

Forest Management Certification Re-Assessment of Soekhoe en Zonen NV in Para District, Suriname April 14, 2021

Introduction – Preferred by Nature (NEPCon) is conducting forest management and chain of custody certification re-assessments of the Soekhoe en Zonen NV located in Para District. The assessment will be implemented from May 24-28, 2021.

Scope of the Certification Assessment – The forest management certification assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the Concession 424a managed by Soekhoe en Zonen, using the Interim National Standard of Suriname (FSC-STD-SUR-01-2020 EN). To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about these standards, please contact *Preferred by Nature* by telephone, FAX, email or website listed below. Please note that the standard may be modified to take account of stakeholder comments. NEPCon is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council™ and this assessment process must follow procedures which have been approved.

The forest under evaluation contains areas either identified as High Conservation Value Forests or where high conservation values, as defined by the FSC, are likely found. NEPCon evaluates the identification, management and protection of these High Conservation Values and solicits related comments from stakeholders.

Assessment Team Composition – The assessment team will be led by MSc. Adolfo Lemus, Lead auditor. The team members will be: Carlos Jimenez (Auditor) and Giani Razab-Sekh (Local Expert).

Assessment Steps and Schedule – Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- ♦ Assessment organization – Preferred by Nature team will have an online meeting before the audit.
- ♦ Field assessments – The local expert will visit sites managed by Soekhoe from 26-28 May.
- ♦ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding Soekhoe forest management in villages surrounding the forest area. This will include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
- ♦ Final assessment briefing – Prior to finalize the audit, the team will meet with Soekhoe managers and other parties to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- ♦ Draft report production – The assessment team will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to Soekhoe and a minimum of one independent peer reviewers. This should occur 60 days after completion of the assessment.
- ♦ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from Soekhoe forest managers and independent peer reviewers, and other general stakeholder comments, *Preferred by Nature* will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by August 28, 2021.

Your Input Sought – As a part of the forest certification assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on Soekhoe forest management in relation to conformance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above as well as comments on the FME's management and protection of High Conservation Values within the forest under evaluation. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the assessment process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the assessment, during the assessment, or prior to August 1st, 2021, so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision by August 28, 2021. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows.

1. Meet with a Preferred by Nature re-assessment team member during or shortly after the fieldwork.
2. Call and give comments to Edgar Bámaca, NEPCon staff person responsible for coordinating this certification assessment.

3. Submit written comments by mail, or email to Edgar Bámaca. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing the Soekhoe.

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential available to only to FSC and Preferred by Nature staff. Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access Preferred by Nature's Dispute Resolution Policy at www.preferredbynature.org

Contacting NEPCon

- ♦ Email: ebamaca@preferredbynature.org
- ♦ Worldwide Website – www.preferredbynature.org
- ♦ Telephone – (502) 2213-8750