



NEPCon Interim Standards for Assessing Forest Management in the Republic of Belarus

Title: NEPCon Interim Standards for Assessing Forest Management in the republic of Belarus

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Cover picture: Cover picture: FSC certified forest in Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain. Mateo Carifio/NEPCon

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.

1. Background

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

2. Public Comment

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

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

The public stakeholder consultation document informs the public about the assessment at least 45 days prior to it taking place. This document is distributed publicly prior to or during an assessment. The document is typically distributed by hand delivery, FAX, mail, or email and is posted to the NEPCon website at www.nepcon.net. The specific NEPCon standard for each assessment is also publicly available before

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.

and during the assessment and is a part of the public record for every forest certification. The public certification summary is produced as a final step of the certification process and is available only after an operation has been approved for certification. For copies of any public stakeholder consultation document or NEPCon interim Forest Management standard, visit our website at nepcon.net. For public certification summaries visit the FSC certified organization website at <http://info.fsc.org/>, or contact NEPCon, headquarters (NEPCon | | Filosoofi 31 | 50108 Tartu, Estonia). **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.

3. Regional Standards

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

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

In all countries or regions not covered by an FSC accredited forest stewardship standard, NEPCon will develop a locally adapted or interim standard for use in evaluating forest management operations in that designated geographic area. The adapted standard is developed from the NEPCon generic standard with modification to certification indicators to take into account the national context (e.g. legal requirements, environmental, social and economic perspectives). This draft will be translated to the official language of the country in which the FME to be evaluated is located and is submitted for consultation at least 60 days at the first-time consultation of their generic forest stewardship standard in a certain country. For repeated consultations in the same country (for different clients), this formal consultation period shall at least be 30 days. Each consultation period shall be followed by a period of at least 10 working days for the certification body to evaluate and incorporate the comments into the generic standard before publishing the resulting locally adapted generic standard on the website. Distribution to key stakeholders occurs via the Internet (email and posted on the NEPCon website), mailings and face to face meetings.

NEPCon will complete the process of local adaptation of its generic standard, and publish the resulting locally adapted generic forest stewardship standard on its website in an official language of the country in which it is to be used, at least one month prior to the start of the main evaluation site visits if it was the first adaptation process of the certification body's generic standard in a certain country, or otherwise prior

to the main evaluation site visits.

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

4. NEPCon Standards Structure

NEPCon generic standard is designed to comply with the latest versions of all approved FSC policies, standards, directives, guidelines and advice notes that apply to the interpretation of the FSC Principles and Criteria, as published on the official FSC website, and is subject to relevant guidance from FSC in relation to standards effective dates. NEPCon generic standards are based directly on the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship (**FSC-STD-01-001**) and include specific generic indicators for each criterion to create a global NEPCon standard. These indicators are the starting point from which region-specific "NEPCon Interim Standards" are developed for use in the forest by forest auditors to evaluate the sustainability of forest management practices and impacts of candidate FME.

The standards are divided into the following ten principles:

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

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

5. Indicators for Small and Large FMEs

As required under FSC policy NEPCon has developed indicators for certain criteria² that are specific to certain sizes of operations. Clear quantitative definitions for small versus large FMEs are included in

²Criteria 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.

regionalized NEPCon Interim Standards. Where these NEPCon regional thresholds are not established, large FME should be considered those larger than 50,000 ha. Small FME definition is determined by FSC regional thresholds set for small and low intensity managed forests (SLIMF) which have been set either globally by FSC (100 ha) or by FSC National Initiatives.

6. Contents

A Scope

This standard shall be the basis for FSC forest management certification of forest management enterprises on a global basis, pending adaptation to regional or national following FSC procedures.

B Standard effective date

This standard shall be effective from 1 February 2015.

C References

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

D Terms and definitions

FME: Forest management enterprise

FSC: Forest Stewardship Council

HCVF: High conservation value forests

FSC definitions associated with this standard can be found in the glossary in annex 1.

E FSC Principles and Criteria & NEPCon interim Indicators for Republic of Belarus

PRINCIPLE 1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES	
<i>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.</i>	
Criteria	Indicators
1.1. Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.	1.1.1. Responsible staff shall be aware of relevant requirements of legislation and their responsibilities
	1.1.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : FMO shall make copies of relevant legislation available in head office and accessible to the staff. Copies may be available either on paper or as electronic versions.
	1.1.3. Discovered non compliances with legislation shall be recorded in written.
	1.1.4. Corrective actions shall be implemented in case non-compliances are identified.
	1.1.5. FMO shall meet all national, state/provincial and local environmental, labor and forestry laws.
1.2. All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.	1.2.1. FMO shall be aware of applicable fees, royalties and taxes
	1.2.2. FMO shall present evidence that applicable fees and other financial charges are paid in time.
	1.2.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : In case of discrepancies, FMO shall maintain a full documentation related to the discrepancies and solving them.
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. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : FMO shall be aware of and respect applicable international conventions. Note: Applicable international conventions are covered within Belarusian legislation as well as other parts of the standards..
	1.3.2. No workers under the age of 15 shall be employed in the forest unless for training or educational purposes.
	1.3.3. No workers are under the age of 18 shall be employed for operations when it is likely to jeopardize health, and safety.
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 and present standard shall be recorded by the FMO.
	1.4.2. Any conflicts identified shall be resolved by working in conjunction with appropriate regulatory bodies and other parties (including FSC national representatives).

1.5. Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.	1.5.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : a system to monitor and protect forest management areas from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities shall be implemented.
	1.5.2. Poaching and illegal timber extraction shall be controlled or decreasing.
	1.5.3. The forest manager shall use all reasonable legal measures to prevent illegal usage of the forest area or resource.
	1.5.4. FMO shall inform appropriate authorities (e.g. environmental inspection and police) about all discovered illegal activities in written.
1.6. Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.	1.6.1. FMO shall clearly demonstrate long-term support for the FSC P&C.
	1.6.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : FMO shall have a publicly available policy or statement committing the organization to adhere to the FSC requirements within the certified forest area
	1.6.3. FMO and its employees shall be aware of applicable FSC standard requirements relevant for their work area
	1.6.4. FME shall not implement activities that blatantly conflict with the FSC P&C on forest areas outside of the forest area under assessment
	1.6.5. FMO shall disclose information on all forest areas over which the FME has some degree of management responsibility to demonstrate compliance 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	
<i>Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.</i>	
Criteria	Indicators
2.1. Clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land (e.g. land title, customary rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated.	2.1.1. FMO shall possess legal documents proving its legal rights of ownership or long term rights to manage the forest area.
	2.1.2. The boundaries of the forest area shall be marked both in maps and on the principal access roads to the forest.
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. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : Local communities' legal or customary use rights (both timber and non-timber) shall be respected in forest management planning and during forest operations.
	2.2.2. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u> : should ensure that local communities have controlled

	<p>access to buy firewood for own consumption at a price not higher than average market price.</p> <p>2.2.3. FMO should inform neighboring landowners about planned forest management operations before field works are initiated</p> <p>2.2.4. FMO shall ensure that local communities have access to the forest for collection of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) such as berries and mushrooms for own consumption</p> <p>2.2.5. FME shall not make restrictions for local communities in relation to legal or customary rights, unless these restrictions are agreed with local communities</p>
<p>2.3. Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified.</p>	<p>2.3.1. FME shall not be involved in outstanding disputes of substantial magnitude in relation to the certified forest area, involving a significant number of interest groups</p> <p>2.3.2. FME shall use mechanisms for resolving disputes over tenure claims and use rights that respectfully involve and consider the disputants in process.</p> <p>2.3.3. Records shall be maintained of disputes over tenure and use rights.</p>
<p>PRINCIPLE 3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS</p>	
<p><i>The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.</i></p>	
Criteria	Indicators
<p>3.1. Indigenous peoples shall control forest management on their lands and territories unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.</p>	<p><i>Criteria considered not applicable in The Republic of Belarus</i></p>
<p>3.2. Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples.</p>	<p><i>Criteria considered not applicable in The Republic of Belarus</i></p>
<p>3.3. Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in co-operation with such peoples, and recognized and protected by forest managers.</p>	<p><i>Criteria considered not applicable in The Republic of Belarus</i></p>
<p>3.4. Indigenous peoples shall be compensated for the application of their traditional knowledge regarding the use of forest species or management systems in forest operations. This compensation shall be formally agreed upon with their free and informed consent before forest operations commence.</p>	<p><i>Criteria considered not applicable in The Republic of Belarus</i></p>
<p>PRINCIPLE 4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKER'S RIGHTS</p>	

<i>Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.</i>	
Criteria	Indicators
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. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : FMO shall have written employment procedures indicating preference of local employees and justifying cases when non-local people are hired (e.g. required qualification, internal promotion mechanisms).
	4.1.2. Local communities and residents shall be given equal or preferential opportunities in forest management activities in terms of employment, training, and provision of supplies to FMO, and other benefits or opportunities.
	4.1.3. No evidence of discrimination in labor practices, including hiring, advancement, dismissal, remuneration and employment-benefits shall exist
	4.1.4. 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
	4.1.5. FMO shall help to maintain the infrastructure and social facilities of villages located within its forest area and provide firewood and other services to local communities
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. Employees, including contractors, shall be aware of and implement safe working practices.
	4.2.2. Appropriate health and safety equipment including helmet, high visibility vest/jacket, safety boots and safety trousers shall be used in the field and first aid kit shall be available onsite for chain saw operators, harvesting companies and contractors.
	4.2.3. Any person entering an ongoing logging site shall wear a helmet and high visibility vest
	4.2.4. Workers involved in dangerous work such as storm damage removal, logging of large trees and tree climbing shall never works alone.
	4.2.5. Workers shall be instructed about procedures in case of emergency situation such as accident, fire or oil spill
	4.2.6. FMO shall not use forest machinery without an operators cabin or substituting crash bars.

	4.2.7. FMO should conduct regular checks to ensure that all safety procedures are observed in the field.
	4.2.8. Warning signs shall be posted at access roads to sites with ongoing logging operation.
	4.2.9 Workers who are staying overnight in the forest should have appropriate sleeping facilities and sufficient supply of clean water
	4.2.10 <u>Large and medium FMO-s:</u> FMO shall maintain a register of accidents and documented steps taken to minimize risk of further accidents.
	4.2.11. <u>Large FMO-s:</u> Staff should be offered vaccinations against tick-borne encephalitis
	4.2.12. Indicators under criterion 4.2 are also applicable for workers family members in case they are present at the operational sites
	4.2.13. FMO shall have national certificates confirming that working places comply with national work safety requirements
	4.2.14 Forest machinery shall be equipped with fire extinguishers.
	4.2.15 All work conducted in areas of radioactive contamination is performed involving obligatory radiation control according to the scheme of radiation control in forests and at forestry units.
	4.2.16. Results of radiation measurements for a site have been added to the technological map (with the density of the soils contamination being up to 15 Cu/km ²) and sanitary passport (with the density of the soils contamination exceeding 15 Cu/km ²) prior to the commencement of work.
	4.2.17 All of those allowed to work on a permanent or temporary basis in an area contaminated with radioactive nuclides have been trained a course on the rules of work safety and respective instructions, being currently in effect and their knowledge have been verified accordingly.
4.3. The rights of workers to organize and voluntarily negotiate with their employers shall be guaranteed as outlined in Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labor Organization (ILO).	4.3.1. All workers shall be free to form and join a trade union of their choice without fear of intimidation or reprisal.
	4.3.2. FMO shall not use forced labor .
	4.3.3. Equal pay and benefits shall be provided for men and women for work of equal value.
	4.3.4. <u>Large and medium FMO-s:</u> Collective bargaining with trade unions shall be carried out in good faith and with best efforts to come to an agreement.

	4.3.5. The minimum age for workers shall not be less than 14 years.
4.4. Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups directly affected by management operations.	4.4.1. <u>Large FMO-s:</u> FMO shall have a system for enabling participation by local communities and stakeholders in the management planning process affects it's results.
	4.4.2. All interested parties shall have access to relevant information
	4.4.3. <u>Large and medium FMO-s:</u> FME shall demonstrate that input from community participation was considered and/or responded to during management planning and operations.
	4.4.4. <u>Large and medium FMO-s:</u> Areas of special economic, ecological, cultural or spiritual value for local communities shall be mapped and their protection values and management regime shall be documented.
	4.4.5. An up-to-date list of stakeholders shall be prepared and maintained
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 <u>Large FMO-s:</u> FMO shall establish and implement a documented mechanism for compensation of affected parties in case local community resources are damaged as result of forestry activity
	4.5.3. FMO has established a complaints and suggestions book as required by the President order.
PRINCIPLE 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST	
<i>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.</i>	
Criteria	Indicators
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. Revenue received should be sufficient to cover forest management costs, e.g. management planning, road maintenance, silvicultural treatments, long-term forest health, growth and yield monitoring, and conservation investments.
	5.1.2. Budgets shall include provision for environmental and social as well as operational costs necessary to maintain certifiable status (e.g. management planning, road maintenance, silvicultural treatments, long-term forest health,

	growth and yield monitoring, and conservation investments).
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. The "highest and best use" for individual tree and timber species shall be sought.
	5.2.2 FMO should utilize frequently occurring, lesser known or less-commonly utilized plant species for commercial and subsistence uses if appropriate
	5.2.3 Non-timber forest products (e.g. seeds, berries, mushrooms, resin, greenery, Christmas trees and game) should be considered during forest use and processing
	5.2.4 FMO should prefer local processing of forest products when possible
	See also 5.4
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. Harvesting techniques shall be designed to avoid log damage and damage to remaining trees
	5.3.2. The harvested merchantable timber shall be transported out of the logging sites to processing facilities before wood quality deterioration occurs.
	5.3.3. Waste generated through harvesting operations, on-site processing and extraction shall be minimized whilst leaving tops, branches, solid wood and other on the forest floor for soil conservation
5.4. Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.	5.4.1. FMO's sales policies and methods shall consider needs of local processing industry where possible.
	5.4.2. FME shall support increased local value added processing where possible
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. FMO shall consider areas important for mushrooms and berry picking; hunting and recreation when planning forest operations
	5.5.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : FMO shall take into consideration the impacts of forest management on the multiple services produced in the forest such as outdoor life, watersheds, NTFP (fishing, hunting, berries and mushrooms), protection of cultural and biological values in written.
5.6. The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained.	5.6.1. The annual yield and annual allowable rate of harvest for all types of cutting shall be determined according to national legislation.
	5.6.2. FMO shall ensure that the rate of harvest does not exceed sustainable levels.

	5.6.3. Actual annual harvest shall be strictly documented, including site, species, quantities, assortments, period of felling and terms and monitoring documentation
	5.6.4 FMO should document commercial harvest of NTFP such as seeds, Christmas trees, greenery and game
	5.6.5. Commercial harvest of NTFP shall not exceed sustainable levels
	5.6.6. Boundaries of harvesting areas shall be clearly marked or distinguishable in field
	5.6.7. Annual harvest shall not exceed the prescribed annual allowable cut within a five-year period unless caused by external factors such as wind or insect damage.
	5.6.8. All protected areas where felling is prohibited, shall be excluded from calculation of annual allowable cut.
	See also 5.1.3

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.

Criteria	Indicators
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. FMO shall assess environmental impacts during management planning of site disturbing forest operations and designate mitigation measures in management plan.
	6.1.2. FMO shall prepare and implement a documented evaluation and monitoring system to minimize impact of site disturbing operations prior, during and after operations.
	6.1.3. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u> : FMO shall have a documented procedure for conducting documented environmental impact assessments prior to major forest management activities such as constructions of new roads or restoration of drainage systems.
	6.1.4. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u> : FMO shall identify and avoid negative environmental impacts prior to and during road construction and drainage systems renovation.
	6.1.5 Environmental impacts of on-site processing facilities shall be assessed and controlled (e.g. waste, construction impacts, etc.).

<p>6.2. Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting shall be controlled.</p>	<p>6.2.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall have written data and protection plan of threatened, rare, and endangered species or ecosystems within their forest area. The Belarus Red Book may serve as a reference source for their identification</p> <p>6.2.2. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall be aware of and conserve the officially registered protected species in the forest area.</p> <p>6.2.3. Known habitats of rare and endangered species shall be mapped and consideration taken in planning and implementing forest management activities.</p> <p>6.2.4. Operations in the conservation zones shall be conducted so that the conservation values are not harmed or endangered in any way</p> <p>6.2.5. Felling operations shall not be conducted in the nesting places and during the nesting period of rare, endangered or threatened species</p> <p>6.2.6. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping and NTFP collecting shall be controlled in the forest.</p>
<p>6.3. Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including:</p> <p>a) Forest regeneration and succession.</p> <p>b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.</p> <p>c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p>	<p>6.3.1. Selective felling or regeneration in small groups shall be preferred in special management areas, such as water conservation zones, wetlands etc).</p> <p>6.3.2. Natural regeneration and local provenances should be preferred. (a, b, c).</p> <p>6.3.3. Thinning and harvesting operations shall favor development of mixed stands (a, b, c).</p> <p>6.3.4. Forest areas not affected by existing drainage ditches shall not be drained.</p> <p>6.3.5. FMO shall develop and implement a long-term policy for switching from clear cutting to stripped-coupe and/or selective cutting in suitable site conditions.</p> <p>6.3.6. To reduce the adverse ecological effects of cutting, the following elements of a forest ecosystem (or their parts) shall be left standing forever, unless their removal is justified by safety reasons or negative implications on forest health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - old and hollow trees; - standing deadwood and snags; - seed trees of commercially valuable species. <p>6.3.7. At least 10 living biodiversity trees (5 in case of noble hardwood) per hectare shall be</p>

	<p>left in final felling and shall be left uncut forever (b).</p> <p>6.3.8. Biodiversity trees shall be chosen from wide variety of species with largest diameter among the most biologically valuable and wind stable trees. (6.3 b).</p> <p>6.3.9. Forwarding and harvesting by harvester shall not be done (f.e. during wet spring and autumn season) in cases when soil damage can not be prevented.</p> <p>6.3.10. Natural reforestation shall be preferred for regeneration of logging sites, unless planting is warranted by site conditions.</p> <p>See 6.9</p>
<p>6.4. Representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape shall be protected in their natural state and recorded on maps, appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations and the uniqueness of the affected resources.</p>	<p>6.4.1. Representative samples of existing ecosystems shall be identified in with environmental stakeholders, local government, scientific authorities, and other stakeholders</p> <p>6.4.2. Identified representative samples of ecosystems shall be protected in their natural state marked in maps and on site.</p> <p>6.4.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall protect identified representative samples of existing ecosystems on a minimum of 5% of their total forest area.</p> <p>6.4.4. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall protect representative samples of existing rare and/or endangered ecosystems in their natural state..</p> <p>6.4.5. In the protected representative sample of existing ecosystems no timber harvesting shall take place, unless required to maintain or increase the conservation values and specified by written protection rules for the protected area.</p> <p>6.4.5. Existing drainage systems shall not be maintained in protected areas unless required to protect their conservation values according to official written protection rules or for transportation of water from bordering lands.</p> <p>See also 6.2</p>
<p>6.5. Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to: control erosion; minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbances; and protect water resources.</p>	<p>6.5.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: Planning documents and technological maps shall specify sites that are suitable for all-weather harvesting or winter-harvesting (frozen soil).</p> <p>6.5.2. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: FMO shall be aware of soil types appropriate for logging in</p>

	winter, spring summer and autumn seasons to avoid soil damage.
	6.5.3. Written guidance to field staff shall cover technical specifications for skid trails and extraction roads (location, width and density), log landing, maintaining buffer zones and road design
	6.5.4. Measures shall be taken to minimize soil damage and erosion during harvesting operations
	6.5.5. No road fill or waste material (e.g. rocks, brush) from site preparation or other activities shall be placed in stream courses
	6.5.6. FMO shall preserve existing buffer zones along forest edges and favour the development and conservation of wind resistant and viable forest edges (buffer zones) along open landscapes
	6.5.7. FMO shall ensure that technological map is prepared for each felling site including areas with protection values and other site specific information (e.g. erosion risk areas, natural regeneration to be preserved etc.).
	6.5.8. Fuel and oil storage and machinery parking shall not take place in floodplains and on the ice of streams and ponds.
<p>6.6. Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides. World Health 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 minimize health and environmental risks.</p>	6.6.1. Chemicals shall not be used outside nurseries, except in cases of extensive weevil outbreaks, for protection of forest regeneration or if prescribed by forest pathologist.
	6.6.2. All uses of chemical substances shall be recorded including information on the name of the chemical, the purpose, the site, date and the amount used at minimum.
	6.6.3. Chemical storage, mixing and application practices shall meet applicable regulation and codes of best practice.
	6.6.4. Responsible employees shall be aware of and able to implement emergency procedures for clean-up following spillages and other accidents with chemicals.
	6.6.5. Chemicals banned according to FSC's pesticides policy shall never be used, unless derogation has been granted by FSC
	6.6.6. Fertilizers shall not be used in forest management, with the exception of permanent seed orchards and tree nurseries, or for afforestation of degraded forest lands.

	6.6.7. 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 not be used.
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. Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil shall be stored and disposed of offsite in environmentally sound and legal manner, whether from forest operations or other 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 chain saws filling points
	6.7.5. Forest machinery shall be without oil/fuel leakage.
	6.7.6. Biodegradable oil should be used for chainsaws and for hydraulic oil in forest machinery..
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. Biological control agents shall only be used in exceptional and justified cases.
	6.8.2. Any use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimized, monitored and strictly controlled in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols
	6.8.3. Genetically modified organisms shall be not used.
6.9. The use of exotic species shall be carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.	6.9.1. Native forests shall not be converted to exotic plantations..
	6.9.2. Exotic species shall not be cultivated in the forest.
	6.9.3. The spread of invasive exotic species that have been historically introduced shall be monitored and if necessary, actions shall be taken to control or eliminate the species.
	See also 10.3
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	6.10.1. FME shall not convert forests, or threatened non-forested habitat to plantations or non-forest land uses, except where the conversion meets the all conditions of 6.10.2 – 6.10.5.

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.	6.10.2. If conversion occurs, it shall 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.

Criteria	Indicators
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; 1. i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.	7.1.1 <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u> : FMO shall have a valid forest management plan, which contains among other aspects: written description of the management objectives; detailed stand description and taxation data; information about planned fellings and other forestry operations; information about known protection values and protection measures of all protection values and HCV forest areas 7.1.2. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u> : FMO management plan or its appendices or reference documents shall include: a) Management objective (a). b) A general description of the history, including ownership and use of the forest management area (b). c) A stand level description of the forest resources including area, site type/forest type, soil type, species, age class distribution, height, site class, average diameter (dbh) and volume (b, c). d) Socio-economic conditions (b) e) A profile of adjacent lands (see also Criterion 5.5) (b) f) Summaries for the total forest area including total area (ha), forest cover percentage, area by site types/forest type, age class distribution, total annual increment and average volume per hectare (b, c, d). Rate of harvest of forest products (timber or non-timber, as applicable) and species selection including justification; g) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics (e);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) Description and justification of the management system used, including types of silvicultural systems used. i) Specify environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments (see also Criterion 6.1, 9.3) (f) j) General description of monitoring activities implemented to ensure conservation of rare, threatened and endangered species (f, g) k) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership (h) l) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used (i) m) Description of the silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories (see also Criteria 5.6, 6.3, 8.1, 8.2) (c). <p>See also 6.2.4 and 9.1.1</p>
	<p>7.1.3. The management plan shall include: a) fire prevention and protection measures; b) pest and disease control measures; c) provision of machinery/equipment for fire detection and suppression.</p>
	<p>7.1.4. The management plan shall contain: Maps of forest resources, including boundaries of protected areas, Maps of planned management activities.</p>
	<p>7.1.5. Management plans or related annual operating or harvesting plan shall be available to staff and used in the field.</p>
	<p>See also 6.2.4 and 9.1.1.</p>
<p>7.2. The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.</p>	<p>7.2.1. Management plan (and/or annual operating plan) revision or adjustments shall occur in timely manner (with revision period not more than 10 years)..</p> <p>7.2.2. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Management plan revisions shall incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information regarding changing silvicultural, environmental, social and economic conditions.</p>

	7.2.3. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u> : Management plan revisions shall follow national procedures.
	7.2.4 The following zones of radioactive contamination have been singled out alongside with other zones: I- 1- 5 Cu/km2 II- 5-15 Cu/km2 III- 15-40 Cu/km2 IY- 40 and more Cu/km2
	7.2.5. The following measures are planned and implemented in all of the contaminated areas: arrangement of wildfire protection, construction of reservoirs, protection of forests from fires, pests, diseases and violations of the forest use rules
7.3. Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.	7.3.1 Large FMO-s Training requirements for FMO staff including contractors shall be defined and implemented covering all relevant aspects of the management plan and the FSC requirements including technical, economic, social and environmental issues.
	7.3.2. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : FMO shall have and implement a written training plan
	7.3.3. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : FMO shall provide training to relevant staff in biodiversity issues
	7.3.4. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u> : For harvesting activities, FMO shall hire only workers who have received instructions on proper and safe felling techniques
	7.3.5. All workers, as well as contractors and their workers and self-employed persons should be sufficiently educated and trained in the tasks they are assigned to and preferably hold relevant skill certificates.
	See also 4.1
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. <u>Large FMO-s</u> : FMO shall produce a public summary of the management plan including those elements listed under criterion 7.1 that is available in printed versions and/or published on the Internet.
	7.4.2. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u> : At minimum FMO shall be willing to provide access to relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who have justified interest in the forest management activities of FMO (e.g. neighboring landowners and local inhabitants)

PRINCIPLE 8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT	
<i>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.</i>	
Criteria	Indicators
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. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u> : FMO shall have monitoring procedures for consistent and frequent monitoring of the aspects mentioned in 8.2, which allows comparison of the results and assessment of changes.
	8.1.2. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u> : 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. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u> : FMO shall at a minimum conduct monitoring of harvesting operations and re-forestation.
	8.1.4. A radiation-ecological forest monitoring shall be carried out to study the radiation situation in forests and to make prognoses, based on the data received, of the forests and forest products radioactive contamination, and to develop recommendations on forest management and use of forests and forest products.
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. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u> : Monitoring plan shall identify/describe observed changes in conditions in terms of: a) growth rates, regeneration area, age and species composition of forest resources, (typically part of the standard management plan prepared according to national legislation) (b, c); b) commercial harvest including harvest of NTFP such as seeds, seedling, game, greenery and Christmas trees (a). c) environmental changes affecting flora, fauna, soil and water resources (e.g. erosion, outbreak of pest, spreading of invasive species, observed nesting sites for endangered bird species) (c, d); d) socioeconomic aspects (e.g. forest management costs, yields of all products, and changes in community and worker relations or conditions, number of staff employed, accident

	<p>rates);</p> <p>e) HCV forest areas</p>
	<p>8.2.2. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: FMO shall at minimum have yearly records of commercially harvested products and regenerated area and species (a, b).</p>
<p>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."</p>	<p>8.3.1. Illegally logged wood reclaimed by the operation shall not be sold as certified.</p> <p>8.3.2 FMO has established and implemented procedures according to FM-35 Rainforest Alliance Chain-of-Custody Standard for Forest Management Enterprises (FMEs)..</p>
<p>8.4. The results of monitoring shall be incorporated into the implementation and revision of the management plan.</p>	<p>8.4.1. <u>Large and medium FMO-s</u>: Monitoring data as required per 8.2.1 shall be considered for management plan revision.</p> <p>8.4.2. <u>SLIMF FMO-s</u>: FMO shall ensure that the management plan is reviewed periodically according to national legislation.</p> <p>See also criterion 7.2</p>
<p>8.5. While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the results of monitoring indicators, including those listed in Criterion 8.2.</p>	<p>8.5.1. <u>Large FMO-s</u>: FMO shall produce a public summary of the monitoring results including indicators listed under 8.2 and make it available in printed versions and/or publish on the internet.</p> <p>8.5.2. <u>SLIMF and medium FMO-s</u>: At minimum FMO shall be willing to provide access to relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who have justified interest in the forest management activities of FMO (e.g. neighboring landowners and local inhabitants)</p>

PRINCIPLE 9 : MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS

Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes that define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.

Criteria	Indicators
<p>9.1. Assessment to determine the presence of the attributes consistent with High Conservation Value Forests will be completed, appropriate to scale and intensity of forest management.</p>	<p>9.1.1. FMO shall carry out an assessment of the FMU sufficient to identify all parts of the FMU that have each of the following attributes:</p> <p>a) HCV1. Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia), such as Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>b) HCV2. Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large</p>

	<p>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, such as intact forest landscapes.</p> <p>c) HCV3. Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems, such as Natura 2000 sites and Woodland Key Habitats.</p> <p>d) HCV4. Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control), such as areas important for drinking water.</p> <p>e) HCV5. Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).</p> <p>f) HCV6. Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).</p>
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	<p>9.1.2. Information on identified high conservation value forests and habitats of rare and endangered species shall be included in the management plan, operating plans and on maps and protection reasons described in written.</p>
	<p>9.1.3. FMO shall have written procedures for identifying and recording HCVF areas</p>
	<p>9.1.4. FMO should be open and willing to cooperate with state organizations and environmental specialists for inventories and protection of HCV forest areas.</p> <p>See also 4.4; 6.1; 6.2; 6.3</p>
<p>9.2. The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance thereof.</p>	<p>9.2.1. Local stakeholders including environmental NGOs shall be consulted to identify HCVF.</p> <p>9.2.2. FMO shall document the stakeholder consultation process in written</p> <p>9.2.3. Stakeholder consultations should indicate that FMO consistently considers and protects HCVF values.</p>
<p>9.3. The management plan shall include and implement specific measures that ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of the</p>	<p>9.3.1. If HCVF values are present, planning documents shall provide site-specific information which describes the measures</p>

<p>applicable conservation attributes consistent with the precautionary approach. These measures shall be specifically included in the publicly available management plan summary.</p>	<p>taken to protect or restore such values consistent with a precautionary approach..</p>
<p>9.4. Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.</p>	<p>9.3.2. Measures to protect HCVF values and officially protected areas shall be described in written public summary.</p> <p>9.4.1. A system for continuous monitoring of HCVF values shall be incorporated into the FME's planning, monitoring and reporting procedures.</p> <p>See also 8.2</p> <p>9.4.2. FMO should support independent monitoring of maintenance of conservation attributes of High Conservation Value Forests by other stakeholders.</p>
<p>PRINCIPLE 10: PLANTATIONS</p>	
<p><i>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.</i></p>	
<p>Criteria</p>	<p>Indicators</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>10.1.1. Objectives of tree planting 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</p> <p>10.1.2. Management objectives for conservation of natural forest and restoration shall be described in the management plan</p> <p>10.1.3. Management objectives, specifically those related to natural forest conservation and restoration, shall be demonstrated in forest management activities</p>
<p>10.2. The design and layout of plantations should promote the protection, restoration and conservation of natural forests, and not increase pressures on natural forests. Wildlife corridors, streamside zones and a mosaic of stands of different ages and rotation periods, shall be used in the layout of the plantation, consistent with the scale of the operation. The scale and layout of plantation blocks shall be consistent with the patterns of forest stands found within the natural landscape.</p>	<p>10.2.1. FMOs shall demonstrate through action their commitment to protect, restore and conserve key areas of natural forest within the ownership</p> <p>10.2.2. Buffer zones along watercourses and around water bodies shall be established according to regional best management practices or local laws and regulations. Buffer zones should be indicated on maps</p> <p>10.2.3. FMO shall establish wildlife habitat and corridors, suitably located across plantation areas, in consultation with acknowledged experts</p>

	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. (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. Where exotic species have been selected, the FME shall explicitly justify this choice demonstrating that their performance is greater than that of native species
	10.4.3. No species shall be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site and that invasive characteristics, if any, can be controlled.
	10.4.4. 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
	10.4.5. In case exotic species are used, at least 20 pct of the stand shall consist of native species. See also 6.9
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. Representative samples of existing natural ecosystems shall be protected or restored to their natural state, based on the identification of key biological areas, consultation with stakeholders, local government and scientific authorities. (Note: Also see Criterion 6.4.)
	10.5.2. Applicable to SLIMF FMEs only (note: above indicator does not apply): Plantation design and management practices shall protect ecological values, especially around conservation features or protected areas.

<p>10.6. Measures shall be taken to maintain or improve soil structure, fertility, and biological activity. The techniques and rate of harvesting, road and trail construction and maintenance, and the choice of species shall not result in long term soil degradation or adverse impacts on water quality, quantity or substantial deviation from stream course drainage patterns.</p>	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
<p>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.</p>	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 minimize use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers
<p>10.8. Appropriate to the scale and diversity of the operation, monitoring of plantations shall include regular assessment of potential on-site and off-site ecological and social impacts, (e.g. natural regeneration, effects on water resources and soil fertility, and impacts on local welfare and social well-being), in addition to those elements addressed in principles 8, 6 and 4. No species should be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site, are not invasive, and do not have significant negative ecological impacts on other ecosystems. Special attention will be paid to social issues of land acquisition for plantations, especially the protection of local rights of ownership, use or access.</p>	10.8.1. Monitoring shall include evaluation of potential onsite and off-site ecological and social impacts of plantation activities. (also see criterion 8.2)
	10.8.2. Applicable to SLIMF FMEs only (note: above indicator does not apply): FME shall document negative environmental or social impacts and design and implement measures to address the impacts
	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.
	10.8.4. (Note: For exotic or invasive species issues, see Criterion 10.4.)
<p>10.9. Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994 normally shall not qualify for certification. Certification may be allowed in circumstances where sufficient evidence is submitted to the certification body that the manager/owner is not responsible directly or indirectly for such conversion.</p>	<p>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 responsible</p>

Annex 1: FSC Glossary of terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annex 2: Summary of the Certification Assessment Process³

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

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

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

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

Team Selection and Planning – NEPCon selects a qualified lead auditor and other team members to participate in the assessment. The lead auditor's first task is to ensure that all team members understand the scope and intent of the assessment process. Responsibility for evaluation of different sections (i.e. specific criteria and indicators) of the standard are assigned to different team members, depending on

³ For detailed information about procedures, contact our headquarters or regional offices through www.nepcon.net.

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 60 days prior to forest evaluation, NEPCon notifies stakeholders of the pending assessment and requests stakeholders' observations or comments with regard to the operations conformance with the certification standard.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certification Decision – Once the above steps are completed, the applicable NEPCo 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.

Annex 3: List of national and local laws and regulations on forestry, applicable in the Republic of Belarus

1. Law of Belarus as of October 20, 1994 "On natural areas of preferential protection";
2. Presidential Decree as of March 6, 2008 No. 146 "On approval of State program of the development of the especially protected areas for 2008-2014";
3. Presidential Decree as of July 24, 2014 No.367 "On approval of the State Program of the system of protected areas development for 2015-2019";
4. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as of 02.07.2014 No. 649 "On the development of the protected areas system";
5. Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as of 27.12.2007 No.1836 "On approval of the provisions of the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus";
6. Decision of the Council of Ministers as of 29.12.2007 no. 1920 "On approval of the national strategy for development and management of the system of environmental areas to January 1, 2015"
7. Decision of the Council of Ministers as of 29.12.2007 no. 1919 "On the scheme of rational allocation of especially protected natural areas of republican value to January 1, 2015"
8. Decision of the Council of Ministers of Belarus as of 30.01.2008 No. 126 "On some issues concerning the treatment of wild animals of the species included in the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus and the species covered by the international treaties of the Republic of Belarus, and regulation of propagation of wild animals";
9. Presidential Decree as of 27.12.2007 No. 1408 "On some issues of protection and rational treatment of bison"
10. Resolution of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus as of 09.06.2004 No. 14 "On approval of the list of rare and endangered species of wild animals and plants included in the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus";

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11. Resolution of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus as of 16.04.2008 No. 38 "On the Registry of Especially Protected Areas of the Republic of Belarus";
 12. Resolution of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus as of 21.04.2008 No. 41 "On elaboration of categories of national environmental significance and criteria for classifying rare and endangered species of wild animals and plants";
 13. Resolution of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus as of 29.10.2008 No. 94 "On some issues of especially protected areas".
 14. Law of Belarus as of June 14, 2003 "About plant world";
 15. Forrest Code of the Republic of Belarus, June 14, 2000, no. 420-Z. Adopted by the House of Representatives as of June 8, 2000. Approved by the Council of the Republic of Belarus as of June 30, 2000.
 16. Presidential Decree as of January 27, 2003 no. 45 "On formation of the State Inspectorate for Flora and Fauna Protection at the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Belarus."
 17. Presidential Decree as of May 21, 2012 no. 237 "On some issues of the State Inspectorate for Flora and Fauna Protection at the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Belarus" (the Regulation of the State Inspectorate for Flora and Fauna Protection at the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Belarus was approved).
 18. Presidential Decree as of May 7, 2007 no. 214 "On some measures on improvement of works in the field of forest management."
 19. Presidential Decree as of November 8, 2012 no. 504 "On amendments and additions to the Presidential Decrees as of May 7, 2007 no. 214 and as of September 9, 2009 no. 444 "On some measures of improvement in forest management" (Rules of timber trading in the domestic market of Belarus were approved, amendments were made to the "Rules of standing timber trading and its harvesting in the forests of Belarus").
 20. Presidential Decree as of July 7, 2008 No. 364 "On approval of the Regulation on the distribution of forests into groups and categories of protection, conversion of forests from one group or category of protection to another and allocation of especially protected forest areas";
 21. Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as of 13.12.2004 No. 1580 " On approval of the Regulation on the plants state inventory and its use";
 22. Resolution of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus as of 31.12.2004 No. 49 "On Approval of the Procedure of state recording of botanical collections";
 23. Resolution of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus, Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus as of 31.08.2005 No. 37/36 "On approval of tree sap harvesting, storage (purchases) of wild plants and(or) their parts";

24. Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as of 01.12.2004 No.1525 "On approval of the Regulation on imposing restrictions or prohibitions in dealing with plant facilities";
25. Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as of 14.04.2004 No. 412 "On approval of the Regulations on the procedure of environmental monitoring of plant world, geophysical monitoring and use of such data within the National Environmental Monitoring System in the Republic of Belarus";
26. Decision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus as of 28.12.2006 No. 79 "On approval of the Instruction on the accounting procedure of plant facilities located on lands of certain categories and handling with plants";
27. Decision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus as of 26.10.2011 No. 103 "On approval of the Instructions for the assessment of plant resources and setting limits on use of plant world";
28. Decision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus as of 29.12.2007 No. 105 "On approval of the Instructions for the use of plant facilities in research and educational purposes";
29. Decision of the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus as of 15.01.2001 No.1 "On approval of Rules of forest management in contaminated areas";
30. Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as of 12.07.2001 No. 1032 "On approval of the Procedure of state accounting of forest resources";
31. Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as of 12.07.2001 No. 1030 " On approval of the Procedure of forest resources management";
32. Decision of the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus as of 20.03.2001 No. 4 "On approval of secondary forest management types, harvesting rules of secondary forest resources and implementation of secondary forest management";
33. Decision of the Council of Ministers as of 06.12.2001 no. 1765 "About the age of wood logging (of wood species concerning the main harvesting);
34. Decision of the Ministry of Forestry as of 21.12.2007 No. 55 "On approval of the Instructions of boxing and collection of soft resin of pine standing wood";
35. Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as of 25.10.2011 No. 1426 "On some issues of handling with plants";
36. TCP 026-2006 (02080) Sustainable Forest Management. Sanitary procedures in the forests of the Republic of Belarus;
37. TCP 047-2009 (02080) Sustainable Forest Management. Instructions on reforestation and forest plantation in the Republic of Belarus;
38. TCP 060-2006 (02080) Rules for allocation and rating of logging sites in the forests of the Republic of Belarus;
39. TCP 103-2007 (02080) Inspection Procedures of logging sites, collection of soft resin, storage of secondary forest resources and secondary forest management;
40. TCP 143-2008 (02080) Rules for wood harvesting in the Republic of Belarus;

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41. TCP 193-2009 (02080) Procedure of fire management of forests in the Republic of Belarus;
 42. TCP 228-2009 (02080) Procedure for forests protection from pests and diseases;
 43. TCP 231-2009 (02080) Thinning. Assessment of the quality;
 44. TCP 252-2010 (02080) Procedure of forest pathology monitoring;
 45. PPB 2.38-2010 Fire Safety Regulations in the forests of the Republic of Belarus;
 46. STB 1358-2002 Sustainable Forest Management. Reforestation and forest regeneration. Requirements to technology;
 47. STB 1359-2002 Sustainable Forest Management. Requirements to forest protection measures;
 48. STB 1360-2002 Sustainable Forest Management. Main wood logging. Requirements to technology;
 49. STB 1361-2002 Sustainable Forest Management. Improvement Thinning. Requirements to technology;
 50. STB 1582-2005 Sustainable Forest Management. Requirements to forest protection measures.
 51. STB 1625-2006 Sustainable Forest Management. Secondary Forest Management. Requirements to technology;
 52. STB 1681-2006 Sustainable Forest Management. Forest Management. General Requirements;
 53. STB 1688-2006 Sustainable Forest Management. Requirements to Forest Engineering;
 54. STB 1708-2006 Sustainable Forest Management. Basic Provisions;
 55. STB 1715-2007 Sustainable Forest Management. Requirements to the forest management organization and implementation in forests used for recreational purposes.