



# NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Romania

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

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# 1. Introduction

A key purpose of NEPCon is to recognise good forest managers through credible independent certification of forestry practices. NEPCon is an FSC™ Certification Body accredited by Accreditation Services International (ASI).

The purpose of these standards are to provide forest managers, landowners, forest industry, scientists, environmentalists and the general public with information on the aspects of forest management operations that NEPCon evaluates to make certification decisions in the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC) certification system.

These standards are the default starting point for the development of region-specific NEPCon Interim Standards that shall be developed in all locations where there are no existing, approved FSC standards. The principles, criteria and indicators<sup>1</sup> in this document are applicable for assessing all forest management enterprises (FMEs) with wood production as a major (though not exclusive) objective. These standards are global in application, for all forest types.

This Standard will be reviewed annually and revised if needed to ensure continued conformance with all approved FSC policies, standards, directives, guidelines and advice notes that apply to the interpretation of the FSC Principles and Criteria.

## 2. Background

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

## 3. Public Comment

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

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

The stakeholder consultation document is typically distributed by hand delivery, fax, mail, or email and is also posted at the NEPCon website [www.nepcon.org](http://www.nepcon.org). The specific NEPCon standard used for each assessment is also publicly available before and during the assessment and is a part of the public record for every forest certification. The public certification report summary is produced as a final step of the certification process and is available only after an operation

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

has been approved for certification. For copies of any public stakeholder consultation document or NEPCon interim Forest Management standard, visit [www.nepcon.org](http://www.nepcon.org). For public certification summaries, visit the FSC database <http://info.fsc.org/>, or contact NEPCon's certification headquarters (NEPCon | Filosoofi 31 I 50108 Tartu, Estonia, email [estonia@nepcon.net](mailto:estonia@nepcon.net), phone +372 7 380 723). We strongly encourage you to give us your input, either positive or negative, on our candidate or certified operations, certification standards, or certification procedures.

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

## 4. Regional Standards

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

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

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

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

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

- FSC-STD-01-001 (version 4-0) FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
- FSC-STD-20-002 (version 3-0) Structure, content and local adaptation of certification body generic Forest Stewardship Standards.
- FSC-POL-30-401 FSC certification and ILO conventions.
- FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria
- NEPCon Generic Standards for Assessing Forest Management"
- NEPCon Global Non Timber Forest Product Certification Addendum



## 5. Structure of the NEPCon Standards

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

- 1 Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles
- 2 Tenure and Use Rights & Responsibilities
- 3 Indigenous Peoples’ Rights
- 4 Community Relations and Workers’ Rights
- 5 Benefits from the Forest
- 6 Environmental Impact
- 7 Management Plan
- 8 Monitoring and Assessment
- 9 Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests
- 10 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 3 is not applicable in the case no indigenous people are present, Principle 10 will not be applicable if there are no plantations).

## 6. Indicators for Small and Large FMEs

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

This standard is applicable to all types of forests found in Romania.

For Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests are applicable only part of indicators, for medium or large forest area are applicable a combination of these indicators.

For purposes of this standard, the thresholds for small, medium and large forests area are:

- Small Organizations (SLIMF) :a) organizations managing forest areas below 500 ha;  
b) organizations where the exploitation rate is below 20% of average annual growth and annual operation is under 5,000 m3;
- Medium organizations: The organization which manages an area of forest between 500 and 10 000 ha;
- Large organizations: The organization that manages a forest area of over 10 000 ha.

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

## **7. Contents**

### **A Scope**

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

### **B Standard effective date**

This standard shall be effective from 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016

### **C References**

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

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

### **D Terms and definitions**

See annex A for glossary.

Acronyms:

FME: Forest Management Enterprise

FMU: Forest Management Unit

FSC: Forest Stewardship Council

HCVF: High Conservation Value Forests

SLIMF: Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests

VED: Volume Estimation Document

NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Romania

<b>PRINCIPLE 1. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES</b> 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.	
<b>1.1. Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.</b>	1.1.1. The staff is aware of relevant requirements of legislation and their responsibilities.
	1.1.2. Large and Medium FME: Access to relevant legislative documents shall be available in the head office and for the staff. (Ex. Legislation regarding National Parks, Natura 2000 sites, Protected areas, Harvesting, Health and Safety, Environment requirements).
	1.1.2. There is no evidence of non-compliance with requirements of related national, state/provincial and local environmental, labor and forestry laws, administrative and technical regulations.
	1.1.4. Claims and non-compliances with legislation shall be recorded, documented and corrective actions shall be implemented to prevent their recurrence.
<b>1.2. All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.</b>	1.2.1. FME shall have documentation confirming on-time payment of any prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges.
	1.2.2. When discrepancies arise, FME shall have full documentation related to that, including the corrective actions that had been taken to solve it.
<b>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.</b>	1.3.1. Large and Medium FME: - Forest managers shall be aware of all applicable international binding agreements and corresponding national regulations.
	1.3.2. Workers under the age of 15 years shall not be employed in the forest.
	1.3.3. Workers under the age of 18 years shall not be employed for forest operations when it is likely to jeopardize health and safety.
	1.3.4. There is no forced labor or debt bondage.
	1.3.5. FME respects provisions applicable in their region resulting from binding international agreements.
<b>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.</b>	1.4.1. Perceived conflicts between laws, technical norms, regulations and present standard shall be recorded by the FME.
	1.4.2. Any conflict identified between FSC requirements and the law shall be resolved through consultation between FME, the FSC certifier, and FSC National Partner (or respective FSC body), as needed.
<b>1.5. Forest management areas</b>	1.5.1. Large and Medium FME: FME shall have a monitoring system with formal



<b><i>should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.</i></b>	documented periodic inspections.
	1.5.2. Appropriate measures against own staff are taken and documented when violation from their attributions of guarding the forest are identified.
	1.5.3. Poaching, Illegal timber extraction and illegal settlement shall be controlled. Poaching shall be under monitoring and relevant authorities shall be informed.
	1.5.4. FME shall take all reasonable legal measures to prevent unauthorized activities on the forest area or on natural resource.
	1.5.5. Illegal harvest, settlements and other unauthorized usage shall be reported to the responsible authorities (police, prosecution, forestry and environmental authorities, etc.).
<b><i>1.6. Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.</i></b>	1.6.1. Forest managers shall clearly demonstrate long-term support for the FSC Principles and Criteria, expressed in written.
	1.6.2. The staff responsible for forest management has been introduced with the FSC Principles and Criteria and are aware of the impact in their regular activities.
	1.6.3. Forest managers shall declare any areas under their operational management, which are not included within the scope of the certification. This areas shall be marked on the field
	1.6.4. The areas under de scope of certification shall be marked or otherwise clearly delineated on the forest management maps
	1.6.5. FME shall implement procedure to ensure that there is no risk of confusion generated by certified and non-certified activities or products.
	1.6.6. Large FME: FME shall follow FSC policy for partial certification (FSC-POL 20-002 or other respective FSC document). The management practice in all forest areas shall clear indicate the commitment to the FSC P&C.
<b>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.</b>	
<b><i>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.</i></b>	2.1.1. Legal ownership and land tenure arrangements are clearly defined, documented and established for the certified forest area. Documents proving legal right of ownership shall be available.
	2.1.2. Documented agreements for forest management are available between the owner and FME.
	2.1.3. Property borders shall be marked and clearly delineated on the forest management maps.
	2.1.4. These areas which are under legal disputes shall not be included under the scope of the certification.

<b>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.</b>	2.2.1. Recognized legal or customary tenure or traditional use rights of local communities or other interested parties shall be identified, documented and respected.
	2.2.2. If any local community or other interested party claim certain rights over the land, such claims are legally proven.
	2.2.3. FME shall ensure that local communities have access to the forest for collection of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) such as berries, mushrooms, herbs for own consumption with the consent of the forest owner.
	2.2.4. FME shall ensure that local communities have controlled access to take or buy wood for their own consumption (e.g. firewood) at a reasonable price.
<b>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.</b>	2.3.1. Records shall be maintained of disputes over tenure and use rights.
	2.3.2. Every reasonable effort shall be made to resolve conflicts through consultation aiming at achieving agreement or consent.
	2.3.3. Disputes will be solved in independent courts.
	2.3.4. FME shall not continue its activities that had caused the dispute unless the dispute is solved through achieved agreement or court decision.
<b>PRINCIPLE 3. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS</b> The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected	
Not applicable for Romania	
<b>PRINCIPLE 4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKERS' RIGHTS</b> Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.	
<b>4.1. The communities within, or adjacent to, the forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services.</b>	4.1.1. FME ensures local people equal access in hiring, promoting, dismissal, remuneration, employment-benefits and training opportunities.
	4.1.2. Evidence of efforts made for providing stable employment for all staff shall exist.
	4.1.3. FME, including contractors shall apply all the legal requirement regarding employees (ex. Labor contract, day worker)
	4.1.4. There is no evidence of limiting access to basic forest functions and social services such as health, education, leisure and tourism.
	4.1.5. Wages or incomes of employees shall be at least as high as those in comparable occupations in the same region and shall not be lower than the established minimum wage.
<b>4.2. Forest management should</b>	4.2.1. Employees, including contractors, shall be aware of and shall implement

<b><i>meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.</i></b>	safe working practices.
	4.2.2 Appropriate health and safety equipment shall be used in the field by the employees, harvesting companies and other contractors (e.g. safety helmet, safety boots, safety trousers, hearing protectors, eye protection and first aid kit).
	4.2.3. Any person entering an ongoing logging site shall wear a helmet.
	4.2.4 For other tasks than harvesting, workers are provided with safety equipment and safety training, relevant to the tasks of workers and the equipment used (e.g. according to national regulations or to ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Forestry).
	4.2.5. Workers involved in dangerous work such as storm damage removal, logging of large trees and tree climbing shall never work alone.
	4.2.6. Workers shall be instructed about procedures in case of emergency situation such as accident, fire or oil spill.
	4.2.7. Forestry machines shall be equipped with adequate security elements (tractors equipped with bumper at the windows and door, brake for chainsaw chain, speed brake for the funicular cable)
	4.2.8. FME shall conduct regular checks to ensure that all safety procedures are implemented in the field.
	4.2.9. Warning signs shall be posted at access roads to sites with ongoing logging operation.
	4.2.10. Large and Medium FME: FME shall maintain a register of all accidents and documented steps taken to minimize risk of further accidents.
	4.2.11. FME operations shall have a health and safety policy and management system in place.
	4.2.12. Compensations are granted to the workers in case of accidents.
	4.2.13. Workers who are staying overnight in the forest shall have appropriate sleeping and toilet facilities and sufficient supply of drinking water.
	4.2.14. The indicators of criterion 4.2 shall also apply to workers' family members in case of their presence on work area.
<b><i>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).</i></b>	4.3.1. All workers shall be able to form and join a trade union of their choice without fear of intimidation or reprisal.
	4.3.2. Large and Medium FME / Contractors: Collective bargaining with representative trade unions shall be carried out in good faith and with best efforts to come to an agreement.
<b><i>4.4. Management planning and</i></b>	4.4.1. Large and Medium FME: FME has in place a system for evaluation of the

<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>social impact from forest management activities, including at least:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) identification of affected groups;</li> <li>2) periodic consultation with affected groups;</li> <li>3) identification of the main impacts of the operation on affected groups;</li> <li>4) specification of mitigation measures for identified negative impacts;</li> <li>5) monitoring of effectiveness of measures in consultation with the affected groups.</li> </ol>
	<p>4.4.2 Records of stakeholders' consultations regarding social, social-economic and cultural values that might be affected by the scale of forest management shall be available.</p>
	<p>4.4.3. Large and Medium FME: FME has in place a system to document stakeholder concerns and request followed by relevant FME's responses.</p>
	<p>4.4.4. SLIMF: FME shall conduct and keep record of stakeholders' consultations regarding social, social-economic and cultural values that might be affected by the scale of forest management.</p>
	<p>4.4.5. Results of social impact evaluation (when applicable) and stakeholders' consultations are addressed in management decisions and are considered during the forest management planning process.</p>
	<p>4.4.6. Areas of special economic, ecological, cultural or spiritual values for local communities shall be mapped and management shall take these values into considerations.</p>
<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>4.5.1. FME shall take action to prevent cases of loss or damage caused by forestry activities to local community resources.</p>
	<p>4.5.2. FME shall apply a complaint solving system including consultations with the affected parties in order to reach an agreement (in terms of property loss, health and property damages or law infraction).</p>
	<p>4.5.3. Fair compensation shall be offered in the case of any loss or damage caused by the forest enterprise and affecting the legal or customary rights, property, resources or livelihoods of local people.</p>
	<p>4.5.4. Large and Medium FME: FME shall have a documented procedure for implementation of the requirements in 4.5.2 and 4.5.3.</p>
<p><b>PRINCIPLE 5. BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST</b> 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.</p>	
<p><i>5.1. Forest management should strive toward economic viability,</i></p>	<p>5.1.1 FME has in place a work plan and budget showing the expected costs and revenues covering at least the current financial year.</p>

<b><i>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.</i></b>	5.1.2 Large and Medium FME: Forestry revenue shall be sufficient to cover forest management expenses, e.g. management planning, road maintenance, silvicultural treatments, long-term forest health, growth and yield monitoring, and investments for maintaining biological productivity of the forest.
	5.1.3. The income foreseen in the budget correlate to the legally approved levels / rate of harvest and the evolution of the market.
	5.1.4. The yearly budget incorporates all due taxes, fees and other similar obligations, as required by the law.
	5.1.5. The yearly budget incorporates all social and environmental costs as specified by Principles 4 and 6.
<b><i>5.2. Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.</i></b>	5.2.1. The "highest and best use" for individual tree and timber species shall be sought.
	5.2.2. Considering local and regional economic needs, a wide range of forest products shall be produced and introduced to the market.
	5.2.3. Non-timber forest products (e.g. seeds, berries, mushrooms, herbs, resin, greenery, Christmas trees and game) shall also be considered during forest use and utilization.
	5.2.4. Large and Medium FME: FME make at least proportion of their production available to local enterprises, such as small-scale industries and processing operations.
<b><i>5.3. Forest management should minimize waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.</i></b>	5.3.1. The system of existing and planned forest roads, bridges, and logging trails shall be appropriate to the scale and intensity of management operations and shall take into account environmental constraints.
	5.3.2. FME / Contractors shall implement techniques of harvesting, extraction and transport that limit damages to remaining trees and avoid damages to other forest resources and soil, and shall monitor these damages.
	5.3.3. The trees bordering the skidding trails shall be protected against damage from wood transportation.
	5.3.4. Harvested and processed wood / products on-site shall be transported from the forest before any deterioration occurs.
	5.3.5. Hauling techniques of trees with branches will not be used. The length of the trunk pieces will be limited as to avoid damages to other forest resource.
<b><i>5.4. Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.</i></b>	5.4.1 Managers have information on the range of potential forest products and services and shall strive to diversify FME's products where it is economically feasible. This refers to diverse wood products including 'lesser known' timber species, Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and opportunities for non-material services like forest recreation, tourism, leisure activities and education.
	5.4.2 FME marketing policy and sale procedures shall consider needs of local

	market.  (see also 5.2.4)
<b>5.5. Forest management operations shall recognize, maintain, and, where appropriate, enhance the value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.</b>	5.5.1. Large and Medium FME: Forest managers shall have information on the water uses and about multiple services produced in the forest such as the watersheds, fishing, hunting, other NTFPs, outdoor activities, social and cultural values of forests in that area.
	5.5.2. Large and Medium FME: FME shall consider and take measures to maintain the services and values, described in 5.5.1, when planning and carrying out forest operations.
	5.5.3. FME shall consider areas important for fishing, hunting, mushrooms, herbs and berry picking, and recreation when planning forest operations.
<b>5.6. The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained.</b>	5.6.1. Planned allowable cut, by area or volume, shall be set based on existing and well-documented estimates of growth and yield so far.
	5.6.2. FME shall ensure that the rate of harvest (annually and long term) does not exceed sustainable levels established in forest management plan in accordance with the valid regulations and considering the requirement of 5.6.1.
	5.6.3. Harvest volume shall be strictly documented regarding species, quantities and assortments. The FME shall provide sufficient document (VED, inventory sheet, regeneration control) to allow on site verification.
	5.6.4. The volume inventoried as sanitary cuttings shall be related only to unhealthy trees. The FME shall provide reason for extraction and inventory sheet for onsite verification.
	5.6.5. Large and Medium FME: FME shall document commercial harvest of NTFP such as seeds, mushrooms, herbs, berries, Christmas trees, greenery, game and fishing.
<b>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.</b>	
<b>6.1. Assessment of environmental impacts shall be completed -- appropriate to the scale, intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources -- and adequately integrated into management systems. Assessments shall include landscape level considerations as well as the impacts of on-site processing</b>	6.1.1 Large and Medium FME: FME shall have a system for assessing environmental impacts prior to commencement of site disturbing operations, including designation of mitigation measures in forestry planning and harvesting documentation. The assessment shall be appropriate to the uniqueness of the affected resources and shall take into consideration the following features: a) the scale and intensity of the forest management; b) the existing biodiversity; c) landscape.
	6.1.2 Large and Medium FME: The system shall ensure that the results of the environmental impact assessment are addressed during the performance of forestry activities (e.g. silviculture system used, constructions of new roads, maintenance of drainage systems, time and terms of harvesting, wet soil types



<b><i>facilities. Environmental impacts shall be assessed prior to commencement of site disturbing operations.</i></b>	handling with precautions, sensitive bird habitats not intervening in the nesting period, etc.).
	6.1.3. SLIMF: FME shall consider potential environmental impacts prior to commencement of site disturbing operations (as harvesting, planting, construction in forest, road building), taking into account the existing officially registered protected species, HCVs, wet soils and watercourses. Mitigation measures to address the identified potential environmental impacts shall be taken during the performance of forestry activities, considering type, intensity, scale and time of the activity. When applicable, the mitigation measures shall be described in planning, harvesting, planting, construction documentation.  (see also 6.2.2, 6.4.3, 6.5.2, 7.1.2, 9.1.2)
	6.1.4. Forest Management activities shall occur according to environmental and nature protection regulations.
	6.1.5 Environmental impacts of on-site processing facilities shall be assessed and controlled (e.g. waste, construction impacts, etc.).
<b><i>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.</i></b>	6.2.1. Large and Medium FME: FME shall have a written list of threatened, rare and endangered species or ecosystems within their forest area as result of a biodiversity assessment performed there.
	6.2.2. SLIMF: FME shall be aware of the officially registered protected species in the forest area and shall take actions for its conservation.
	6.2.3. Large and Medium FME: At least 10% of FME's territory shall be selected, designated and identified on maps (if relevant also marked in the field) as conservation zones or areas for protection, where the primary management objective is biodiversity maintenance.
	6.2.4. The areas assigned by the FME for conservation and protection shall be located in areas where they can offer a maximum contribution to the biodiversity conservation goals (e.g. this territory could include areas assigned under requirement of 6.4.1, officially designated Protected Areas, old-growth-forests, areal of threatened, rare and endangered species or ecosystems in the FME, marginal forest habitats - forest belts, stream side vegetation, vegetation on rocky areas, swamps and heaths, non-forested areas like wetlands, meadows, grasslands or other areas excluded from operation or valuable for biodiversity).
	6.2.5. Operations in the conservation zones shall be conducted so that the conservation values are not harmed or endangered in any way.
	6.2.6. FME has a system in place for monitoring the hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting of animals and plants.
	6.2.7. FME system includes notification procedures to authorities, regarding unauthorized hunting, fishing, trapping or collecting of protected species.
<b><i>6.3. Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact,</i></b>	6.3.1. The silvicultural systems adopted are in accordance with the principles of forest ecology, based on site-specifics and promoting natural regeneration and

<p><i>enhanced, or restored, including:</i>  <i>a) Forest regeneration and succession. b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</i></p>	<p>local proveniences (a,b,c).</p>
	<p>6.3.2. Preferred silvicultural systems shall grant the development of a diversified structure (in spatial and in varied age classes), according with priority functions of the forest.</p>
	<p>6.3.3. Thinning and harvesting operations shall result in the development of mixed stands in accordance with the site (a, b, c). The FME shall perform tending operations at least on the area specified in the management plan.</p>
	<p>6.3.4. Forest managers shall not promote clear cuts in the FME. Whenever it is planned, the area of clear-cuts in natural forests and semi-natural forest of native species shall not exceed 3 hectares excepting 5 hectares for Poplar plantation. Felling sites with clear cut in neighbor stands (sub-compartments) shall not be merged or shall not be implemented in one and same time period. Recurrence of cuts (between each cut and between neighbor stands) in all types of forests shall not be shorter than 5 years (c) or until the regeneration of the clear-cut area is achieved in the neighbour stand.</p>
	<p>6.3.5. The scale of regeneration gaps (coupe size), different than in final phases of shelter wood, shall resemble the natural dynamics in the native forest types (e.g. 0.1-0.3 ha but not exceed 0.5 ha in area) (a, c).</p>
	<p>6.3.6. The final cut in the shelter wood system shall consider the natural dynamics of forest regeneration, considered successful if obtained during regeneration period, composed by species corresponding to the natural forest type and present on at least 70% of the stand based on monitoring of regeneration (unless clearly justified silvicultural reasons are given).</p>
	<p>6.3.7. Natural elements of forest ecosystems (hollow and old standing trees, nesting trees, snags, wild fruit trees, etc.) shall not be eliminated and shall be kept uncut at the site, with consideration of national requirements on work safety (b). Some pioneer tree species may be maintained to contribute to the diversity of the forest ecosystem.</p>
	<p>6.3.8. FME shall leave dead and decaying wood, standing and fallen, diverse in their size and species, with consideration of national requirements on work safety. Amount of the dead wood shall refer to local conditions and dominant function of the forest, as well as shall be spatially differentiated (greater amounts shall be left in nature reserves, conservation zones, areas out of use, xylobiont's sites) (a, b, c).</p>
	<p>6.3.9. FME shall maintain with limited interventions the marginal forest habitats (forest belts, riparian forests, vegetation on rocky areas, swamps and heaths) (a, b, c).</p>
	<p>6.3.10. At least 5 living biotope trees per hectare shall be left in clear cuts and final cuts in the shalterwood system and shall be left uncut forever. Biotope trees should be from the representative species of the initial stand and should be selected preferably in groups in consistency with 6.3.7, 6.3.8, 6.3.9 (b).</p>

	6.3.11. Non-recoverable leavings (e.g. branches below 2 cm, crushed timber, bark, wood rot) should remain in the forest as biomass after harvesting (c).
	6.3.12. Stumps shall not be extracted from the soil unless when is used as regeneration technique (c).
	6.3.13. Burning the biomass in the forest is forbidden (c).
<b>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.</b>	6.4.1. Large and Medium FME: At least 5% of the forest land is selected, identified on maps and protected, being entirely excluded from timber harvesting, unless forest health and sanitary regulations require intervention. The area shall include representative samples of existing rare, threatened or endangered forest ecosystems and old-growth-forests.
	6.4.2. The 5% areas are chosen to be maintained throughout the duration of the certification. Can't be selected areas where cutting restriction is temporary (Plantations, young forest stands).
	6.4.3. Large and Medium FME: Selection of forest areas to be preserved as required in 6.4.1 shall be based on the inventory of key biological areas identified through consultation with environmental stakeholders, local government and scientific authorities.
	6.4.4. SLIMF: FME shall protect representative samples of existing rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems in their natural state.
<b>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.</b>	<p>6.5.1. Large and Medium FME: FME shall have available and implemented written rules and procedures for construction in forest, for road building and ways for nearby wood extraction. Rules / procedures shall take into consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Constructions in forest and design of new roads aim to a minimum alteration of natural features;</li> <li>2) Constructions in forest and building roads are avoided in steep, narrow valleys, slip-prone or other unstable areas, natural drainage channels and stream sides;</li> <li>3) Constructions in forest and roads are not located through environmentally sensitive areas;</li> <li>4) New roads are traced / planned in advance on topographical maps which indicate the existing water streams;</li> <li>5) Wherever possible roads are located on natural benches, ridges and flatter slopes;</li> <li>6) Drains, ditches, bridges, planting for soil fixation or other necessary measures are planned as road attributes in order to avoid erosion;</li> <li>7) Stream crossings are planned and registered on maps before the construction works begin;</li> </ol>

	8) Number of stream crossings is kept to a minimum;
	9) Stream crossings are perpendicular to the stream;
	10) Culverts are designed in order to avoid obstruction of fish-migration and creation of fast water velocities or other unsuitable for fish stream beds.
	6.5.2. SLIMF: FME shall be aware of soil types appropriate for logging in different seasons (winter, spring, summer or autumn) to avoid soil damage.
	6.5.3. Buffer zones with limited interventions in at least 5 m shall be left along permanent water courses/bodies and open landscape.
	6.5.4. New roads shall not be constructed in valley bottom, closed to the streambeds. Existing roads in streambeds or nearby shall be closed and replaced with alternative road in consideration with requirements in 6.5.1.
	6.5.5. No road fill or waste material from site preparation, harvesting operations or other activities shall be placed in stream courses (e.g. rocks and soil, log landing, lop, top, brushes and other harvesting residue). Forest machinery shall not enter watercourses except at designated and designed stream crossings.
	6.5.6. Guidance to field staff shall cover technical specifications for skid trail (location, width and density), log landing, maintaining biodiversity, buffer zones, protection of standing trees, protection of species habitats and road design.
	6.5.7. Measures shall be taken to minimize soil damage and erosion during harvesting operations. Extraction shall be stopped when soils are saturated. (see also 5.3.2)
<b>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</b>	6.5.8. When new harvesting and extraction machinery is selected the need to minimize damage to soils, residual trees, regeneration and other forest resources shall be taken into account. (see also 5.3.2)
	6.6.1. Use of chemical substances for plants protection and pest control shall be minimized in the forest. When chemical substances are used in forests, it shall be based on a well-documented strategy, where the need of use is justified and the use itself is approved and supervised by related authorities.
	6.6.2. The following basic rules shall be applied for chemical use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chemical storage, mixing and application practices shall meet applicable regulation and the best available technology shall be employed to minimize the use of chemicals;</li> <li>- The chemicals are only used if there were no alternative treatments, or if they were too expensive or of low efficiency;</li> <li>- The use or storage of WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides (according to WHO) chlorinated hydrocarbons, pesticides based on mercury, organophosphates or other non-degradable chemicals, which can accumulate in food chains or the</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>be prohibited. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.</i></b></p>	<p>ecosystem is prohibited;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transportation and storage are made in safe and sealed / leak proof spaces / conditions and the application is safely performed;</li> <li>- Chemical treatments are prohibited at a distance of less than 20 m from water streams and 30 m from water tanks/reservoirs and lakes;</li> <li>- Chemical treatments are prohibited during the periods when the soil is frozen, covered with snow, rainy periods or severe draught;</li> <li>- The introduction of chemically treated saplings is prohibited in water streams, swamps, wells or carst areas;</li> <li>- Prior to apply the treatments there shall be taken actions to warn the animal breeders and the bee-masters in the area.</li> </ul> <p>6.6.3. Temporary uses of chemical substances, classified as Highly Hazardous by FSC, shall be held only accordingly to approved by FSC derogation, as defined in FSC-PRO-01-004 and other applicable FSC documents.</p> <p>6.6.4. Employed chemicals are registered. Registrations content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name of the product and expiry date;</li> <li>- Location of the treated surface / area;</li> <li>- Size of the treated area;</li> <li>- Method employed;</li> <li>- Date of beginning and date of ending of the treatment;</li> <li>- The overall used quantity.- Reference to the document of justification/approval (see 6.6.1.)</li> </ul> <p>6.6.5. FME shall demonstrate proof of training and that appropriate equipment is provided according to the Safety data sheet to all individuals, who handle or operate chemicals.</p> <p>6.6.6. Responsible employees shall be aware of and able to implement emergency procedures for cleanup following spillages and other accidents with chemicals.</p>
<p><b><i>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.</i></b></p>	<p>6.7.1 Chemical substances, their containers, liquid and solid waste, generated during forestry operations or by the equipment used or from processing facilities, shall be disposed out of forest in an environmentally sound and legal manner.</p> <p>6.7.2. Efforts shall be taken to control and minimize disposal of all types of waste in the forest including garbage left from visitors.</p> <p>6.7.3. Appropriate oil absorbent kit shall be available in forest machinery.</p>

	6.7.4. Appropriate oil absorbent kit or spill proof tanks shall be used at chainsaw's filling points.
	6.7.5. Oil/fuel leakage of the forest machinery shall be minimized. No permanent oil/ fuel leakage shall exist.
	6.7.6. Biodegradable oil should be used for chainsaws and for hydraulics of the forest machineries.
	6.7.7. FME shall make sure that harvesting companies and other contractors assures the appropriate implementation of the following requirements: 6.7.3. - 6.7.6.
<b>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.</b>	6.8.1. Biological control agents shall only be used in exceptional cases and shall be documented, minimized, monitored and strictly controlled.
	6.8.2. If biological control agents are used in silviculture and forest protection, they shall be made of organisms and components natively present in the country instead of chemical methods.
	6.8.3. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) shall not be used.
<b>6.9. The use of exotic species shall be carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.</b>	6.9.1. Native forests shall not be converted to exotic plantations.
	6.9.2. The spread of exotic species (especially invasive) that have been historically introduced shall be monitored and if necessary, actions shall be taken to control, minimize their density or eliminate the species.  (see also 10.3)
	6.9.3. Exotic species shall not be newly introduced and cultivated in natural forest.
	6.9.4. Native fungi species shall be used for seedling mycorrhisation.
<b>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; 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.</b>	6.10.1 Conversion of forestland to other land uses shall not be done unless resulting from legally established procedures and:  1) does not occur on HCVF and Protected Areas; and 2) occupy very limited area (less than 5% of the FME's forestland); and 3) is supported by cultural, landscape, recreational or environmental interests.
	6.10.2. Evidence exists that plan for conversion is accepted and supported by stakeholders, including local communities and related authorities.
<b>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</b>	



achieving them, shall be clearly stated.	
<p><b>7.1. The management plan and supporting documents shall provide:</b> a) <i>Management objectives;</i> b) <i>Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands;</i> c) <i>Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories;</i> d) <i>Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection;</i> e) <i>Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics;</i> f) <i>Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments;</i> g) <i>Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species;</i> h) <i>Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership;</i> i) <i>Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.</i></p>	7.1.1. FME shall have a valid management plan prepared according to national legislation and including a written description of the management objectives (a, e).
	7.1.2. SLIMF: FME management plan and the related documentation shall prescribe the available forest resources; endangered, threatened, rare forest ecosystems and protected species and the recommended measures for their maintenance; description and justification of the silvicultural systems used; allowed level of extraction.
	7.1.3. Large and Medium FME: FME management plan, or the related documentation shall include:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Management objectives (a).</li> <li>2) A general description of the history, including ownership and use of the forest management area;</li> <li>3) A clear description of the physical aspects of the forest management area (e.g. features of topography, geomorphology, geology, hydrology, soils, tree species, vegetation, etc.);</li> <li>4) A stand level description of the forest resources including area, site/forest type, soil type, species, age class distribution, height, average diameter (DBH) and volume;</li> <li>5) Description and justification of the silvicultural systems used, including clearly stated management recommendations and procedures;</li> <li>6) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics;</li> <li>7) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments;</li> <li>8) General description of monitoring activities implemented to ensure conservation of protected areas and HCVF resources;</li> <li>9) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership (h);</li> <li>10) Action plan for emergency situations;</li> <li>11) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used (i).</li> </ul>
	7.1.4. The management plan shall be consistent and technically detailed, given the size of the forest operation, complexity and intensity of forest operations.
	7.1.5. Maps should be of sufficient quality to effectively guide field activities.
	7.1.6. Management plans or related annual operating or harvesting plans shall

	be available to staff and implemented in the field.
<b>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.</b>	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.
	7.2.2 Large and medium FME: Management plan revisions shall occur based on national legislation requirements and incorporate changing silvicultural, environmental, social and economic conditions.
	7.2.3. SLIMF: Management plan revisions shall follow national procedures.
<b>7.3. Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.</b>	7.3.1 Large and Medium FME: Forest managers and supervisors shall have appropriate qualification, ensuring that they are able to plan and organize forest operations and other elements of the management plan.
	7.3.2. Large and Medium FME: Training plan shall exist and be implemented.
	7.3.3. Large and Medium FME: Relevant staff shall receive training in biodiversity issues.
	7.3.4. For harvesting activities, FME 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 shall be sufficiently educated and trained in the tasks they are assigned to and preferably hold relevant skill certificates.
<b>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.</b>	7.4.1 Large and Medium FME: Forest managers shall produce a summary of management plan that is publicly available to all interested parties, within the accepted norms of commercial confidentiality.
	7.4.2. SLIMF: Upon request forest managers shall provide access at minimum to relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who have interest in the forest management activities (e.g. neighbor landowners, local inhabitants, social and environmental stakeholders).
<b>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.</b>	
<b>8.1. The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations as well as the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and</b>	8.1.1. Large and Medium FME: Forest managers shall have monitoring procedures for consistent, repeatable and frequent monitoring of the aspects mentioned in 8.2, which allows comparison of the results and assessment of changes.
	8.1.2. SLIMF: Forest managers shall at a minimum conduct monitoring in connection with harvesting operations and re-forestation.
	8.1.3. FME maintains the monitoring records accessible, up-to-date and in

<i>assessment of change.</i>	standard forms.
<b>8.2. Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators:</b> <b>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.</b>	<b>8.2.1. Large and Medium FME: Monitoring plan shall identify/describe observed changes in conditions in terms of:</b>  1) growth increment rates, forest regeneration and species composition and age structure of forest resources (b, c);  2) production is recorded for each type of forest product including NTFPs (a).  3) 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) see 6.2.1.  4) socioeconomic aspects (e.g. forest management costs, yields of all products, productivity and efficiency, changes in community and worker relations or conditions).  5) forest areas identified as high conservation values (criterion 9, HCV).
	<b>8.2.2. Large and Medium FME: There are regular meetings with the representatives of the local communities and raised issues shall be recorded and used in FME monitoring.</b>
	<b>8.2.3. SLIMF: Forest Manager shall at minimum have yearly records of harvested products (species and volume) during management plan period.</b>
	<b>8.2.4. SLIMF: Forest Manager shall ensure that inventory data is regularly updated with periodic management plan revision.</b>
	<b>8.3.1. Forest products commercialized from certified forests shall be readily identifiable. Harvesting and transportation documents of the wood originated from certified forests shall specify the following data:</b>  - the source of the timber;  - the date of sale;  - the quantity of certified product sold out;  - species;  - size / quality;  - the location wherefrom the buyer shall take over the control on the chain of custody over the certified timber.
<b>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."</b>	<b>8.3.2. Invoices, waybill and other applicable documentation related to transport of forest products shall be kept in a head office and/or shall be easily available for inspection.</b>
	<b>8.3.3 In case FME is also handling non-certified timber or products, FME shall clearly distinguish certified products from non-certified products through marks</b>

	or labels, separate documented storage, and accompanying invoices or waybills.
	8.3.4 Written procedure shall be in place to ensure that certified status of sold products is clearly indicated on invoices and transport documents.
	8.3.5 Illegally logged wood reclaimed by the FME shall not be sold as certified.
	8.3.6. FME maintains and control a chain of custody of the forest products according to Annex 1 NEPCoN CoC Standard for FME 19Dec14.
<b>8.4. The results of monitoring shall be incorporated into the implementation and revision of the management plan.</b>	8.4.1 Large and Medium FME: Monitoring data as required in 8.2.1 shall be considered for management plan revision.
	8.4.2. SLIMF: FME shall ensure that the management plan is reviewed periodically according to national legislation.
<b>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.</b>	8.5.1. Large and Medium FME: Forest managers shall produce a summary of the monitoring results that is publicly available to all interested parties, within the accepted norms of commercial confidentiality. (See point 7.4.1).
	8.5.2. SLIMF: Upon request forest managers shall provide access to monitoring results that are relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who have interest in the forest management activities (e.g. neighbor landowners and local inhabitants, social and environmental stakeholders).  (See point 7.4.2).
<b>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. Note: for Romania the guide for identifying HCVF is available on the <a href="http://www.certificareforestiera.ro">www.certificareforestiera.ro</a>. The toolkit was developed by wide working group within a project of WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme Romania in close cooperation with different stakeholders./</b>	
<b>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.</b>	9.1.1. Large and Medium FME: Special investigation is accomplished in compliance with the best available information “in order to determine High Conservation Valued areas in the FME (Guide for identification, management and monitoring of HCVF in Romania”).
	9.1.2. SLIMF: Forest managers are aware about the presence of High Conservation Values in their area, as they are described in the “Guide for identification, management and monitoring of HCVF in Romania”.
	9.1.3. HCVFs identified in the FME’s territory are delineated on maps.
<b>9.2. The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance</b>	9.2.1. Large and Medium FME: Local stakeholders including environmental NGOs shall be consulted to identify HCVF.
	9.2.2. Large and Medium FME: Forest managers shall document the stakeholder consultation process in written.

<i>thereof.</i>	9.2.3 Stakeholder consultations shall aim to adjustment of forest activities to protect HCVF values.
<b>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.</b>	9.3.1. Specific management measures in accordance with the best available information ("Guide for identification, management and monitoring of HCVF in Romania", management plans of Natura 2000, etc) are developed for maintenance, protection and enhancement of the identified HCVs. Following a precautionary approach, the specified management measures shall avoid any actions, which can cause loss of their conservation value.
	9.3.2. Characteristics of the identified HCVs and specific measures for their maintenance are available in written to the relevant staff for field implementation.
	9.3.3. Large and Medium FME: The management measures to maintain and enhance HCVF values and officially protected areas shall be available in public summary of the management plan.
	9.3.4. SLIMF: Forest managers shall provide upon request access to the information on protection measures of HCV forest areas in the FME.
<b>9.4. Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.</b>	9.4.1. HCVF shall be monitored on a regular basis (at least annually) to avoid activities that might endanger their conservation values.
	9.4.2. Forest features, crucial for recognizing them as high conservation value shall be monitored and analyzed, according to recommendations of the "Guide for identification, management and monitoring of HCVF in Romania". Monitoring enables observation of negative trends in relation to high conservation values.
	9.4.3. The monitoring results are documented in standard forms and they are used for updating of the measures for maintenance of the related HCVs.
<b>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.</b>	
<b>10.1. The management objectives of the plantation, including natural forest conservation and restoration objectives, shall be explicitly stated in the management plan, and clearly demonstrated in the implementation of the plan.</b>	10.1.1 The aim of setting plantation and forestation of all non-forested area shall be clearly defined in the management plan, considering the relations between tree planting and the silvicultural, socio-economic and environmental (i.e. forest conservation and restoration) situation in the area.
<b>10.2. The design and layout of the plantations should promote the protection, restoration and conservation of natural forests, and not increase pressures on natural</b>	10.2.1. When designing and establishing plantations, FME shall ensure that:  1) the plantation does not have negative impact on neither environment nor natural forest;  2) the forestation of post agricultural areas does not have negative impact on



<p><i>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.</i></p>	neither environment nor biodiversity.
	10.2.2. Areas with natural vegetation shall be protected and taken into consideration when plantations are designed and established.
	10.2.3. Streamside and wetlands buffer zone with natural vegetation shall be assigned and/or protected.
	10.2.4. Need to ensure ecological wildlife corridors, ponds and bogs with their watersides shall be respected during the forestation and plantation development.
	10.2.5. Plantations and forestation activities shall not interfere with natural or semi natural landscape.
<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>10.3.1. FME shall introduce a wide range of composition and structure diversity in new plantation or forestation according to the site specifics (e.g. variety of tree species and provenances used, age and structural diversity, size and spatial distribution).</p> <p>(see also 10.4)</p>
	10.3.2. FME shall consider that the stand composition of the new plantation or forestation provides economic, ecological and social stability.
	10.3.3. The size of monoculture plantations shall correspond to the size of naturally occurring forest stands in the landscape.
<p><i>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.</i></p>	10.4.1. The selection of the species and their origin shall be justified and documented, taking into account that species shall be suitable for site specifics and for the plantation or forestation management objectives.
	10.4.2. FME shall promote the indigenous tree species over exotic species in plantation, or in forestation of post agriculture land or in ecosystem restoration activities.
	10.4.3. Invasive exotic species and species that cross breed with local species shall not be used in stand composition.
	10.4.4. Exotic species may only be used if they constantly exist in local environmental conditions from long periods (species historically introduced and growing well for century or longer).
	10.4.5. Exotic species may only be used in new plantation or forestation if they outperform native species in meeting the management objective.
	<p>10.4.6 In areas suffering of industrial pollution (intermediate degree or higher), FME may promote exotic species, which proved that are more resistant than the local ones (taking into consideration 10.4.3 and 10.4.4).</p> <p>(see also 6.9)</p>



<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>10.5.1. Large and Medium FME: Consistent with 6.2.3, at least 10% of the plantations area shall be managed with goal of biodiversity conservation.</p>
	<p>10.5.2. Large and Medium FME: Consistent with 6.4.1, at least 5% of the plantations areas shall be managed with the goal to restore in time the natural fundamental forest type.</p>
	<p>10.5.3. SLIMF: At least 5% of the plantations areas shall be based on cultivation of for the region native tree species and shall be managed according to the same silvicultural system used for the management of the natural fundamental forest type.</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>10.6.1. Plantations and newly established forestation shall not degrade soil.</p>
	<p>10.6.2. Plantations and newly established forestation shall not degrade water resources.</p>
	<p>10.6.3. Buffer zones shall be assigned around permanent water-bodies/courses in plantations and newly established forestation areas.</p> <p>(see also 6.5, 10.2)</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>10.7.1. FME shall have in place strategy for chemical use and for pest and invasive species control, consistent with criteria 6.6, 6.9 and strengthen to minimize use of pesticides and fertilizers in plantations and nurseries.</p>
	<p>10.7.2. An appropriate fire prevention and control system shall be in place.</p> <p>(see also 7.1.3)</p>
	<p>10.7.3. Staff shall be trained to identify and react on health problems, to perform fire control activities, as well as perform other tasks and activities in plantation management.</p> <p>(see also 6.6, 6.7, 7.3)</p>
<p><b>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,</b></p>	<p>10.8.1. Plantations shall be set neither in areas with rare or unique elements of biodiversity, nor in fragile ecosystems or in areas where they could harmfully affect the water sources.</p>
	<p>10.8.2. For recently set plantations with a compact surface larger than 500 ha the social and environmental impact shall be assessed.</p> <p>(see also 4.4, 6.1)</p>

<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>10.8.3. Amount and types of yield, scale of increment and production, health conditions and soil conditions of the plantations shall be observed regularly.</p> <p>(see also 8.1, 8.2)</p>
<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>10.9.1. The plantation shall not occupy land converted from natural forest since November 1994, unless clear evidence exist that the current forest manager/owner was not responsible.</p> <p>(see also 6.9.1, 6.10)</p>

## Annex 1: FSC Glossary of terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Forest Management Enterprise (FME):** organization responsible for forest management.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Work Code Law 53/2003
- Law 319/2006 for H&S
- Law 265/2006 - for the approval of Government Emergency Ordinance no. 195/2005 on environment protection;
- Law 46/2008 - Forestry Cod;
- Law 407/2006 - on hunting and hunting fund protection with modifications and Order 1540/2011, instructions, modalities and periods for timber collection, extraction and transport
- Government Decision 470/2014 timber sourcing, transport and trading
- additions brought by law no. 197 of July 2, 2007;
- Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/ 2007 on the regime of the protected areas and the conservation of nature habitats, of wild flora and fauna;
- Government Decision no. 996/ 2008 - for the approval of the Norms regarding the sourcing, circulation and trading of wood material, the regime of wood material storage areas and of the equipment for round timber processing;
- Technical norms in forestry, forest regulations and instructions:
- Technical norms for forest regeneration;
- Technical norms for tending of stands;
- Technical norms for treatment method selection and application;
- Technical norms for the evaluation of the wood volume;
- Technical norms for forest management planning;
- Technical norms for forest protection;
- Technical norms for carrying out the annual control of regenerations;
- Technical norms for fire prevention and fighting within the forestry fund;
- Norms on the determination of terms, ways and periods of logging in the forests and in the forestry vegetation outside the national forest fund;
- Specific safety norms for forestry and game economy;
- Regulations on the forest guarding.



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

- Habitats Directive, Bern 1979 (Legea 13/1993)
- Law 462/2001 includes also provisions of Habitats and Birds Directives
- Paris Convention (Law 187/1990)
- RAMSAR (Law 5/1991)
- Bonn Convention (Law 13/1998)
- European Landscape Convention (Law 451/2002)
- Kyoto protocol (Law 3/2001)
- Helsinki Resolutions - H1-H4
- Strasbourg Resolutions - S1-S6
- Convention on climatic changes (Law 451/2001)

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

- 29\* Forced Labour Convention, 1930
- 87\* Freedom of association and protection of the right to organize conventions, 1948.
- 97 Migration for employment (revised) convention, 1949.
- 98\* Right to organize and collective bargaining convention, 1949.
- 100\* Equal remuneration convention, 1951.
- 105\* Abolition of forced labour convention, 1957.
- 111\* Discrimination (occupation and employment) convention, 1958.
- 131 Minimum Wage fixing convention, 1970.
- 138\* Minimum age convention, 1973.
- 141 Rural workers organizations convention, 1975.
- 142 Human Resources Development Convention, 1975
- 143 Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975
- 155 Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981
- 169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989
- 182\* Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999
- ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Forestry Work.
- Recommendation 135 Minimum Wage Fixing Recommendation, 1970

Forest managers are legally obliged to comply with all ILO Conventions which have been ratified in the country of operation. The following ILO Conventions have been ratified in Romania:

- C1 Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919
- C2 Unemployment Convention, 1919
- C3 Maternity Protection Convention, 1919
- C6 Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1919
- C8 Unemployment Indemnity (Shipwreck) Convention, 1920
- C9 Placing of Seamen Convention, 1920
- C11 Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921
- C13 White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921
- C14 Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921
- C16 Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921

- C22 Seamen's Articles of Agreement Convention, 1926
- C24 Sickness Insurance (Industry) Convention, 1927
- C27 Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels) Convention, 1929
- C29 Forced Labour Convention, 1930
- C68 Food and Catering (Ships' Crews) Convention, 1946
- C81 Labour Inspection Convention, 1947
- C87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948
- C88 Employment Service Convention, 1948
- C89 Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948
- C92 Accommodation of Crews Convention (Revised), 1949
- C95 Protection of Wages Convention, 1949
- C98 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949
- C100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951
- C105 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957
- C108 Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958
- C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958
- C116 Final Articles Revision Convention, 1961
- C117 Social Policy (Basic Aims and Standards) Convention, 1962
- C122 Employment Policy Convention, 1964
- C127 Maximum Weight Convention, 1967
- C129 Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969
- C131 Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970
- C133 Accommodation of Crews (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1970
- C134 Prevention of Accidents (Seafarers) Convention, 1970
- C135 Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971
- C136 Benzene Convention, 1971
- C137 Dock Work Convention, 1973
- C138 Minimum Age Convention, 1973
- C144 Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976
- C147 Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (and its Protocol)
- C154 Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981
- C163 Seafarers' Welfare Convention, 1987

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

### **CITES:**

There is not any CITES listed tree species native in Romania

### **Endangered species in Romania:**

The list of endangered species is approved through: Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2007 on the regime of the protected areas and the conservation of nature habitats, of wild flora and fauna.

The IUCN website can also be checked for up-to-date information on the conservation status for species in Romania <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>.

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

The certification assessment process begins with a candidate operation submitting an application to NEPCon. Based on a review of the application, the scope of the area to be certified and discussions with the candidate, NEPCon will propose a certification process that includes either a) a pre-assessment followed by a main assessment, or b) a main assessment only. Every candidate operation is assigned a NEPCon task manager who will liaise with the assessment lead auditor and the candidate to schedule and perform the evaluations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Team members meet independently with stakeholders. All assessments solicit and incorporate input (confidential and/or open) from directly affected and/or knowledgeable stakeholders, including local communities, adjoining

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

landowners, local forest industry, environmental organisations, government agencies, and scientific researchers. During these consultations, assessment team members explain the assessment process, solicit opinions, and gather impressions about the field performance of the operation being assessed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## About NEPCon

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

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

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

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

NEPCon also provides services within PEFC, Sustainable Biomass Partnership (SBP) Management (CFM) certification. NEPCon | Filosoofi 31 | 50108 Tartu | Estonia  
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