пясъчна лилия — Pancratium maritimum
Сем. Сенникоцветни — Apiaceae (Umbelliferae)
Възлоцветна целина — Apium nodiflorum
Пълзяща целина — Apium repens
Крайбрежен астродаукус — Astrodaucus littoralis
Буним — Bunium erucoides
Дълголистна урока — Bupleurum longifolium
Сем. Сенникоцветни — Bupleurum ranunculoides
Приморски ветрогон — Cachrys alpina
Отровна цикута — Cicuta virosa
Сем. Тойнови — Apocynaceae
Приморски ветрогон — Eryngium maritimum
Дланевидолистен ветрогон — Eryngium palmatum
Източна тимянка — Ferula orientalis
Колхидски джел — Ilex colchica
Сем. Змиярникови — Araceae
Тракийски равнец — Achillea thracica
Сребристовлакнесто подрумиче — Anthemis argyrophylla
Йорданово подрумиче — Anthemis jordanovii
Борисово подрумиче — Anthemis regis-borisii
Тъмнолюспест пелин — Artemisia eriantha
Янкева метличина — Centaurea jankae
Тракийски равнец — Achillea kotschyi (Achillea urumoffii)
Прилегналовлакнест равнец — Achillea leptophylla
Бледожълт равнец — Achillea ochroleuca
Тракийски равнец — Achillea pedemontana
Родопски магарешки бодил — Carduus rhodopaeus (C. adpressus ssp. rhodopaeus)
Тракийски равнец — Carduus thracicus
Ахтарова метличина — Centaurea achtarovii
Пясъчна метличина — Centaurea arenaria
Тъмнопурпурна метличина — Centaurea atropurpurea
Янкева метличина — Centaurea jankae
Centaurea kernerana
Centaurea mannagetae ssp. pirinica
Centaurea marshalliana
Centaurea nigrescens
Centaurea parlica
Centaurea pichleri
Centaurea pseudoaxillaris
Centaurea rumelica
Centaurea rupestris
Centaurea x wagenitziana
Chondrilla urumoffii
Cirsiurn bulgaricum
Cicerbita panchici
Cicerbita plumieri
Cirsiurn stojanovii
Crepis bithynica
Crepis schachii
Crepis stojanovii
Ditrichia viscosa (Inula viscosa)
Engeron vichrensis
Helichrysum plicatum
Hieracium belogradense
Inula spiraeifolia
Jurinea ledebourii
Jurinea tsar-ferdinandii
Lactuca tatarica
Leontopodium alpinum
Ligularia glauca
Ligularia sibirica
Onopordon bracteatum
Otanthus maritimus
Pallenis spinosa
Petasites kablukianus
Reichardia picroides
Saussurea discolor
 Scorzonera parvilora
Senecio subalpinus
 Serratula bulgarica
Sonchus palustris
Tragopogon floccosus
Tragopogon stribrnyi
Urospermum picroides
Berberidaceae
Epimedium
Sempervivum
Aethionema arabicum
Alyssum borzaeanum
Alyssum cuneiforme ssp. pirinicum
Alyssum orbilicum
Alyssum stribrnyi
Arabis collina
Arabis ferdinandi-coburgii
Arabis nova
Aubrieta gracilis ssp. Scardica
 Aurinia uechtritziana (Lepidotrichum uechtritzianum)
Brassica nivalis ssp. jordanoffii
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<td>Trachelium rumelianum (T. jacquinii)</td>
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Тунечево халимионе
Halimione portulacoides
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Petrosimonia brachiata
Разнолистна суеда
Sueda heterophylla
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Calystegia soldanella
Нежна поветица
Convolvulus althaeoides (C. elegantissimum)
Парнаска поветица
Convolvulus boissieri ssp. parnassicus (C. compactus)
Зюндерманова поветица
Convolvulus boissieri ssp. suendermannii (C. suendermannii)
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Convolvulaceae
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Черноколева тлъстига
Sedum tschernokolevii
Цоликоферова тлъстига
Sedum zollikoferi
Четинест дебелец
Sempervivum ciliosum
Сем. Емпетрови
Empetraceae
Черен емпетрум
Empetrum nigrum
Сем. Острицови
Crassulaceae
Дебелолист
Crassula tillaea
Розов златовръх
Rhodiola rosea
Критска кresa
Cistus salvifolius
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Arbutus andrachne
Жлезиста кумарка
Arbutus unedo
Калуна
Calluna vulgaris
Пирен
Erica arborea
Сем. Миризливовърбови
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Aldrovanda vesiculosa
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Drosera rotundifolia
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Сем. Росянкови
Droseraceae
Високоглавче
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Сем. Бобови
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Anthyllis aurea
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Astragalus alopecurus
Рогчесто сграбиче
Astragalus corniculatus
Вълнестоцветно сграбиче
Astragalus dasyanthus
Безстъблово сграбиче
Astragalus ehrhaptor
Мехуресточашково сграбиче
Astragalus physocalix
Мъхнатоцветно сграбиче
Astragalus pubiflorus
Вилмотиево сграбиче
Astragalus wilmottianus
Карагана
Caragana frutex
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Чамаецитис neicheffii
Нейчев зановец
Chamaecytisus neicheffii
Регенсбургски зановец
Chamaecytisus ratisbonensis
Цариградски нахут
Cicer montbretii
Влакнеста жълтуга
Genista pilosa
Немска жълтуга
Genista germanica
Алепска млечка
Euphorbia aleppica
Лъскаволистна млечка
Euphorbia lucida
Албена млечка
Euphorbia peplis
Млечко (Leguminosae)
Anthyllis aurea
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Astracantha thracica (Astragalus thracicus)
Astragalus alopecurus
Astragalus corniculatus
Astragalus dasyanthus
Astragalus ehrhaptor
Astragalus physocalix
Astragalus pubiflorus
Astragalus wilmottianus
Caragana frutex
Chamaecytisus kovacevii
Chamaecytisus neicheffii
Chamaecytisus ratisbonensis
Cicer montbretii
Genista germanica
Genista pilosa
Гол сладник
Пълзящ гръмотрън
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Пърнар
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Тракийски дъб
Трояшки дъб
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Сем. Тинтявови
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Морски червен кантарион
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Скална тинтява
Жълта тинтява
Петницата тинтява
Истина горчица
Къдрава горчица
Петницата сверция
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Бохемски здравец
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Родопски силивряк
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Сем. Гологлавчеви
Равнинно гологлавче
Сем. Звъникови
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Боасиерова звъника
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Петниста звъника
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Къдрава горчивка
Енгадиновата горчивка
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Конски кестен
Сем. Хипуридови
Обикновен хипурис
Сем. Водянкови
Алоевиден стратиотес
Сем. Дзуковидни
Жабешка дзука
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Разперена светлика
Сем. Дзуковидни
Приморски триостреник
Сем. Устоцветни
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Юлианова микрохвърла
Черноморска хвърла била
Украинска хвърла била
Форскала кавула
Пърнар кавула
Къчевка кавула
Кримски миризлив бурен
Пясъчен ранилист
Балкански ранилист
Приморски ранилист
Шарламонски ранилист

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Quercus thracica
Quercus trojana
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Centaurium littorale
Centaurium maritimum
Gentiana acaulis
Gentiana frigida
Gentiana lutea
Gentiana punctata
Gentianella amarella
Gentianella crispa
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Geranium aristatum
Geranium bohemicum
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Luzula deflexa
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Microseria juliana
Nepeta parviflora
Nepeta ucranica
Salvia forskahlei
Salvia pinnata
Salvia scabiosifolia
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Stachys arenariaformis
Stachys balcanica
Stachys maritima
Stachys scardica
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Teucrium lanifolium
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Thymus perinicus
Thymus stojanovi
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Colchicum diomalis
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Lloydia serotina
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Scilla bithynica
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Onagraceae
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Ludwigia palustris
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Cephalaria epipactoides
Cypripedium calceolus
Dactylorhiza incarnata
Dactylorhiza kalopisii
Epipactis greuterii
Epipactis leptochila
Epipactis palustris
Epipactis purpurata
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Goodyera repens

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Herminium monorchis

Недоразвит лимодорум
Limodorum abortivum

Льозелов липарис
Liparis loeselii

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Listera cordata

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Ophrys apifera

Опрыс арголика
Ophrys argolica

Опрыс инсектифера
Ophrys insectifera

Опрыс маммоса
Ophrys mammosa (O. sphegodes ssp. mammosa)

Орхис лаксифлора
Orchis laxiflora

Орхис милитарис
Orchis militaris

Орхис папилон accreditation
Orchis papilionacea

Орхис провинциалис
Orchis provincialis

Орхис спитзели
Orchis spitzeli

Траунстейнера глобоса
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Serapias vomeracea

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Spiranthes spiralis

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Paeonia mascula

Теснолистен божур
Paeonia tenuifolia

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Papaver degenii

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Goniolimon besseranum

Бяла змийска трева
Goniolimon collinum

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Алпийска телчарка
Polygala alpestris

Горчива телчарка
Polygala amarella

Сибирска телчарка
Polygala sibirica

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Groenlandia densa

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Влакновиден ръждавец
Potamogeton trichoides

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Пролетно ботурче
Cortusa matthioli

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Българска гърлица
Limonium bulgaricum

Гмелинова гърлица
Limonium gmelinii

Широколистна гърлица
Limonium latifolium

Мейерова гърлица
Limonium meyeri

Обикновена гърлица
Limonium vulgare

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Erianthus ravennae

Влагалищна власатка
Festuca vaginata

Кръглолистна мурава
Pyrola rotundifolia

Цитинус
Cytinus clusii

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Сем. Макови
Papaveraceae

Сем. Житни
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Polygonaceae

Сем. Лападови
Polygonaceae

Сем. Муравови
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Гръцка лугачка
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Боев лопен
Винчелистен лопен
Давидов лопен
Декоративен лопен
Луцианов лопен
Янков лопен
Йорданов лопен
Юрушки лопен
Лагуров лопен
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Благороден лопен
Скрипица лопен
Родопски лопен
Тракийски лопен
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Урумов лопен
Баумгартено̀в лопен
Скален лопен
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Малка ежова главица
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Гризебахово великденче
Перестолистно великденче
Търилово великденче
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Сем. Дилянкови
Сем. Теменугови
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Пиринска теменуга
Прасковолистна теменуга
Ниска теменуга
Пиренейска теменуга
Прекрасна теменуга
Стоянова теменуга
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Linaria peloponesia
Lindernia procumbens
Pedicularis palustris
Rhyynchocorys elephas
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Verbascum anisophyllum
Verbascum boeae
Verbascum bugulfolium
Verbascum davidoffii
Verbascum decorum
Verbascum dieckianum
Verbascum eriophorum
Verbascum jankaeanum
Verbascum jordanovii
Verbascum junik
Verbascum lagurus
Verbascum minutiflorum
Verbascum pseudonobilium
Verbascum purpureum
Verbascum rupestre
Verbascum spathulisepalum
Verbascum thracicum
Verbascum tzar-borisii
Veronica baumgartenii
Veronica eurynema
Veronica glauca
Veronica grisebachii
Veronica multifida
Veronica turnilliana
Sparganiaceae
Sparganium angustifolium
Sparganium minimum
Tamaricaceae
Myricaria germanica
Theligonaceae
Theligonum cynocrambe
Tymelaeaceae
Daphne blagayana
Daphne laureola
Daphne pontica
Trapa natans
Typhaceae
Typha shuttleworthii
Urticaceae
Panteraria rhodopaea
Valerianeaceae
Centranthus kellererii
Valeriana simplicifolia
Violaceae
Viola balcanica
Viola delphinantha
Viola gracilis
Viola grisebachiana
Viola herbaria
Viola palustris
Viola pannonica
Viola persicifolia
Viola pumila
Viola pyrenaica
Viola speciosa
Viola stojanovii
Annex 5: Summary of the Certification Assessment Process

The certification assessment process begins with a candidate operation submitting an application to NEPCon. Based on 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) a pre-assessment followed by a main assessment, or b) a main assessment only. 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 NEPCon forest assessment handbook. 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 "regionalised" 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 organises 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 emphasise 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 open) from directly affected and/or knowledgeable stakeholders, including local communities, adjoining communities, and others with a stake in the assessment process.

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3 For detailed information about procedures, contact our headquarters or regional offices through www.nepcon.net
landowners, local forest industry, environmental organisations, 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 analyse 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 non-conformances are analysed and classified as either minor or major. A non-conformance is considered major if it results in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant criterion in the standard. Conversely, a non-conformance 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 non-conformance identified, the assessment team develops a nonconformity report (NCR) which is classified as follows:

- **A Major Nonconformity Report (NCR)** is issued to document a major non-conformance with an indicator(s)/criterion that the candidate FME must correct before NEPCon certification is granted.
- **A Nonconformity Report (NCR)** is issued to document a minor non-conformance 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).
- **An observation** is a very minor problem or the early stages of a problem which do not of itself constitute a non-conformance, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future non-conformance 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 non-conformance in the future.

**Report Write-up** - following the forest evaluation, the team prepares the certification assessment report. This report follows a standardised format and includes detailed findings of performance and proposes pre-conditions (major non-conformances), 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.
About NEPCon

NEPCon is an international, non-profit organisation. We work to foster sustainable land use and climate-friendly solutions.

We empower people and organisations to be part of the solution in tackling some of the greatest challenges facing mankind - such as climate change and the loss of our natural heritage. We do this through certification services, capacity building and innovation projects.

NEPCon is an accredited FSC Certification Body providing FSC Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification to thousands of forest operations and timber supply chain companies.

Our tailored, international FSC Expert training courses fulfil FSC’s formal requirements for FSC Lead Auditor training. We are actively engaged in the FSC system and in projects that aim to facilitate FSC certification.

NEPCon also provides services within PEFC, Sustainable Biomass Partnership (SBP), LegalSource and Carbon Footprint Management (CFM) certification.