

NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Sri Lanka



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1 Introduction

A key purpose of NEPCon is to recognize good forest managers through credible independent certification of forestry practices. NEPCon is a certification body accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council™. The purpose of these standards are to provide forest managers, landowners, forest industry, scientists, environmentalists and the general public with information on the aspects of forest management operations that NEPCon evaluates to make certification decisions in the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC™) certification system.

The 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.

NB: From 1st October 2018, NEPCon and RA-cert have joined to unify their credible sustainability certification services at a global scale, engage widely with a diverse range of stakeholders, and productively contribute to the development of schemes for environmental and socially responsible practices. In order to minimize the negative impacts of the joining the former RA-cert FSC FM national standards are maintained unchanged except for the formatting until actual changes are required by the system.

2 Background

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

3 Public Comment

The certification process has both public and private aspects. Certification assessments are not public documents unless specifically required by law (e.g. for some public forests)

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.

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.org. The specific NEPCon standard for each assessment is also publicly available before and during the assessment and is a part of the public record for every forest certification. The public certification summary is produced as a final step of the certification process and is available only after an operation has been approved for certification. For copies of any public stakeholder consultation document or NEPCon interim Forest Management standard, visit our website at nepcon.org. For public certification summaries visit the FSC certified organization website at <http://info.fsc.org/>, or contact NEPCon, certification 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.

4 Regional Standard

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 standard 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 with modification to certification indicators to take into account the national context (e.g. legal requirements, environmental, social and economic perspectives)². This draft will be translated to the official language of the country. Distribution to key stakeholders occurs via the Internet (email and posted on the NEPCon website), mailings and face to face meetings.

5 NEPCon Standard Structure

The NEPCon 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 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).

² Future standards will be developed following FSC FSC-PRO-60-007

6 Indicators for Small and Large FMEs

As required under FSC policy NEPCon has developed indicators for certain criteria³ that are specific to certain sizes of operations. Clear quantitative definitions for small versus large FMEs are included in regionalized NEPCon Interim Standards. Where these NEPCon regional thresholds are not established, large FME should be considered those larger than 50,000 ha. Small FME definition is determined by FSC regional thresholds set for small and low intensity managed forests (SLIMF) which have been set either globally by FSC (100 ha) or by FSC National Initiatives.

7 Content

7.1 Scope

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

7.2 Standard effective date

This standard shall be effective from March 2017.

7.3 References

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

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

7.4 Terms and definitions

See annex A for glossary.

Acronyms:

FME : Forest management enterprise

FSC : Forest Stewardship Council

HCVF : High conservation value forests

SLIMF : Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests

7.5 NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Sri Lanka

PRINCIPLE #1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES

³ Criteria 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 9.1, 10.5 and 10.8.

Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

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

1.1.1 An up-to-date register (reference list) of all pertinent statutes and bodies of regulations

is maintained and is available to FME staff; summaries of key regulations are kept in field offices.

1.1.2 The frequency and nature of regulatory violations shall not be indicative of widespread

and systemic non-compliance; when violations occur, FME acts promptly to correct and remediate the circumstances associated with the violation. Note: Non-conformance to this Indicator constitutes a Major Failure and precludes award of certification until appropriately corrected.

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

1.2.1 There is no evidence of chronic non-payment; rather, payments are regularly made in a timely manner.

1.2.2 Up-to-date records are kept of all payments and are available to the RA auditor(s).

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 FME is aware of which binding international agreements apply to the nation in which

their forest operations reside.

1.3.2 FME demonstrates sensitivity to all binding international agreements and endeavours to respect their requirements, at a level of effort scaled to the size and intensity of

operations.

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 FME is forthright in informing the RA auditor(s) of any possible conflicts between laws,

regulations and the FSC Principles and Criteria.

1.4.2 FME is willing to participate in appropriate processes for resolving conflicts, at the request of RA and/or the FSC.

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

1.5.1 Large FMEs: FME shall have a monitoring system with formal documented periodic

inspections for the prevention and detection of illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.

For SLIMF: SLIMF managers shall ensure that the FMU is monitored periodically to prevent and detect illegal harvesting, settlement, and other unauthorized activities.

1.5.2 The FME shall take all reasonable legal measures to prevent illegal and inappropriate

usage of the forest area or its natural resources.

1.5.3 Illegal harvest, settlements and other unauthorized usage of the forest shall be reported to the responsible authorities.

Preventive measures shall be taken to decrease poaching and illegal timber extraction.

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

1.6.1 In the management plan, or another appropriate document of broad public availability, there is an express statement of commitment to the FSC Principles and Criteria.

1.6.2 FME staff and contractors shall be informed about FSC requirements and FME shall control how these requirements are upheld.

1.6.3 The FME shall provide information on all of the forested areas over which it exercises a certain degree of responsibility for forest management in order to demonstrate

compliance with FSC policies on partial certification and on the exclusion of areas from the scope of the certificate.

1.6.4 FME shall not implement activities that blatantly conflict with the FSC P&C on forest

areas outside of the FMU under assessment on which it has direct or indirect involvement per the definitions in FSC-POL-01-004.

PRINCIPLE #2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

2.1 Clear evidence of long term forest use rights to the land (e.g. land title, customary rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated.

2.1.1 FME shall possess legal documents proving its legal rights of ownership or long term rights to manage the FMU.

Legal use rights may be associated with:

- fee-simple ownership
- long-term or renewable lease rights
- long-term or renewable exclusive management agreements
- other mechanisms allocating long-term or renewable management rights and responsibilities to the forest manager

2.1.2 Property borders shall be marked or otherwise clearly delineated (e.g. follow natural boundaries).

2.2 Local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights shall maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over forest operations unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.

2.2.1 Local communities, and/or other stakeholders with duly recognized legal or customary

tenure or use rights within the FMU have been identified and the nature of these rights are described and documented.

Examples of legal or customary tenure or use-rights may include:

- public rights of way
- established easements
- collection of non-timber forest products
- hiking, fishing, hunting, or other recreation
- firewood collection
- visitation of culturally significant sites, such as religious shrines

2.2.2 When communities have delegated control of their legal rights or customary tenure or

use in whole or in part, this must be confirmed by documented agreements and / or interviews with representatives of local communities.

2.2.3 Allocation of duly recognized legal or customary tenure or use rights by local communities to other parties is documented, with evidence of free and informed consent.

2.3 Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified.

2.3.1 Records are kept of past disputes over tenure claims and use rights, to a level of detail

sufficient to enable the RA auditor(s) to ascertain the nature and magnitude of the disputes.

2.3.2 FME can demonstrate, through appropriate documentation, that legally-recognized

mechanisms have been employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights

2.3.3 The magnitude and severity of unresolved tenure claims and use rights disputes are

minor, relative to the scale of operations.

PRINCIPLE #3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

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

Note: In 1993, Sri Lanka initiated a National Committee to discuss the concept of Indigenous

People (“Ādivāsi Lanka”). One indigenous group, the Veddas, may be recognized. For more

information, see the Indigenous People section in Sri Lanka’s Agenda 21 presentation.

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.

3.1.1 The identity, location and population of all indigenous peoples, including migratory

groups, living in the vicinity of the FMU are documented by the FME.

- 3.1.2 The communities concerned have identified themselves as indigenous.
- 3.1.3 All rights and claims to lands, territories or customary rights within the FMU are documented and/or clearly mapped.
- 3.1.4 Rights identified in terms of Indicator 3.1.3 are respected
- 3.1.5 Forest management operations do not take place in areas identified in Indicator 3.1.3 above, without clear evidence of the free and informed consent of the indigenous or traditional peoples claiming such land, territory or customary rights.
- 3.2 Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples.
- 3.2.1 FME demonstrates, through policies and actions, a sensitivity to the resources and tenure rights of indigenous peoples.
- 3.2.2 As appropriate, indigenous peoples are afforded opportunities to participate in management planning, research, and monitoring on forest areas associated with indigenous resources and tenure rights.
- 3.2.3 FME solicits—through effective consultative mechanisms—the concerns and perspectives of potentially affected indigenous peoples; the results of such consultation are documented, including the actions taken to reasonably accommodate concerns and perspectives that have been received.
- 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.
- 3.3.1 Management activities with potential impacts to sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples are guided by the precautionary principle.
- Examples of sites may include:
- ceremonial, burial, or village sites
 - areas used for hunting, fishing, or trapping
 - areas used for gathering of sustenance and culturally important materials
- 3.3.2 FME implements procedures for identifying and appropriately protecting sites of special cultural or religious significance; the processes for identifying and protecting such

sites are documented; the management plan contains express written policies for the identification and protection of such sites.

3.3.3 Field workers are appropriately trained in the procedures employed for protecting sites

of special significance to indigenous peoples.

3.3.4 Confidential maps recording the locations of sites of special significance are maintained up-to-date and are used by forest managers and field workers.

3.3.5 As appropriate, indigenous peoples are afforded opportunities to participate in the identification and protection of sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance within the FMU.

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.

3.4.1 If commercial utility is created through application of traditional knowledge, FME seeks to compensate, through appropriate mechanisms, those indigenous peoples with whom the protected traditional knowledge and intellectual property is associated.

3.4.2 Where indigenous intellectual property or traditional knowledge are used commercially or for management purposes, compensation for individuals and/or tribes is agreed upon in writing, with their free, prior, and informed consent.

PRINCIPLE #4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKER'S RIGHTS

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

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

4.1.1 Qualified people in local communities are given preferential opportunities in employment and contracting; the forest management operation actively targets the local workforce.

Examples may include:

-employment and contractual opportunities offered locally before they are offered outside the region

4.1.2 FME contributes to or directly develop training programs designed to enhance the capabilities and qualifications of local workers.

4.1.3 FME gives preference to local vendors of equipment and miscellaneous services, subject to cost considerations.

Examples may include:

- timber being offered to local processors before being sold out of the region
- utilization of local banks, insurance companies, etc.

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 FME demonstrates a priority towards worker safety; there is an active safety program, appropriate to the scale of operations.

4.2.2 Written guidelines and policies, appropriate to the scale of operations, exist for workplace health and safety.

For example: written safety guidelines exist for each step of the latex production process, from rubber tapping to processing and manufacturing.

4.2.3 Appropriate safety equipment is made available to all workers.

4.2.4 All equipment is periodically inspected and tested for safety performance.

4.2.5 Up-to-date information on pertinent health and safety laws and regulations is maintained by forest managers and appropriately disseminated to forest workers.

4.2.6 Forest managers maintain up-to-date safety records; such records indicate exemplary performance relative to industrial norms.

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 FME, by its actions and policies, respects the rights of workers to organize or join trade unions and to engage in collective bargaining.

4.3.2 Issues and grievances raised by workers and/or their organizations are investigated fairly and objectively.

4.3.3 There are documented procedures for conflict resolution.

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

4.4.1 Management activities and policies are modified, as appropriate, in response to the results of social impact assessment.

4.4.3 FME endeavors to keep neighbors and members of the community informed as to planned activities on the FMU.

For FMUs meeting SLIMF requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply; the indicator(s) are not to be used for assessing non-SLIMF operations:

4.4.4 FME engages in regular communications with neighbors, forest workers, and other stakeholders within the local communities; to the extent practicable, management policies and activities are sensitive to stakeholder concerns and expectations

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 In the event of a grievance or dispute, FME shall implement documented dispute resolution procedures that require it to, at a minimum:

- a) keep a record of all complaints made known to them relating to the FME's compliance with FSC requirements;
- b) make these records available to RA upon request;
- c) conduct an investigation on any claims or disputes to identify the root cause;
- d) take appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies found in FME's forest management system that affect compliance with the requirements for FSC certification; and
- e) document the actions taken to resolve grievance or dispute

4.5.3 Fair compensation or reasonable mitigation is provided to local people, communities or adjacent landowners for substantiated damage or loss of income caused by the FME.

PRINCIPLE # 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST

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

5.1 Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.

5.1.1 FME has sufficient financial capital and human resources to implement the management plan, over the long run.

5.1.2 The full costs of forest management, including environmental and social costs, are considered and adequately covered by the financial resources of the FME.

5.1.3 Adequate investments of capital, machinery and human resources are made so as to maintain or restore the productive capacity, ecological integrity and socio-economic profile of the FMU.

5.1.4 Commercial (income generating) activities are financially viable, given short and medium-term market conditions and costs.

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 Management and marketing policies, as well as field-level decisions, systematically assure that commercial forest products are being sold for their highest and best uses.

Examples may include:

- new products are explored and developed for common but less used species
- access to new markets is explored and developed

5.2.2 FME strives to diversify the mix of commercial products recovered from the forest and marketed.

5.2.3 FME has a demonstrated track record of favoring or encouraging local processing of forest products.

Note: Forest products include timber and non-timber forest products, such as wood and latex.

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

5.3.1 Harvesting operations minimize waste and residual stand damage.

Examples may include:

- bumper trees and directional felling techniques are used to minimize unintentional tree damage

5.3.2 Yarding, log sorting, and onsite processing operations minimize product wastage, de-grade and foregone revenue opportunities.

5.3.3 Log landings and/or other forest product staging areas on the FMU are kept to a minimum practicable number and size and are located so as to minimize adverse environmental impacts.

5.3.4 Where on-site processing takes place, the footprint of the milling facility is kept to the smallest practicable size; the processing facilities are located in the most environmentally benign locales as well as in locations where losses to productive forest area are minimized.

5.3.5 While minimizing undue waste, forest managers establish field guidelines that recognize the ecological value of biomass (e.g., tops and branches) being left on site; forest managers have documented guidelines for retention of downed woody debris and standing snags within harvest areas.

Verifier: Written field guidelines or illustrations for the biomass retention (snags, tops, and downed woody debris, etc.).

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

5.4.1 The FME demonstrates knowledge of the operation's effect on the local economy as it relates to existing and potential markets for a variety of timber and non-timber forest products and services.

5.4.2 The FME strives to diversify the economic use of the forest for a variety of timber and non-timber forest products and services.

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

5.5.1 The FME shall identify the full range of forest services associated with the FMU including: municipal watersheds, commercial and recreational fisheries (or the supply of water to downstream fisheries), visual quality, contributions to regional biodiversity, recreation, tourism, and any other services.

5.5.2 Forest management activities are designed and implemented, spatially and temporally, with due consideration to the impacts on the forest services identified in 5.5.1.

5.5.3 The FME engages in regular dialogue with stakeholders and advocates of forest services that are subject to impact from forest operations.

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

5.6.1 For natural forest management operations, the annual allowable cut (AAC) of forest products, either by area or volume, shall be established by a combination of empirical data and published literature, based on conservative, well-documented growth and yield estimates to ensure that the rate of harvest does not exceed the calculated rates of long-term growth.

5.6.2 For plantation forest management, the growth and harvest rates (for thinning and final cuts), shall be based on well-documented information and/or field trials, and be consistent with the observed behavior of the species at the national or regional level.

5.6.3 For large FMEs: Average annual harvest levels, over rolling periods of no more than 10 years, do not exceed the calculated AAC.

For SLIMF: On SLIMF forests, harvest levels and rates do not exceed growth rates over successive harvests, contribute directly to achieving desired future conditions as defined in the forest management plans, and do not diminish the long term ecological integrity and productivity of the site.

5.6.4) Harvest levels shall be set such that inventories of desired species increase over time,

unless it is substantiated that current inventories (measured in average standing volume per hectare) exceed optimal levels.

5.6.5) For operations harvesting NTFPs such as latex, management strategies incorporate the

best available monitoring and inventory data to calculate a conservative growth and harvest rates; harvest of non-timber forest products is also subject to Indicator 5.6.3.

5.6.6) For timber investment management programs (see FSC-STD-50-001 (V1-2), section 9): If

growth projections are used to make claims on the rate of financial return, the FME shall include a visible declaration on all material that carries the FSC or certification body trademarks regarding the responsibility of financial claims (e.g., “FSC and RA are not responsible for and do not endorse any financial claims on returns on investments”).

Guidance: A timber investment organization is a forest management project established in a

natural or plantation forest (e.g., a TIMO or REIT), where the FME uses funds from various investors to achieve management objectives, usually in exchange for returns on investment within a specified timeframe

PRINCIPLE #6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.

6.1 Assessment of environmental impacts shall be completed appropriate to the scale, intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources and adequately integrated into management systems. Assessments shall include landscape level considerations as well as the impacts of onsite processing facilities. Environmental impacts shall be assessed prior to commencement of site disturbing operations.

6.1.1 Project (site)-level environmental impact assessments, scaled to the size and complexity of operations, are systematically completed prior to commencement of site disturbing activities.

6.1.2 In addition to project-level assessments, FME also completes landscape-level environmental impact assessments in which the cumulative effects of forest operations are considered.

6.1.3 To provide background for environmental impact assessments, the regional, sub-regional, and landscape environmental context of the FMU is established and

documented (preferably in the management plan), consistent with the scale and intensity of operations.

6.1.4 Planned management activities are appropriately modified based upon the results of the environmental impact assessments.

For FMUs meeting SLIMF requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply; the indicator(s) are not to be used for assessing non-SLIMF operations:

6.1.5 FME demonstrates knowledge of the possible negative impacts of its activities and seeks to minimize them.

6.2 Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting shall be controlled.

6.2.1 "Listed" species, their habitats, and sites with unusually high species and/or ecosystem diversity are identified through field surveys or other sources and are protected or managed at a level sufficient to ensure that viable populations are maintained or restored; the level of effort should be scaled to the size and complexity of operations.

6.2.2 Field employees are trained in the recognition of endangered species and their habitats.

6.2.3 Areas of critical habitat for listed species are duly delineated, appropriately managed, and recorded on maps of appropriate scale

6.2.4 Illegal and inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping, or collecting of rare, threatened, or endangered species is controlled and minimized

For FMUs meeting SLIMF requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply; the indicator(s) are not to be used for assessing non-SLIMF operations:

6.2.5 Measures are in place to control illegal and inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping, and collecting

6.2.6 Where information exists on rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats, the FME uses this information to map and protect them.

6.2.7 Habitat features that are important for conservation are identified and protected.

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

- a) Forest regeneration and succession.
- b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.
- c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.

6.3.1 For large FMEs: Known ecological functions and values of natural ecosystems within the FMU are described in the management plan and updated periodically as additional information/knowledge is acquired.

6.3.2 For natural/ semi-natural forest management (NA for plantations): Subject to the scale of operations, the forest is managed so as to maintain a full range of successional stages at distributions within the range of natural variability.

6.3.3 For natural/ semi-natural forest management (NA for plantations): The management plan incorporates principles of landscape and ecosystem-based planning; the plan contains goals pertaining to biological diversity for the range of spatial scales from genetic diversity to landscape diversity.

6.3.4 For natural/ semi-natural forest management (NA for plantations): Management practices maintain, enhance or restore natural forest composition; management is aimed at maintaining all naturally occurring species.

6.3.5 Harvesting and other management practices are designed and laid out, over time and space, with consideration of the types, sizes and frequency of natural disturbances as well as connectivity of wildlife habitats.

6.3.6 Regeneration after final harvests are timely and successful; young stands, either planted or naturally established, are well-stocked with desired species, vigorous and on the trajectory to healthy merchantable stands.

6.4 Representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape shall be protected in their natural state and recorded on maps, appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations and the uniqueness of the affected resources.

6.4.1 FME reviews the amount of representative samples of existing ecosystems protected within the regional landscape.

6.4.2 Where deficiencies exist within the landscape, the FME takes actions to make contributions to the network.

6.4.3 Protected areas within the FMU are delineated on maps and protection policies are included in the management plan.

For FMUs meeting requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply; the indicator(s) are not to be used for assessing non-SLIMF operations:

6.4.4 Representative samples of ecosystems are identified, recorded on maps, and excluded from the harvesting area. If existing representative samples of ecosystems are already adequately protected on other private or public properties within the region then no additional samples need to be identified and protected. .

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.

6.5.1 The FME shall have documented guidelines that cover all technical specifications required in this Criterion.

Guidance: Documented guidelines may be in the form of manuals, illustrations, videos, etc. or a combination thereof.

6.5.2 Forest operations meet or exceed Best Management Practices (BMPs) that address components of the Criterion where the operation takes place.

6.5.3 Management activities including site preparation, harvest prescriptions, techniques, timing, and equipment are selected and used to protect soil and water resources and to avoid erosion, landslides, and significant soil disturbance. Logging and other activities that significantly increase the risk of landslides are excluded in areas where risk of landslides is high. The following actions are addressed:

- Slash/ logging residue is concentrated only as much as necessary to achieve the goals of site preparation and the reduction of fuels to moderate or low levels of fire hazard.
- Disturbance of topsoil is limited to the minimum necessary to achieve successful regeneration of species native to the site.
- Rutting, compaction, and erosion are minimized.
- Soil erosion is not accelerated.
- Burning is only done when consistent with natural disturbance regimes and/or national/ local laws.
- Natural ground cover disturbance is minimized to the extent necessary to achieve regeneration objectives.
- Whole tree harvesting on any site over multiple rotations is only done when research indicates soil productivity will not be harmed.
- Techniques and equipment that minimize impacts to vegetation, soil, and water resources are used whenever feasible.

6.5.4 The transportation system, including design and placement of permanent and temporary haul roads, skid trails, water crossings and other harvesting infrastructure, is designed, constructed, maintained, and/or reconstructed to reduce short and long-term environmental impacts, habitat fragmentation, soil and water disturbance and cumulative adverse effects, while allowing for customary uses and use rights. This includes:

- access to all roads and trails (temporary and permanent) and off-road travel, is controlled, as possible, to minimize ecological impacts;
- road density is minimized;
- erosion is minimized;
- sediment discharge to streams is minimized;
- there is free upstream and downstream passage for aquatic organisms;

- impacts of transportation systems on wildlife habitat and migration corridors are minimized;
- area converted to roads, landings and skid trails is minimized;
- habitat fragmentation is minimized;
- unneeded roads are closed and rehabilitated.

6.5.5 In consultation with appropriate expertise, the FME implements documented Riparian Management Zone (RMZ) buffer management guidelines to prevent or mitigate negative environmental impact, and include protecting and restoring water quality, hydrologic conditions in rivers and stream corridors, wetlands, vernal pools, seeps and springs, lake and pond shorelines, and other hydrologically sensitive areas. The guidelines include vegetative buffer widths and protection measures that are acceptable within those buffers.

Guidance: If there are any nationally or locally applicable laws or regulations in regards to RMZ buffers, the FME should have them referenced or otherwise documented per indicator 6.5.1. Where no such laws or regulations exist, FME may develop or adopt guidelines for RMZs in consultation with stakeholders and/or through consulting relevant literature/ research.

6.6 Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides. World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.

6.6.1 All chemical pesticide use in nurseries, FMUs or processing facilities occurs within the context of an integrated pest management program; pesticides are only used when non- chemical management has been proven ineffective or cost-prohibitive.

Verifiers:

- Silvicultural prescriptions are selected and designed to minimize the dependence on chemical pesticides;
- The FMU can demonstrate evidence of reduction or elimination of the use of chemical pesticides over time.

6.6.2 If the FME uses chemical pesticides:

- The FME shall have a complete list of chemical pesticides used;

- The FME shall maintain records of all pesticides used, including the name of the product, active ingredient(s), location and method of application, total quantity applied, and the dates of application;
- The FME shall comply with all safety regulations during the transport, manipulation, application, and storage of chemical pesticides;
- Where required by law, field personnel shall be properly licensed to apply chemical pesticides;
- FME personnel and contractors shall use appropriate equipment and gear to assure safe application;
- The FME shall provide adequate supervision and training to personnel and contractors related to the transport, storage, manipulation, and application of chemical pesticides.

6.6.3) The FME shall not use highly hazardous chemical pesticides as defined by the FSC (FSC- POL-30-601), those prohibited in India, pesticides classified as Type 1A or 1B by the World Health Organization (WHO) or pesticides composed of hydrocarbons or chlorine. Exceptions are made when the FSC has permitted a formal derogation in the applicable territory. In such cases, the FME shall follow the terms of the approved derogation. Note: Non-conformance to this Indicator constitutes a Major Failure and precludes award of certification until appropriately corrected.

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 Toxic chemicals and their containers are disposed of, off site, in an environmentally sound and legal manner.

6.7.2 There are contingency plans and procedures for prevention and cleanup following spills or other accidents involving chemical pesticides, oils and fuels.

6.7.3 There are on-site facilities for secure collection of waste, including oil and fuel.

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

6.8.1 There shall be no use (defined as commercial use as well as research) of genetically modified organisms within the FMU. Note: Non-conformance to this Indicator constitutes a Major Failure and precludes award of certification until appropriately corrected.

6.8.2 All use of biological control agents takes place within the context of an integrated pest management program that will document, minimize, monitor, and strictly control their application.

6.8.3 Use of biological control agents takes place only where demonstrably necessary and only under strict protocols in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

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

6.9.1 Exotic species (tree species as well as other flora and fauna) are introduced into the FMU only after active investigation demonstrates that they are not invasive.

6.9.2 Exotic species use is governed by written guidelines for controlling off-site regeneration; active ongoing monitoring is mandatory.

6.9.3 In areas where invasive exotic plants are problematic, forest owners or managers develop and implement appropriate control measures...

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

- a) Entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and,
- b) Does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and,
- c) Will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.

6.10.1 FME shall not convert forests to plantations or non- forest land uses, except where the conversion meets the conditions of 6.10.2 – 6.10.4 below.

6.10.2 If conversion occurs, the area affected shall not exceed 0.5% of the area of the FMU in any one year, nor affect a total of more than 5% of the area of the FMU.

6.10.3 If conversion occurs, the FME shall demonstrate that any conversion produces clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation benefits across the FMU.

6.10.4 If the conversion occurs, it shall not occur on high conservation value forest areas.

PRINCIPLE #7: MANAGEMENT PLAN

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

7.1 The management plan and supporting documents shall provide:

- a) Management objectives.
- b) Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands.
- c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories.
- d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection.
- e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics.

- f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments.
- g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.
- h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership.
- i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.

7.1.1 Appropriate to the scale, intensity, and complexity of operations, there shall be a written management plan for the FMU that addresses the subjects and plan components enumerated in this criterion, above. Note: Non-conformance to this Indicator constitutes a Major Failure and precludes award of certification until appropriately corrected.

7.1.2 The management plan contains both long term goals and objectives as well as short and near term tactical direction

7.1.3 There are sufficient resources invested in plan development so as to produce a functional and effective management plan

For FMUs meeting SLIMF requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply; the indicator(s) are not to be used for assessing non-SLIMF operations:

7.1.4 A written management plan exists and is implemented. The management plan includes at least the following:

- a) the objectives of management
- b) a description of the forest
- c) how the objectives will be met, harvesting methods and silviculture (clear cuts, selective cuts, thinning) to ensure sustainability
- d) sustainable harvest limits (which must be consistent with FSC criteria 5.6)
- e) plans for monitoring forest growth
- f) environmental/ social impacts of the plan
- g) conservation of rare species and any high conservation values
- h) maps of the forest, showing protected areas, planned management and land ownership
- i) Pest and weed control planned
- j) Duration of the plan

7.2 The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.

7.2.1 The management plan is revised and updated at regular intervals, the frequency of which is appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations.

7.2.2 FME maintains conversancy in emerging scientific and technical information pertinent to the management of the FMU.

7.2.3 Over time, the management plan is kept current and relevant; as such, the plan is able to provide ongoing guidance to the management of the FMU.

For FMUs meeting SLIMF requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply; the indicator(s) are not to be used for assessing non-SLIMF operations:

7.2.4 The management plan is revised and updated at regular intervals, the frequency of which is appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations.

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

7.3.1 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations, there is a documented protocol by which forest workers (including subcontractors and rubber tappers) are duly trained as to their role in implementing the management plan

7.3.2 Records are maintained as to when each forest worker received management plan training

7.3.3 There is a demonstrable track record of compliance with and implementation of the management plan

7.3.4 Forest workers are supervised by qualified managers who provide guidance in the implementation of the management plan.

For FMUs meeting SLIMF requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply:

7.3.5 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations, forest workers (including subcontractors and rubber tappers) are duly trained, according to a documented protocol, as to their role in implementing the management plan

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 Interested stakeholders are readily able to obtain a public summary of the management plan, which provides information on the elements enumerated in criterion 7.1.

7.4.2 The FME shall update the public summary of the FMP as necessary, or, at a minimum, during full revisions of the FMP.

PRINCIPLE #8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Monitoring shall be conducted -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management -- to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.

8.1 The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations as well as the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change.

8.1.1 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations, there are written protocols for periodic monitoring of forest conditions, management activities, plan compliance and chain-of-custody

8.1.2 FME has a demonstrated track record of implementing monitoring protocols which are consistent and replicable over time.

For FMUs meeting SLIMF requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply:

8.1.3 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations, periodic monitoring of forest conditions, management activities, plan compliance and chain-of-custody is conducted and done so according to written protocols.

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 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations, FME periodically gathers information on the indicators enumerated in this criterion, above.

8.2.2 Written records are kept of the annual or periodic harvest levels of each commercial forest product, at levels of specificity appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations.

For example:

- Records of timber harvest volume by species
- Records of rubber collection or latex production by volume

8.2.3 FME demonstrates a commitment to acquiring and utilizing information on key indicators pertaining to the production, environmental and socio-economic profiles of its operation.

For FMUs meeting SLIMF requirements, only the following indicator(s) apply; the indicator(s) are not to be used for assessing non-SLIMF operations:

8.2.4) Appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations, FME periodically gathers information on the indicators enumerated in this criterion, above.

8.2.5) Information necessary to judge progress towards management objectives is collected and

recorded. In all cases this will include:

- Amount of all commercial forest products harvested, by species
- Effects of operations as identified under Criteria 6.1
- Changes in features identified under Criteria 6.2
- Annual monitoring of high conservation values identified under Criteria 9.1
- Invasive exotic species

For example:

- Records of timber harvest volume by species
- Records of rubber collection or latex production by volume

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

8.3.1 The FME shall have documented procedures for the tracking of certified products per RA' COC indicators for FMEs.

8.3.2 The FME shall implement consistently the COC procedures defined in indicator 8.3.1.

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

8.4.1 FME demonstrates a commitment to adaptive management where information gathered during systematic monitoring is incorporated into revisions to the management plan as well as revisions to standard operating procedures, see Criterion 7.2.

8.4.2 For non-SLIMF: The evolution of the management plan over successive revisions demonstrates that the results of monitoring are being appropriately incorporated.

8.5 While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the results of monitoring indicators, including those listed in Criterion 8.2.

8.5.1 Interested stakeholders are readily able to obtain a public summary of the results of periodic monitoring that addresses the indicators listed in criterion 8.2.

8.5.2 FME endeavors to keep the monitoring summary up-to-date

PRINCIPLE 9: MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS

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

9.1 Assessment to determine the presence of the attributes consistent with High Conservation Value Forests will be completed, appropriate to scale and intensity of forest management.

9.1.1 An assessment of the FMU has been completed for the presence of areas meeting the FSC definition of high conservation value.

9.1.2 The assessment for the presence of HCVFs includes consultation with pertinent stakeholders and outside experts. Where available, an existing national toolkit is used to assist in the identification of HCVFs.

9.1.3 FME demonstrates a working understanding of the HCVF concept and definition and endeavor to comply with the spirit of this principle.

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

9.2.1 FME provides to RA a list of pertinent stakeholders who may be consulted regarding HCVFs.

9.2.2 Stakeholder consultation indicates that the forest management operation consistently considers and protects areas of high conservation value

9.3 The management plan shall include and implement specific measures that ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of the applicable conservation attributes consistent with the precautionary approach. These measures shall be specifically included in the publicly available management plan summary.

9.3.1 The conservation attributes of each identified HCV area found within the FMU are described in the management plan.

9.3.2 The management plan and public summary thereof contain specific policies for maintenance and enhancement of the conservation attributes that define HCV areas; these protections are consistent with the precautionary approach.

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

9.4.1 Measurable effectiveness indicators are developed and presented in the HCVF section of the management plan.

9.4.2 Appropriate to the scale of and intensity of operations, annual monitoring is conducted that focuses on the effectiveness by which HCVF management and protection measures are maintaining and/or enhancing the pertinent conservation attributes.

9.4.3 The results of HCVF monitoring are used adaptively in modifying HCVF management and protection policies as well in revising the management plan.

PRINCIPLE # 10: PLANTATIONS

Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1 - 9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

10.1 The management objectives of the plantation, including natural forest conservation and restoration objectives, shall be explicitly stated in the management plan, and clearly demonstrated in the implementation of the plan.

10.1.1 The management plan for the defined plantation forest area includes a presentation of the landowner and/or plantation owner objectives.

10.1.2 The plantation forest objectives include express policies for natural forest conservation as well as restoration of degraded natural forest areas.

10.1.3 FME demonstrates a systematic pattern of implementing the management plan.

10.2 The design and layout of plantations should promote the protection, restoration and conservation of natural forests, and not increase pressures on natural forests. Wildlife corridors, streamside zones and a mosaic of stands of different ages and rotation periods shall be used in the layout of the plantation, consistent with the scale of the operation. The scale and layout of plantation blocks shall be consistent with the patterns of forest stands found within the natural landscape.

10.2.1 For non-SLIMF and 'low intensity' SLIMF: The scale and layout of existing and new plantation blocks are consistent with the patterns of natural forest stands within the landscape.

Examples of patterns may include contours, soil types, water courses, slope, etc.

10.2.2 The FME shall design plantations to include stands with a diversity of age classes and rotation periods.

10.2.3 The FME identifies and conserves all areas of natural vegetation within the FMU.

10.2.4 The FME protects, maintains, and enhances natural vegetation and wildlife corridors in accordance to Criterion 6.3.

10.2.5 Buffer zones of natural vegetation are maintained or established along watercourses in accordance to C6.5.

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 The FME shall employ a variety of species, provenances, and/or clones to achieve optimal economic, ecological and social stability.

10.3.2 The FME shall introduce diversity to established and new plantations in accordance to indicators 10.2.2 and 10.3.1, and through practices such as: cut blocks of different size and shape, and maintenance of volunteer (naturally established) seedlings and other structural components within plantation stands.

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 Exotic tree species are planted only after an assessment of native species is conducted, in which it is demonstrated that native species cannot achieve comparable performance levels.

10.4.2 Periodic monitoring is conducted of the adaptability of exotic stands, as indicated by measured levels of mortality, disease and insect outbreaks.

10.4.3 Selection of plantation species and provenances is based on documented trials that demonstrate their suitability to the plantation sites and management objectives.

10.4.4 Information about the source of seed or planting stock is presented in the management plan or another suitable document

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 are being protected or restored in their natural state, per the requirements of C6.4.

10.6 Measures shall be taken to maintain or improve soil structure, fertility, and biological activity. The techniques and rate of harvesting, road and trail construction and maintenance, and the choice of species shall not result in long-term soil degradation or adverse impacts on water quality, quantity or substantial deviation from stream course drainage patterns.

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

10.6.2 The FME shall implement BMPs established in C6.5 to minimize impacts to soil and water resources.

10.6.3 Where degradation and/or other negative impacts to soil and water resources have occurred on the FMU, the FME shall implement measures to mitigate such impacts.

10.7 Measures shall be taken to prevent and minimize outbreaks of pests, diseases, fire and invasive plant introductions. Integrated pest management shall form an essential part of the management plan, with primary reliance on prevention and biological control methods rather than chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Plantation management should make every effort to move away from chemical pesticides and fertilizers, including their use in nurseries. The use of chemicals is also covered in Criteria 6.6 and 6.7.

10.7.1 Plantation forest standard operating procedures include regular monitoring for pest and pathogen activity, inordinate levels of mortality, and the spread of invasive exotic plants.

10.7.2 If chemical pesticides and fertilizers are used or included as a management option in the management plan, the FME shall have policies and guidelines for integrated pest management that are demonstrably followed in the field.

10.7.3 FME, through its policies and actions, demonstrates a commitment to progressively lessen the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

10.7.4 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations, there is a written fire prevention and suppression plan.

10.8 Appropriate to the scale and diversity of the operation, monitoring of plantations shall include regular assessment of potential on-site and off-site ecological and social impacts, (e.g. natural regeneration, effects on water resources and soil fertility, and impacts on local welfare and social well-being), in addition to those elements addressed in principles 8, 6 and 4. No species should be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site, are not invasive, and do not have significant negative ecological impacts on other ecosystems. Special attention will be paid to social issues of land acquisition for plantations, especially the protection of local rights of ownership, use or access.

10.8.1 Monitoring of the impacts of plantations, both on and off-site, shall be conducted in the same manner as the monitoring of natural forests, in accordance with Principles 4, 6, and 8.

10.8.2 Acquisition of land for establishment of plantation forests does not adversely impact, without due compensation, local ownership rights or access/use patterns

10.9 Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994 normally shall not qualify for certification. Certification may be allowed in circumstances where sufficient evidence is submitted to the certification body that the manager/owner is not responsible directly or indirectly of such conversion.

10.9.1 Records are of sufficient detail to enable the RA auditor(s) to determine if conversion of natural forests to plantations has occurred since November, 1994.

10.9.2 Areas converted from natural forest to plantation since November 1994 are not certified, except where the FME provides clear and sufficient evidence that it was not directly or indirectly responsible for the conversion

Annex 1: FSC Glossary of terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Indicator: a quantitative or qualitative variable which can be measured or described, and which provides a means of judging whether a forest management unit complies with the

requirements of an FSC Criterion. Indicators and the associated thresholds thereby define the requirements for responsible forest management at the level of the forest management unit and are the primary basis of forest evaluation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ecosystem to recover its natural structure and composition following harvesting or disturbance, or to produce mature or primary conditions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annex 2: List of national and local forest and related laws and administrative requirements which apply in Sri Lanka

- National Environmental Act, 1980
- National Environmental (Protection & Quality) Regulations 1990
- Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance of 1993
- Control of Pesticides Act no. 33 1980
- Rubber Research Institute Technical guidelines
- Forest Ordinance of 1988
- Employment's Federation of Ceylon Guidelines on labour, health and safety
- Central Environmental Authority Guidelines and Regulations for rubber processing industries
- Labour Law of Sri Lanka

Annex 3: List of the multilateral environmental agreements and ILO Conventions that Sri Lanka has ratified

Multilateral Environmental Agreements:

- Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
(CITES) – accession 1979
- Convention on Biological Diversity – ratified 1994; Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety – ratified 2004
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – ratified 1993; Kyoto Protocol – ratified 2002
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants – ratified 2005
- Constitution of the Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries – signed 1970

Ratified ILO Conventions:

Convention	Ratification date	Status
C8 Unemployment Indemnity (Shipwreck) Convention, 1920	25:04:1951	ratified
C11 Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921	25:08:1952	ratified
C16 Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921	25:04:1951	ratified
C18 Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Convention, 1925	17:05:1952	ratified
C26 Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928	09:06:1971	ratified
C29 Forced Labour Convention, 1930	05:04:1950	ratified
C45 Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935	20:12:1950	ratified
C58 Minimum Age (Sea) Convention (Revised), 1936	18:05:1959	ratified
C80 Final Articles Revision Convention, 1946	19:09:1950	ratified
C81 Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	03:04:1956	ratified
C87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to	15:09:1995	ratified
C90 Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948	18:05:1959	ratified
C95 Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	27:10:1983	ratified
C96 Fee-Charging Employment Agencies Convention (Revised), 1949	30:04:1958	ratified
C98 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention,	13:12:1972	ratified
C99 Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) Convention, 1951	05:04:1954	ratified
C100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	01:04:1993	ratified
C103 Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952	01:04:1993	ratified
C105 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	07:01:2003	ratified
C106 Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957	27:10:1983	ratified

C108 Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958	24:11:1995	ratified
C110 Plantations Convention, 1958	24:04:1995	ratified
C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	27:11:1998	ratified
C115 Radiation Protection Convention, 1960	18:06:1986	ratified
C116 Final Articles Revision Convention, 1961	26:04:1974	ratified
C131 Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970	17:03:1975	ratified
C135 Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971	16:11:1976	ratified
C138 Minimum Age Convention, 1973	11:02:2000	ratified
C144 Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	17:03:1994	ratified
C160 Labour Statistics Convention, 1985	01:04:1993	ratified
C182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	01:03:2001	ratified

Annex 4: List of officially endangered species in Sri Lanka

For a database of endangered species in Sri Lanka, please visit the CITES species database on the internet:

<http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/species.html>

Annex 5: Summary of the Certification Assessment Process⁴

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fieldwork and Data Collection: Evaluation of conformance with the standard is based upon data collection by the auditors through review of FME management documentation, interviews with staff and stakeholders, and field observations and measurements. The team organizes opening meetings with the FME staff to review the assessment scope and

⁴ For detailed information about procedures, contact our headquarters or regional offices through www.nepcon.org

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 NEPCon Decision Review: The candidate operation, at least one peer reviewer, and NEPCon regional staff, review each certification assessment report.

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

About NEPCon

NEPCon (Nature Economy and People Connected) is an international non-profit organisation working to support better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature and the climate in 100+ countries around the world. We do this through innovation projects, capacity building and sustainability services. We focus on forest and climate impact commodities and related sectors, such as tourism.

We are accredited certifiers for sustainability schemes such as FSC™ (Forest Stewardship Council™), PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification), RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil), Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture and SBP (Sustainable Biomass Program). We also certify to our own LegalSource™, Sustainable Tourism and Carbon Footprint Management standards. A self-managing division of NEPCon promotes and delivers our certification services. Surplus from certification activities supports NEPCon's non-profit activities.

NEPCon is recognised by the EU as a Monitoring Organisation under the EU Timber Regulation.

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