

Forest Stewardship Standard

# THE FSC FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARD FOR BULGARIA

FSC-STD-BGR-02-2025 All Forest Types

3/09/2024



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<sup>1</sup> The transition period is the timeline in which there is a parallel phase-in of the new version and phase-out of the old version of the standard. Six (6) months after the end of the transition period, certificates issued against the old version are considered invalid.

## Version control

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This standard is subject to the review and revision requirements as described in FSC-STD-60-006 (V1-2) EN.

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**Photo credits:**

**Old-growth forest in Central Balkan Mountain (© Yana Barzova, WWF Bulgaria)**

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**NOTE ON THIS ENGLISH VERSION:**

This is the official version of the FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard that is approved by FSC International, and it is available at [connect.fsc.org](https://connect.fsc.org). Any translation of this version is not an official translation approved by FSC International. If there is any conflict or inconsistency between the approved English version and any translated version, the English version shall prevail.

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# A Foreword

(Informative section)

## A.1 The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

The Forest Stewardship Council A.C. (FSC) was established in 1993, as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro, 1992) with the mission to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC provides a system for voluntary accreditation and independent third-party certification. This system allows certificate holders to market their products and services as the result of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management. FSC also sets standards for the development and approval of National Forest Stewardship Standards and Interim National Standards which are based on the FSC Principles and Criteria. In addition, FSC sets standards for the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies (also known as certification bodies) that certify conformance with FSC's standards.

Environmentally appropriate forest management ensures that the production of timber, *non-timber products\** and *ecosystem services\** maintains the forest's biodiversity, productivity, and ecological processes.

Socially beneficial forest management helps both local people and society at large to enjoy long term benefits and also provides strong incentives to local people to sustain the forest resources and adhere to *long-term management plans\**.

Economically viable forest management means that forest operations are structured and managed so as to be sufficiently profitable, without generating financial profit at the expense of the forest resource, the *ecosystem\**, or affected communities. The tension between the need to generate adequate financial returns and the principles of responsible forest operations can be reduced through efforts to market the full range of forest products and services for their best value.

## A.2 The FSC Principles and Criteria

FSC first published the FSC Principles and Criteria in November 1994 as a performance-based, outcome-orientated, worldwide standard. The Principles and Criteria focus on field performance of forest management rather than on the management systems for delivering that field performance.

There is no hierarchy between the Principles or between Criteria. They share equal status, validity and authority, and apply jointly and severally at the level of the individual Management Unit.

The FSC Principles and Criteria together with the International Generic Indicators (IGI) provide the basis for the development of Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS/RFSS) and Interim Standards (INS/IRS).

## B Preamble

### B.1 Objective

(Informative section)

The objective of this standard is to provide a set of requirements for:

1. The Organization to implement responsible forest management within their Management Unit and to demonstrate conformity.
2. FSC accredited certification bodies (CBs) to determine conformity against this standard as the basis for granting or maintaining forest management certification.

### B.2 Scope

(Normative section)

This standard shall be applied in the following scope:

<b>Geographic region</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>
<b>Forest types</b>	<b>All forest types</b>
<b>Ownership types</b>	<b>All types of ownerships, including public, private and others</b>
<b>Scale and intensity categories</b> (According to section 6 of FSC-STD-60-002)	<b>All categories of management units, including provisions for small or low intensity managed forests (SLIMFs)</b> <i>(See section B.4 for the applicable SLIMF eligibility criteria for this geographic region)</i>
<b>Forest products</b> (According to FSC-STD-40-004a)	<b>Rough wood</b> <b>NTFPs not included</b>

For HCV-related requirements, the document titled *The High Conservation Value Forests Toolkit for Bulgaria* (FSC-STD-BGR-02-2025a) shall be referred as a normative addendum document that supplements this FSS, and shall therefore be implemented together with this standard.

### B.3 Responsibility for Conformity

(Normative section)

The requirements in this standard cover all of The Organization's management activities that are related to the Management Unit, whether within the Management Unit or outside; whether directly undertaken or contracted out.

In terms of geographical space, the requirements in this standard apply generally to the entire geographic space inside the boundary of the Management Unit which is being submitted for (re)certification. However, some of the Criteria and indicators apply beyond the boundary of the Management Unit. This would include those infrastructural facilities that are part of the Management Unit, as defined by the FSC Principles and Criteria.

This standard is to be used in conjunction with international, national and local laws and regulations.



Where there might be situations of conflict between the requirements in this standard and laws, specific FSC procedures will apply.

Responsibility for ensuring conformity with the requirements in this standard lies with the person(s) or entities that is/are the certificate applicant or holder. For the purpose of FSC certification, this person(s) or entities are referred to as 'The Organization'.

The Organization is responsible for decisions, policies and management activities related to the Management Unit.

The Organization is also responsible for demonstrating that other persons or entities that are permitted or contracted by The Organization to operate in, or for the benefit of the Management Unit, conform with the requirements in this standard.

The Organization is required to take corrective actions in the event of such persons or entities not being in conformity with the requirements in this standard.

## **B.4 Note on the use of indicators, annexes, addendums and verifiers**

(Normative section)

Normative elements in the standard are:

Scope, effective date, validity period, glossary of terms, principles, criteria, indicators, tables, annexes and addendums.

Not normative elements in the standard that can be used for guidance only, are:

Verifiers, notes, and examples which are attached to some of the indicators (as well as other guidance which might be produced in association with this standard).

The Organizations managing Management Units qualifying as SLIMF (small or low-intensity managed forest(s)) shall conform with all indicators in the standard, except those indicated as "NON-SLIMF". The latter are obligatory for only those Organizations that manage NON-SLIMF Management Units. Where specific SLIMF indicators exist (marked as e.g., "1.4.1 (SLIMF)", The Organizations managing SLIMF Management Units shall conform with them instead. All other indicators are mandatory for all Organizations, regardless of the size of the Management Unit or intensity of management.

For two indicators (4.7.1 and 4.7.2), requirements are applicable for NON-SLIMF and for SLIMF but managed only by the public entities. Those indicators have been marked as "NON-SLIMF and public SLIMF".

## SLIMF eligibility criteria

## Thresholds

For Bulgaria, SLIMF MUs are those that comply with at least one of the following requirements:

- MUs with an area maximum 1000 ha;
- The rate of harvesting is less than 20% of the mean annual increment (MAI) within the total production forest area of the unit and the annual harvest from the total production forest area is less than 5000 cubic meters;
- The rate of harvesting is less than 20% of the mean annual increment (MAI) within the total production forest area of the unit and the average annual harvest from the total production forest is less than 5000 m<sup>3</sup> / year during the period of validity of the certificate.

## Verbal forms for the expression of provisions

[Adapted from *ISO/IEC Directives Part 2: Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*]

“shall”:	indicates requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform with the standard; ‘shall not’ indicates a prohibition.
“should”:	indicates that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required. The Organization can meet these requirements in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated and justified.
“may”:	indicates a course of action permissible within the limits of the standard; ‘need not’ indicates that a specified course of action is not a requirement.
“can”:	is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

The text of the Principles and the Criteria under section F contain terms that are formatted in italics and marked with an *asterisk*<sup>\*</sup>. These terms are defined in the annex of Glossary of terms. The terms that have been marked with an *asterisk*<sup>\*</sup> and formatted in italics in the indicators’ text, are local terms which have been added to apply to the local circumstances for this standard only. These local terms are defined in the annex of Glossary of terms.

## B.5 Interpretations and disputes

(Normative section)

Interpretation requests regarding the FSC Forest Stewardship Standards are submitted directly to FSC for processing and approval. Approved interpretations are published in the international FSC website (see: INT-STD-60-006\_01).

Disputes between stakeholders concerning certification requirements are managed by FSC dispute resolution procedure (see: FSC-PRO-01-008).

# C Context

(Informative section)

## C.1 General description of the forestry sector

### **Role of forest sector in the national economy:**

The contribution of the forest sector to the GDP of the country is estimated to be 0.4% (National Statistical Institute, 2020). However, this value does not contain the value of services provided by forest areas related to their environmental and social functions, therefore the contribution of the forest sector to GDP is incomplete and underestimated.

The contribution of the forestry sector to natural resource protection is significant, since the country's forests grow mostly on steep land on the upper slopes of watersheds and play a key role in preventing erosion and protecting the sources of the 3.4 billion m<sup>3</sup> of water that is stored for irrigation, the municipal water supply and hydroelectric power. Bulgarian forests also have an important recreational function. Forests provide space for more than 60% of the endangered animal species in Bulgaria.

### **General description of forest resources (vegetation zones, forest cover (including natural forests and plantations), topographic aspects):**

Land area in Bulgaria is approximately 110,000 sq.km., forests and woodlands cover one third of the country's territory. Mountains cover much of the Republic of Bulgaria, interspersed with fertile valleys and plains. The Balkan Mountains cross the country from the north-west to the Black Sea and form the watershed between the Danube river and the Aegean Sea. The northern side of the Balkan Mountains slopes gradually to the Danube River. Plains to the north and south of the Balkan Mountains are important agricultural regions. The total forest area in Bulgaria, reported as of 31.12.2021 is 4,270,269 ha, and the tendency is to increase. The forested area amounts to 3,921,390 ha, and the unforested area - 348,879 ha.

The largest share of the forest territory in Bulgaria is occupied by semi-natural forests - 74.4%, while the share of the plantations is 16.9% and the natural forests - 8.7%. According to their functions, 61.7 % of the total area of the forest territories is used for timber production while 38.3%, have mainly protective and special functions (watershed, erosion control, etc.). (Reference: Forest Sector Analysis 2013-2021)

### **Utilization of forest resources (annual increment, annual harvest levels, export/import figures, commercial tree species, silvicultural practices, forest roads...):**

The total wood stock of forests in 2020 was 718.4 million m<sup>3</sup> of which 62.2% were concentrated in forests with special functions, 8.5% included in protective forests and 29.4% - in commercial forests. The average stock is 184 m<sup>3</sup> / ha. The average increment is 3.48 m<sup>3</sup> / ha. The average age of forests is 60 years. (Reference: Forest Sector Analysis 2013-2021)

Generally, in Bulgaria is applied "continuous forest cover" silvicultural system. According to the national forest legislation, felling is carried out for the restoration, cultivation, improvement of the condition of forests and for achieving the goals set in the forest management plans. The following general principles are observed during their implementation: maintenance of mixed wood composition of the forests, preserving single specimens of valuable tree species; protection of animal's habitats; tolerance of forest-fruit tree species; preservation of trees from the periphery of the forest regardless of the quality of their stem and crown, if they are in good health; protection of the form diversity of forest stands, tolerating rare forms and

those characterized by high productivity and valuable technical qualities of wood; conservation of biotope wood, including standing and lying dead wood, hollow trees and trees with nests.

Logging, especially regenerative felling, is largely aimed at mimicking natural processes and disturbances that are small-scale and create conditions for a diverse, structurally diverse and sustainable forest. Forestry interventions are uneven over the entire area, which is more nature friendly and preserves the ecological functions of the forest. Regeneration felling is with preliminary natural regeneration. Exceptions are related to the biology of tree species and are allowed only for poplar, willow, linden and low-stemmed forests (Black locust, Oriental hornbeam, South European flowering ash and Thorny locust forests for coppice regeneration).

Thinning is carried out during the period from the emergence of the stand to its maturity, and regeneration felling is carried out in mature stands in order to naturally regenerate them with young forest.

In cases of biotic and abiotic damage, if necessary, sanitary and salvage logging is carried out. (Regulation on Forest Fellings)

The distribution of forested area by main tree species is as follows: Scots pine - 13.7%, Austrian pine - 6.9%, Norway spruce - 4.2%, Silver fir - 0.9%, other conifers - 0.8%, oaks - 36.8%, Common and Oriental beech - 16.5%, Oriental hornbeam - 5.3%, European hornbeam - 4.2%, other deciduous - 15.9%. (Executive Forest Agency, 2020)

The main species in deciduous forests or in mixed coniferous-deciduous forests are common beech, Turkish oak, Sessile oak, European and Oriental hornbeam. Of economic importance are also species of the genus *Acer*, genus *Ulmus*, genus *Tilia*, genus *Betula*, genus *Populus*, genus *Alnus*, genus *Corylus* and others. A number of alien deciduous trees are grown in the country, but the most important are the Euro-American hybrid poplars, the Red oak and the Black locust. (Reference: Forest Sector Analysis 2013-2021)

Average annual import of wood in Bulgaria is 52,892,426 kg (60,448 m<sup>3</sup>). Average annual export of wood is 806,592,758 kg (921,820 m<sup>3</sup>). (National Statistical Institute, 2013-2017)

#### **Ownership of forests (by state, companies, smallholders, communities):**

The distribution of forest territories by type of ownership is as follows: 77.1% - state property, 11.1% - municipal property, 9.7% - property of individuals and 1.5% - property of legal entities. (Reference: Forest Sector Analysis 2013-2021)

#### **Overview of forest-related legislation and ratification of international conventions:**

The main national laws which concern Bulgarian forestry are:

- Forests Act (2011, last amended 2016) - forest ownership, management and organisation, forest regeneration, harvesting, forest protection, construction in forests, forestry sector financing and penalties.
- Restitution of Forests Act (1997, amended 1999) - defines procedures for the restitution process and responsible parties for implementation.
- Protected Areas Act (1998, last amended 2015) - arranges the categories of protected areas in Bulgaria, their purpose, regimes of protection and use, and their management. The different ownership, regimes and uses in these areas, the different responsible and management bodies, have resulted in the establishment of six protected areas' categories according to the Bulgarian legislation.
- Environment Protection Act (2002, last amended 2015)
- Hunting and Game Protection Act (2000, last amended 2016)
- Biological Diversity Act (2002, last amended 2015)
- Medicinal Plants Act (2000, last amended 2014).

Forestry related secondary legislation includes: Regulation on Forest Fellings, Regulation on the Control of the Forest Territories, Regulation on forest Inventory and Planning, etc.

Also relevant is the legislation implementing the EU Habitats and Birds Directives, legislation implementing the ILO Core Labour Conventions, and health and safety related legislation.

Relevant to the forestry International Conventions and Agreements in force in Bulgaria:

- Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) - ratified on 25.01.1999, in force for Bulgaria since 01.05.1991 (State Gazette No 23/1995);
- Convention on Biological Diversity - ratified on 29.02.1996, in force for the Republic of Bulgaria since 16.07.1996 (State Gazette No 19/1999);
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (The RAMSAR Convention) - ratified, in force for the Republic of Bulgaria since 24.01.1976 (State Gazette No 56/1992);
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (The Washington Convention, CITES) - ratified in 1990, in force for the Republic of Bulgaria since 16.04.1991 (State Gazette No 6/1992);
- Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage - signed, ratified and in force for the Republic of Bulgaria since 1976;
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (The Bonn Convention) - ratified on 03.08.1999, in force for the Republic of Bulgaria since 01.11.1999 (State Gazette No 16/2000);
- Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area - ratified and promulgated in the State Gazette No 87/1999;
- Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Water birds - ratified by law - State Gazette No 87/1999; promulgated in the State Gazette No 16/2000, in force since 01.02.2000;
- Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe - ratified by law - State Gazette No 69/1999; Promulgated in the State Gazette No 16/2000, in force since 09.12.2000.

### **Forest legislation enforcement mechanisms:**

According to the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators<sup>2</sup>, in 2016 BG ranked in the 74<sup>th</sup> percentile for regulatory quality, the 54<sup>th</sup> percentile for rule of law, and the 51<sup>st</sup> percentile for control of corruption. Forestry-specific legislation relates primarily to forest management, felling licensing – felling permits and transport tickets, forest reproductive material, and plant health, control of the activities in forest areas and many other forestry practices. For the period 2005-2017, three analyses of the level of illegal logging in Bulgaria were prepared by WWF Bulgaria. It is estimated that the level of illegal logging is between 25-30%<sup>3</sup>.

### **Forest management planning (how is it regulated, who does it):**

All forest territories, as well as the territories having the characteristics of a forest (in the sense of the Forest Act), regardless their ownership, are subject to forest inventory. This inventory is the basis for forest management planning. Each forest management plan is valid for a 10-years period.

The main purpose of the inventory of forest areas is to determine the type, condition and potential of forest areas and resources. The inventory of the forest territories is carried out in accordance with the adopted administrative-territorial division of the country and the forest territorial units.

The main tasks of the inventory of forest areas are:

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<sup>2</sup> <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>

<sup>3</sup> [http://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/downloads/report\\_illegal\\_logging\\_wwf\\_2014\\_resume\\_en.pdf](http://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/downloads/report_illegal_logging_wwf_2014_resume_en.pdf)

- creation of an up-to-date database for forest territories and resources;
- making a forestry map;
- organization of the forest territory.

The inventory of forest areas is carried out by the state. The Regional Forest Directorate, on whose territory the forest territorial unit subject to inventory is located, assigns the elaboration of the assignment. The Director of the Regional Forest Directorate presents the terms of reference prepared for approval by the Executive Director of the Executive Forestry Agency. Before approval of the assignment by the Executive Director of the Executive Forest Agency, the same shall be adopted by an expert council. The inventory assignment shall indicate methodologies, instructions and requirements according to which other activities related to the inventory shall be performed. The forest inventory is being done by specialised companies (contractors).

The control over the inventory is carried out by the Executive Forest Agency, its structures and specialized territorial units according to a methodology approved by an order of the Executive Director of the Executive Forest Agency, and a protocol is drawn up for the results.

### **Concession / licensing mechanisms:**

Not applicable.

### **Forest sector training:**

There are no regular trainings in the form of a targeted training programme or a programme for professional qualification growth. Nevertheless, there are occasional trainings organised by the state forest authorities, as well as by NGOs such as WWF, Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, Association of Parks in Bulgaria, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, Green Balkans, etc. In the most cases these trainings are possible thanks to the implementation of particular forest related projects.

At present (2021) WWF Bulgaria and FSC are implementing a capacity building project for foresters in South Central and South Western Part of Bulgaria.

### **Corruption risk in the country:**

The corruption risk in Bulgaria is measured through the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of Transparency International. CPI is the most widely-used global corruption ranking in the world. It measures how corrupt each country's public sector is perceived to be, according to experts and businesspeople. Bulgaria scored 42 points out of 100 on the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International. The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories around the world by their perceived levels of public sector corruption. The results are given on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). (<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>)

### **Gender equity, risk of harassment, risk of racism:**

**Gender equity:** Bulgaria ranks 38th this year out of a total of 156 countries included in the Global Gender Gap Index, with a score of 0.746 with a minimum score of 0 and a maximum of 1 point. Bulgaria ranks 41st in the world in economic participation and opportunities for women, but 82nd in education. In terms of health and survival, Bulgaria ranks 34<sup>th</sup>, and in terms of political empowerment, it ranks 52nd. ([https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf))

**Risk of harassment:** According to the Institute for Social and Trade Union Research, research shows that when Bulgaria is compared to other European countries (for example, studies by EU-OSHA and EWCS), it appears to have a low level of harassment. ([https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/bulgaria\\_etuc\\_safe\\_at\\_home\\_safe\\_at\\_work\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/bulgaria_etuc_safe_at_home_safe_at_work_final_0.pdf))

**Risk of racism:** In Bulgaria, the legal and institutional framework against racism and discrimination has been strengthened and initiatives have been taken to improve the situation of Roma and of refugees. ([https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance-publishes-report-bulgaria\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance-publishes-report-bulgaria_en))

### **Living wages:**

In 2021, the minimum wage in Bulgaria is BGN 650 (EUR 332). The average gross monthly salary in Sofia is around BGN 1500 (EUR 750), resulting in a net salary (after tax and social levies) of about BGN 1,200 (EUR 600). In the rest of the country, the average gross salary is around BGN 1,000 (EUR 500), but with important regional diversity. The average salary in Bulgaria has thus increased by about 25% over the last 5 years. (<https://www.lpg-bulgarie.bg/en/publications/social/salaries-bulgaria>)

### **Presence of Indigenous People and forest dependent communities:**

There is no indigenous people in Bulgaria. Forestry is a traditional activity and has a particular importance for the development of rural areas in Bulgaria and the improvement of the quality of life. The social importance of forest areas is also growing, by providing a natural environment for recreation and tourism and for the development of activities creating employment in rural areas.

### **Presence of HCVs and availability of HCV inventories:**

HCVs are identified for FSC certified territory in the country, which is 2,374,088 ha or about 60% of all forests. HCVs identification and assessment is made based on the Practical Guide for identifying, managing and monitoring of HCVF in Bulgaria. ([https://wwfeu.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/hcvf\\_toolkit\\_2017\\_eng.pdf](https://wwfeu.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/hcvf_toolkit_2017_eng.pdf))

There are publicly available HCVF reports for each FSC certified MU. For some of the MUs, supported in their efforts to get FSC certified by WWF Bulgaria, an interactive map showing different categories of HCVs is made available via GIS forest platform developed and maintained by WWF: <https://gis.wwf.bg/mobilz/#/>.

### **Status of forest protection and red listed species:**

At the end of 2020, the total number of protected areas in Bulgaria is 1023 with a total area of 583,582.2 ha or approximately 5.3% of the country's territory, divided into the following categories:

- Reserves (category I according to IUCN) are 55 with an area of 77204.2 ha;
- National parks (category II according to IUCN) are 3 with an area of 150798.7 ha;
- Natural landmarks (IUCN category III) are 346 with an area of 18013.2 ha;
- Maintained reserves (category IV according to IUCN) are 35 with an area of 4540.2 ha;
- Natural parks (category V according to IUCN) are 11 with an area of 256441.4 ha;
- Protected areas (category VI according to IUCN) have a total number of 573 with an area of 76,584.4 ha.

17 of the country's reserves have been declared biosphere reserves under the UNESCO program "Man and the Biosphere", and two of the natural sites - Pirin National Park and Srebarna Reserve, are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. (NSI, Protected territories and sites by category, 2015)

Currently, the ecological network of protected areas (Natura 2000) in the country includes a total of 340 protected sites and covers about 34.9% of the national territory. Nearly 57% of Bulgaria's forests fall within sites of Natura 2000. (Eurostat, Protected areas for biodiversity: habitats directive, 2015).

To meet the requirements for identification of the old growth forests, according to the requirements of Directive 92/43/EEC, in 2016 state forest authorities and conservation NGOs in Bulgaria proposed to the Minister of Agriculture and Food a list of OGFs to be designated as forests in the old age phase and set aside for protection. With an Order of the Minister of Agriculture and Food, OGFs determined in state forest

areas fall into Natura 2000 protected sites. The total area of OGFs set aside for protection with this Order is 111,000 ha.

This successful joint initiative of Bulgarian government, non-governmental and science & research sector takes into account the important role of forests in the old age phase in providing islands of tranquillity and conditions for species survival, conserving valuable gene pool, conserving biodiversity and improving the water balance of ecosystems. The introduction of modern approaches and policies for forest management and administration sets a good example by the organisations managing state forests to other forest owners.

Bulgaria is rich in biological diversity due to its highly varied climatic, geological, topographic and hydrological conditions. These characteristics predetermine the occurrence of biota, consisting of 94 species of mammals, 383 birds, 36 reptiles, 16 amphibians, 207 Black Sea and freshwater fish, around 27,000 insects and other invertebrates, between 3,500 and 3,750 higher plant species and more than 6,500 lower plants and fungi.

Number of threatened forest species, classified according to the categories of the IUCN Red Data Book (by 2015).

Category	<i>Threatened forest species*</i>			
	vulnerable	endangered	Critically endangered	extinct
	Number of threatened species by category			
Plants	0	0	0	0
Birds	7	3	2	0
mammals	5	2	1	0
Other vertebrates	8	4	5	0
Invertebrates	6	0	0	0

Source: SoEF 2020 (<https://foresteurope.org/state-of-europes-forests/>)

### **Pest and disease threats:**

The general state of forest health is assessed as good. The ecological monitoring of forest ecosystems (level I) in 2020 showed that in 44% of the observed test trees no damage was found.

The analysis of the data on damages by the main tree species shows that the ones with the highest percentage are those caused by insect pests and fungal pathogens - 72% of all damages.

In the artificial plantations of Scots pine, outside the natural range of the species, drying processes occur as a result of physiological weight loss, combined with an attack by bark beetles. The trees are initially inhabited by *Ips acuminatus*, and later by other species (*Ips sexdentatus*, *Tomicus piniperda*, *T. minor*, etc.).

Damages from abiotic, biotic and anthropogenic factors - in general, the phytosanitary condition of forests is improving compared to previous years. The established damages in 2020 are on a total area of 42,444,2 ha, which represents 1.4% of the total forest area in Bulgaria.



Forest fires - compared to the average indicators for Bulgaria, calculated on the basis of data for the period 2011 - 2020 (respectively 498 fires and 5,140 ha of burned areas), with 499 forest fires and 5,259 ha of burned forest areas in 2020, Bulgaria is close to the average values on both indicators. The direct damages from the forest fires for 2020 are estimated at BGN 596,220 compared to over BGN 2 million in 2019 and average values of over BGN 1.8 million per year for the last decade.

Source: (Executive Environmental Agency, National report on the state and protection of the environment in the Republic of Bulgaria, 2020)

### **Use of NTFPs, hunting:**

Non-Timber Forest Products (e.g. berries, mushrooms, hay, etc) might be harvested commercially based on permissions issued by MUs. Local people may collect such products for own needs free of charge. FMP includes an assessment of the hay and medicine plants yield.

As of December, 2021, the total hunting area of the country amounts to 10,402,471 ha, incl. 447,207 ha in the state hunting farms, 780,866 ha in the game breeding areas (leased for management and use of the game to legal entities and not leased) and 9,174,398 ha in the hunting areas of the hunting associations.

Hunting activities are carried out in accordance with Hunting and Game Protection Act. Illegal activities (e.g. poaching) are controlled through patrols and control of the legal hunting. The hunters need hunting licenses and permits issued from MUs in order to be allowed to hunt. Populations of species for hunting are monitored annually.

### **Development of FSC certification (including FSC-certified forest area), analysis of potential barriers:**

Since the first FSC certification of a Bulgarian forest in 2005, there has been a steady and growing trend of increasing the area of FSC certified forests in the country. By January 2024, the total area of forests covered by FSC certification accounted to 2,111,554 ha or about 60 % of all forests. The majority of these forests are state-owned (29 certificates) but 2 municipality owned MUs (19,548 ha in total) have also committed to FSC. (<https://fsc.org/en/facts-figures>)

This corresponds to the objectives of the National Strategy for Development of the Forest Sector in Bulgaria (2014 - 2021) and the Government objective for certification of state forests.

The introduction and the expansion of the FSC certification has brought a number of widely recognized environmental, social and economic positives for the sector, but standing out from these are:

- improved transparency of the certified organizations (especially the state forestry units);
- enhanced environmental protection through setting aside of 10% of the certified areas as representative sample areas of native ecosystems where management activities are not allowed (except for activities for restoration of the forest to more natural conditions);
- designation of old-growth forests (at least 5% of the certified MUs) where human interference is not allowed (This is a specific requirement of the Bulgarian NFSS which has a serious impact for the forest conservation.);
- improvement of the silvicultural practices through dead wood retention, leaving buffer zones along water bodies, conservation of biotope trees, application of close to nature regeneration of the forests etc.;
- improved communication with interested and affected stakeholders especially with regard to dispute resolution.

The increase of the certified area, some specifics of national legislation and the increased demand for certified products (mainly from abroad) has also led to a significant increase in the number of CoC certified companies. Nowadays, more than 400 entities avail FSC CoC certificate.

## C.2 Members of the Standards Development Group

The National Standard Development Group (NSDG) of Bulgaria has been officially registered at FSC in 2014 and is operational since then. It has 9 members representing equally the three chambers and its work is supported by three technical experts. The competence and the expertise of the members and the experts is diverse and complementary covering forestry matters, biodiversity and habitat conservation, economic and social aspects and interests, FSC auditing experience etc. Since 2017, the Standard development group has had few changes including: substitution of the representatives of one of the members of the economic chamber, one of the members of the environmental chamber and one of the members of the social chamber. All these changes were objectively justified, the reason being the inability of the respective persons to participate pro-actively in the SDG life and in no case as a result of disagreement or rejection. These changes have not affected the operation of the SDG and all new members were unanimously accepted.

The NSDG is extensively supported, coordinated and facilitated by WWF Bulgaria. The latter, together with the SDG, is now recognised as the main driver of the FSC related processes in the country as there is no official FSC representation in Bulgaria (no focal point or National Office). WWF Bulgaria has a special role in contributing to strengthening the implementation and spread of FSC certification, a niche which the NSDG cannot cover on its own. As part of its activities, WWF provides specialised trainings, methodological support and capacity building to the forest stakeholders (management units, active citizens, forest practitioners, etc).

Below is provided the updated list of the of members of the National Standard Development Group:

<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Social</b>
<b>Name:</b> Mr. Dimitar Plachiiski	<b>Name:</b> Mr. Kiril Tashev	<b>Name:</b> Mrs. Sevdalina Dimitrova
<b>Organization:</b> Bulgarian society for the protection of birds (BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria)	<b>Organization:</b> Executive Forest Agency (EFA)	<b>Organization:</b> Union of Bulgarian Foresters (UBF)
<b>Name:</b> Mr. Dimitar Popov	<b>Name:</b> Mr. Simeon Iordanov	<b>Name:</b> Ms. Eleonora Yosifova
<b>Organization:</b> Green Balkans NGO	<b>Organization:</b> Bulgarian Branch Chamber of Woodworking and Furniture Industry (BBCWFI)	<b>Organization:</b> Bulgarian association for alternative tourism (BAAT)
<b>Name:</b> Zornitza Stratieva	<b>Name:</b> Elena Krizhan	<b>Name:</b> Mr. Alexander Borisov
<b>Organization:</b> Bulgarian Association of Parks	<b>Organization:</b> Ministry of Agriculture and foods, Directorate "Companies and public participation"	Organization: Executive Agency "General Labour Inspectorate"

### C.3 Expert advising the Standard Development Group

The standard development and revision processes were closely supported by the following experts in responsible forest management who gave valuable contributions and advice to the NSDG throughout the standard document: Ms. Dobromira Dimova Petrova, Mr. Stanislav Lazarov and Mr. Alexander Bardarov. Valuable support for the development of the standard gave also: Mr. Pencho Dermendzhiev and Ms. Zoya Markova as responsible forest management experts with their opinions and expertise particularly during the field tests of the standard.

### C.4 Background information on the standard development

The drafting of the national FSC standard for Bulgaria was initiated and supported by WWF Bulgaria. The process was carried out by National Standard Development Group (NSDG) which was officially registered in the FSC Policy and Standards Unit in August 2014.

The first draft was developed within the period August - November 2014 and was presented for public consultation. The second draft included the results from the public consultations, as well as the last changes in the FSC International Generic Indicators. The second draft of the standard was tested on the field. A total of 3 field tests were made: one in FSC Certified Forest (State Forestry Unit Trigrad), one in non-certified MU (State Hunting Unit Trakia) and one in SLIMF forest (public forest of the Municipality of Gorna Oriahovitsa). After the field tests and analysis of the results, the third draft of the standard was set out again for public consultation. The second public consultation was held in the period March - May 2016. The last fourth draft of the standard was developed in the period May - June 2016 as in it were integrated the relevant comments from the second public consultation. The last version of the standard was sent to FSC Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) on 15 June 2016. PSU assessed the Bulgarian National Forestry Stewardship Standard (NFSS) and came to the conclusion that the standard is not in breach of any FSC international procedure, standards or related normative document for NFSS development and maintenance. FSC Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) suggested the standard for approval to the FSC Policy and Standards Committee (PSC). PSC approved the Bulgarian NFSS on its meeting in October 2016 with some minor conditions which were met in a timely manner.

NFSS was officially approved by the FSC on 24 January 2017 and became effective on 16 August 2017.

In Accordance with FSC requirements, the NFSS (at present, FSS) scheduled revision process was launched in June 2021 (and registered by Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) in June 2021). The process followed procedure and timeline approved by FSC as shown below:

Item	Time	Estimated Date
1st Draft of Revision Standard	5 months	June – 31 Oct 2021
Stakeholder Comments	60 days	1 Nov – 31 Dec 2021
Consultation report	One month	By 31 January 2022
Pre-approval draft	2 months	Febr to April 2022
SDG Formal recommendation	1 month	30 April 2022

The revised FSS was submitted for approval to FSC on 09.09.2022. After the quality check of the standard by PSU, it was submitted to PSC. The latter approved the revised Bulgarian FSS on 3 March 2023 with nine conditions and one recommendation. All conditions were closed and the standard was finally approved on 24 June 2024.

Further information can be obtained from the coordinator of the NSDG Ms. Yana Barzova (Senior forest expert at WWF Bulgaria, [fcic@wwf.bg](mailto:fcic@wwf.bg)) and the chairperson of the NSDG Ms. Neli Doncheva (Forest Programme Manager of WWF Bulgaria, [ndoncheva@wwf.bg](mailto:ndoncheva@wwf.bg)).

## D REFERENCES

(Informative section)

The following referenced documents are relevant for the application of this standard.

For references without a version number, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

Reference	
<b>FSC-POL-20-003</b>	<i>FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification</i>
<b>FSC-POL-30-001</b>	<i>FSC Pesticides Policy</i>
<b>FSC-POL-30-602</b>	<i>FSC Interpretation on GMOs: Genetically Modified Organisms</i>
<b>FSC-STD-20-007</b>	<i>Forest Management Evaluations</i>
<b>FSC-STD-30-005</b>	<i>FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups</i>
<b>FSC-PRO-01-008</b>	<i>Processing Complaints in the FSC Certification Scheme</i>
<b>FSC-PRO-30-006</b>	<i>Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools</i>
<b>FSC-DIR-20-007</b>	<i>FSC Directive on FSC Forest Management Evaluations</i>
<b>FSC-GUI-30-003</b>	<i>FSC Guidelines for the implementation of the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)</i>
<b>FSC-GUI-60-005</b>	<i>Promoting Gender Equality in National Forest Stewardship Standards</i>
<b>FSC-STD-BGR-02-2025a</b>	<i>The High Conservation Value Forests Toolkit for Bulgaria (addendum to this standard)</i>

**Note:** When applying this standard, consider relevant interpretations by inquiring with local FSC representatives (e.g. National Offices or representatives, or FSC's Performance and Standards Unit, if no national FSC presence exists), or your certification body. International interpretations are available through the FSC Document Centre (<https://fsc.org/en/document-centre>).

## **E ABBREVIATIONS**

(Informative section)

<b>FSC</b>	Forest Stewardship Council
<b>NF</b>	Normative Framework
<b>FSS</b>	Forest Stewardship Standard
<b>PSU</b>	Performance and Standards Unit

## F PRINCIPLES\*, CRITERIA\* AND INDICATORS\*

(Normative section)

### PRINCIPLE\* 1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

**The Organization\* shall comply with all applicable laws\*, regulations and nationally-ratified\* international treaties, conventions and agreements.**

**1.1. The Organization\* shall be a legally defined entity with clear, documented and unchallenged legal registration\*, with written authorization from the legally competent\* authority for specific activities.**

1.1.1. The Organization has legal and unchallenged registration entitling it to carry out all activities within the scope of the certificate.

#### Verifiers:

##### For legal entities:

- Check of the current status in the trade register as per the Unique Identification Code (UIC);
- Tax registration;
- Management contracts;
- Registration in the public registers attesting the right to perform the activities in the scope of the certificate;
- Documents proving the right of long-term management/use (deeds, documents proving the adoption of the Forest Management Plan, sketches from the cadastre);

##### For individuals/physical person:

- Proof of ownership: deeds, decision for restitution of ownership issued by Land Commission/Municipal Agriculture Office, including sketch (delineation).

**1.2. The Organization\* shall demonstrate that the legal status\* of the Management Unit\*, including tenure\* and use rights\*, and its boundaries, are clearly defined.**

1.2.1. There are legal documents proving tenure rights, including the right to use the resources within the scope of the certificate, issued by a competent authority and in accordance with legal procedures\*.

#### Verifiers:

##### Documentary check:

- Deeds and/or sketches/maps, contracts and/or orders for usage;
- Documents proving the right for long-term management/use;
- Legal provisions, if applicable.

1.2.2. The boundaries of all Management Units within the scope of the certificate are documented, clearly identifiable in the field (marked and following natural or administrative boundaries) and are clearly shown on maps.

#### Verifiers:

##### Documentary check:

- Documents issued by the Cadaster Agency, maps of restituted ownership (MRW), documents with description of the boundaries; paper and electronic maps;
- Complaints regarding the tenure and land use rights;

Field check to assure that:

- Boundaries are marked on the field;
- There is a compliance with the documentary information.

**1.3. The Organization\* shall have legal\* rights to operate in the Management Unit\*, which fit the legal\* status of The Organization\* and of the Management Unit\*, and shall comply with the associated legal\* obligations in applicable national and local laws\* and regulations and administrative requirements. The legal\* rights shall provide for harvest of products and/or supply of ecosystem services\* from within the Management Unit\*. The Organization\* shall pay the legally prescribed charges associated with such rights and obligations.**

1.3.1. All activities, including the harvest of products and/or supply of ecosystem services, are implemented in accordance with national legislation and in compliance with the rights of ownership and use (see Annex 1 - List of applicable legislation).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability and accessibility of up-to-date database containing specialized forest, environmental and labour related regulatory framework;
- Document proofs for violations registered by competent authorities;
- Protocols from inspections of competent authorities;

Field check:

- Overall assessment of compliance with regulatory framework;
- Check of compliance with the requirements for the welfare of animals used in the transportation of wood;

Interviews with:

- The staff of The Organization;
- Workers of subcontractors;
- Owners of animals used for some operations in the forests (e.g. extraction of logs, etc.)
- Responsible institutions and other stakeholders (incl. regarding the welfare and compliance with animal health requirements for animals used in forestry, such as horses, mules, donkeys, oxen, etc.).

1.3.2. Planning documentation for activities does not contradict national legislation (see Annex 1 - List of applicable legislation).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Past and current legal proceedings for non-compliance with the legislation;
- Punitive administrative acts etc.;
- Written protocols for contradictions identified;



- Planning documents;

Interviews with:

- Relevant institutions and stakeholders;
  - Employees and subcontractors of The Organization;
  - Relevant institutions and other stakeholders.
- 1.3.3. (NON-SLIMF) There is evidence that the financial liabilities (applicable legally prescribed charges) related to forest management are paid in a timely manner.
- 1.3.3. (SLIMF) There is evidence that the financial liabilities (applicable legally prescribed charges) related to forest management are paid in a timely manner (only) for those *SLIMF\** Organizations, which have a management structure and obligations to maintain financial accounting according to national law.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Receipts, accounts, etc.;

Interviews with:

- Subcontractors, suppliers and other stakeholders.

**1.4. The Organization\* shall develop and implement measures, and/or shall engage with regulatory agencies, to systematically protect the Management Unit\* from unauthorized or illegal resource use, settlement and other illegal activities.**

- 1.4.1. (NON-SLIMF) A clear and effective system for prevention and control of illegal logging, poaching, collecting NTFP, settlement and other unauthorized activities is available and is implemented. The system includes but is not limited to the following:
- 1) Technical and human resources to exercise prevention and control in the field;
  - 2) Levels of risk defined for the different parts of MU and activities for control and prevention are in conformity with the defined risk;
  - 3) Differentiation of forest roads with controlled access to areas with high risk;
  - 4) Control of traffic on forest roads.
- 1.4.1. (SLIMF) A clear and effective system for prevention and control of illegal logging, poaching, collecting NTFP, settlement and other unauthorized activities is available and is implemented. The system includes determination of the levels of risk defined for the different parts of the MU and activities for control and prevention which are in conformity with the defined risk.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents certifying that the periodic and/or sudden control is being exercised;
- Orders or other documents for establishment of forest roads with controlled access to areas being of high risk;
- Orders for closure of temporary forest roads;
- Documents to determine the level of risk for individual territories/parts of MU;

- Protocols and other documents from inspections carried out by the competent authorities and personnel of The Organization;
- Documents as evidence that The Organization has undertaken the necessary measures for the cases in which violations were found – signals to the prosecutor’s office and regional forest directorates, written statements for observed administrative violations, orders for search of violators, etc.;
- Check on how many written statements for violations have actually been executed (got enforced); in order to check the effectiveness of the control implemented by The Organization;

Field check:

- Check of the human resources and technical means engaged in the control on the field;

Interviews with:

- With the responsible personnel of The Organization;
- With interested stakeholders.

1.4.2. (NON-SLIMF) Where other competent authorities have responsibilities in terms of protection and control of unauthorized activities, a system to engage and work with them is implemented.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Contracts for implementation of safeguard and control;
- Correspondence with competent authorities;

Interviews with:

- Relevant responsible employees of The Organization;
- Representatives of competent authorities (Executive Forest Agency and its subdivisions, Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Waters, Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Border Police, etc.).

1.4.3. The necessary legal measures are taken if unauthorized activities are detected.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Evidences that responsible control bodies are informed;
- Administrative statements for found violation issued by The Organization.

**1.5. The Organization\* shall comply with the applicable national laws\*, local laws\*, ratified\* international conventions and obligatory codes of practice\*, relating to the transportation and trade of forest products within and from the Management Unit\*, and/or up to the point of first sale.**

1.5.1. There is evidence that The Organization complies with national legislation, local regulations and ratified international conventions relating to trade and transportation of forest products to the point of change of ownership.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Evidences of past and current legal proceedings for non-compliance with the legislation;
- Administrative acts for infringements of the national legislation and regulatory framework;
- Written protocols for contradictions identified.

Field check:

- Records of The Organization;
- Sites where the timber is harvested and processed;
- Transport *infrastructure*\*;
- Protected areas, nurseries, etc., related to law enforcement (refer to Annex 1, but is not limited only to it);

Interviews with:

- Local communities;
- Employees of The Organization;
- Competent authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

1.5.2. The Organization complies with the provisions of the CITES Convention in the case of extraction and/or trade of species listed in the Annexes of the Convention.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check of the species that are harvested;
- Check if the species that are harvested are included in the Annexes of CITES Convention;
- Check if certificates are available in case of harvesting of species included in the Annexes CITES Convention.

**1.6. The Organization\* shall identify, prevent and resolve *disputes\** over issues of *statutory or customary law\**, which can be settled out of court in a *timely manner\**, through *engagement with affected stakeholders\**.**

1.6.1. (NON-SLIMF) A publicly available dispute resolution process is in place (for disputes including but not limited to those related to ownership of forests and lands, rights of use, and concessions), developed through *culturally appropriate\** engagement with affected stakeholders.

The mechanism includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Establishment of mutually agreed communication channels allowing for information to flow in both directions;
- 2) Ensuring equal representation and inclusion of all groups;
- 3) Documentation of all meetings, all issues discussed and all consents achieved;
- 4) Adoption of the content of the minutes of meetings, including specific steps to resolve the dispute; and
- 5) Disclosure of the results of the stakeholder involvement activities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of mechanism/*procedures*\*;
- Evidences for stakeholder participation in the development of the mechanism;

Interviews with:

- Stakeholders and affected stakeholders.

1.6.2. There is clear evidence that, in cases where it is possible, the necessary actions are undertaken for timely and out of court resolution of disputes related to enforcement of applicable legislation, including legislation regulating tenure and land use rights.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if there are current disputes;

Interviews with:

- Affected stakeholders.

1.6.3. Such disputes as mentioned in 1.6.2 are either resolved or are in the dispute resolution process.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check of the records;

Interviews with:

- Affected stakeholders.

1.6.4. (NON-SLIMF) Up-to-date records of past and current disputes are maintained, including:

- 1) Description of the steps taken to resolve disputes;
- 2) Outcomes of the dispute resolution process, including agreed compensation; and
- 3) Unresolved disputes, the reasons they are not resolved, and how they will be resolved.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check of the records;

Interviews with:

- Affected stakeholders.

1.6.5. In the case of out of court disputes, no operations are conducted in the disputed territory.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Orders to cease the activity in disputed sites;

Field check:

- Check on site if any activities are taking place in the disputed territory;

Interviews with:

- Affected stakeholders.

1.6.6. Operations cease in disputed territory in the case of court disputes where one of the parties has requested the suspension of operations.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Court decisions/orders to cease the activity in disputed sites, dossier of the dispute, etc.
- Documents of court disputes related to tenure;

Field check:

- Check on site if any activities are taking place in the disputed territory;

Interviews with:

- Affected stakeholders.

**1.7. The Organization\* shall publicize a commitment not to offer or receive bribes in money or any other form of corruption, and shall comply with anti-corruption legislation where this exists. In the absence of anti-corruption legislation, The Organization\* shall implement other anti-corruption measures proportionate to the scale\* and intensity\* of management activities\* and the risk\* of corruption.**

1.7.1. (NON-SLIMF) A policy is developed and implemented that includes a commitment not to offer or receive bribes of any description nor any other form of corruption.

1.7.1. (SLIMF) The Organization declares its commitment not to offer or receive bribes of any description nor any other form of corruption.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of such policy;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

1.7.2. (NON-SLIMF) The policy meets or exceeds existing anti-corruption legislation.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check the policy;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

1.7.3. (NON-SLIMF) The policy is publicly available at no cost.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check for the free public access of the policy;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

1.7.4. Bribery, coercion and other acts of corruption do not occur.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check for accusations/issued court decisions;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

1.7.5. Corrective measures are implemented if corruption does occur.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check for accusations/issued court decisions, measures taken;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

**1.8. The Organization\* shall demonstrate a long-term\* commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles\* and Criteria\* in the Management Unit\*, and to related FSC Policies and Standards. A statement of this commitment shall be contained in a publicly available\* document made freely available.**

1.8.1. There is a written document adopted by the managers of The Organization, reflecting the long-term commitment to the FSC Principles and Criteria and related Policies and Standards, including The Policy for the Association of Organizations with FSC.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability and accessibility of the document required and check to what extent the required elements are present (incorporated).

1.8.2. The document required in 1.8.1 includes a commitment to avoid unacceptable activities, as follows:

- 1) Illegal logging and trade in illegally harvested timber and NTFP;
- 2) Violation of traditional and human rights in forest management operations;
- 3) Significant change in the use of forests, unless such change is related to the construction of *infrastructure\** of national importance, as well as sites related to national security and defense. (The scope of the change is in accordance with indicator 6.9.1.);
- 4) Introduction of genetically modified organisms;
- 5) Violation of the Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The document also includes a commitment to timely reporting to FSC of unauthorized associations with FSC by other organizations (where these become known).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability and accessibility of the document required and check to what extent the required elements are present (incorporated).

1.8.3. The written document of the long-term commitment of The Organization to the FSC Principles and Criteria and related policies and standards is publicly available at no cost.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check the accessibility of the document;

Interviews:

- With employees and stakeholders.

1.8.4. (NON-SLIMF) The Organization is not engaged in the unacceptable activities listed in 1.8.2 including in forest territories outside the scope of the certificate.

**Verifiers:**

Interviews:

- With employees and stakeholders.

## PRINCIPLE\* 2: WORKERS\* RIGHTS AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

**The Organization\* shall maintain or enhance the social and economic wellbeing of workers\*.**

**2.1. The Organization\* shall uphold\* the principles and rights at work as defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work\* (1998) based on the eight ILO Core Labour Conventions\*.**

2.1.1. The Organization shall not use *child labour\**.

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- Lists of The Organization's staff and sub-contractors (e.g. permits issued for access to forest areas; documentation for public procurements, etc.);
- Official statements of competent authorities on the observance of labour legislation; examination of inspection reports;
- Court decisions on labour disputes incl. cases for illegal dismissals;

#### Field check:

- Inspection of the persons present in the sites where *forestry activities\** are carried out;

#### Interviews:

- With employees of The Organization, management staff and subcontractors' workers;
- With representatives of the Labor Inspectorate, the State Agency for Child Protection, trade unions, etc.

2.1.2. The Organization shall not employ persons under the age of 16 and shall not allow the involvement of such in activities that it has assigned. As an exception and in compliance with the national law, persons between the ages of 15 and 16 may be employed to perform work which is light and not hazardous or harmful to health and to their proper physical, mental and moral development, and whose implementation would not preclude regular school attendance or participation in vocational training programs.

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- Lists of The Organization's staff and sub-contractors (e.g. permits issued for access to forest areas; documentation for public procurements, etc.);
- Written opinions on compliance with labour legislation; verification of inspection reports;
- Decisions on labour disputes;

#### Field check:

- Inspection of the persons present in the sites with *forestry activities\**;

#### Interviews:

- With employees of The Organization, management staff and subcontractors' workers;
- With representatives of the Labour Inspectorate, the State Agency for Child Protection, trade unions, etc.



2.1.3. The Organization shall not employ persons under the age of 18 to perform hazardous, harmful and *heavy work*\*.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Lists of The Organization's staff and sub-contractors (e.g. permits issued for access to forest areas; documentation for public procurements, etc.);
- Written opinions on compliance with labour legislation; verification of inspection reports;
- decisions on labour disputes.

Field check:

- Inspection of the persons present in the sites where *forestry activities*\* are carried out;

Interviews:

- With employees of The Organization, management staff and employees of subcontractors;
- With representatives of the Labour Inspectorate, the State Agency for Child Protection, trade unions, etc.

2.1.4. Employment relationships are voluntary and based on mutual consent, without *threat*\* of a penalty.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Lists of The Organization's staff and sub-contractors (e.g. permits issued for access to forest areas; documentation for public procurements, etc.);
- Written opinions on compliance with labour legislation; verification of inspection reports;
- Decisions on labour disputes;
- Verification of employment contracts, including the National Revenue Agency system.

Interviews:

- With employees of The Organization, management staff and employees of subcontractors;
- With representatives of the Labour Inspectorate, trade unions, etc.

2.1.5. There is no evidence of any practices indicative of *forced or compulsory labour*\*, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1) Physical and sexual violence;
- 2) Bonded labour;
- 3) Withholding of wages/including payment of employment fees and or payment of deposit to commence employment;
- 4) Restriction of mobility/movement;
- 5) Retention of passport and identity documents;
- 6) Threats of denunciation to the authorities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Lists of The Organization's staff and sub-contractors (e.g. permits issued for access to forest areas; documentation for public procurements, etc.);
- Written opinions on compliance with labour legislation; verification of inspection reports;
- Decisions on labour disputes;
- Verification of employment contracts, including the National Revenue Agency system.

Interviews:

- With employees of The Organization, management staff and employees of subcontractors;
- With representatives of the Labour Inspectorate, trade unions, etc.

2.1.6. The Organization shall ensure that there is no *discrimination\** in *employment and occupation\** and termination of employment.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Lists of The Organization's staff and sub-contractors (e.g. permits issued for access to forest areas; documentation for public procurements, etc.);
- Written opinions on compliance with labour legislation; verification of inspection reports;
- Decisions on labour disputes;
- Verification of employment contracts, including the National Revenue Agency system.

Interviews:

- With employees of The Organization, management staff and employees of subcontractors;
- With representatives of the Labour Inspectorate, Commission for Protection against Discrimination, trade unions, etc.

2.1.7. Workers are able to establish or join worker or trade union organizations of their own choosing.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Collective labour agreement;
- Minutes of the general meeting;

Interviews:

- With the representatives of the employees and/or the trade union leaders, subcontractors' workers.

2.1.8. The Organization respects the rights of workers to engage in lawful activities related to forming, joining or assisting a *workers' organization\** or to refrain from doing the same; and will not discriminate or punish workers for exercising these rights

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Collective labour agreement;
- Minutes of the general meeting;

Interviews:

- With the representatives of the employees and/or the trade union leaders, subcontractors' workers.
- 2.1.9. The Organization negotiates with lawfully established *workers' organizations\** and/or duly selected representatives in *good faith\** and with the best efforts to reach a *collective bargaining\** agreement.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Collective labour agreement;
- Minutes of the meetings with the representatives of the employees;

Interviews:

- With the representatives of the employees/workers and/or the trade union leaders.
- 2.1.10. Agreements resulting from *collective bargaining\** with representatives of trade unions and/or other agreements concerning workers' *rights* and working conditions are implemented.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Agreements on *collective bargaining\**;

Interviews:

- Workers representatives and/or trade union leaders.

**2.2. The Organization\* shall promote *gender equality\** in employment practices, training opportunities, awarding of contracts, processes of *engagement\** and *management activities\**.**

- 2.2.1. (NON-SLIMF) The Organization promotes gender equality and prevents gender *discrimination\** in employment practices, processes of engagement, training, awarding of contracts, and management activities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Internal rules, rules on salary;
- Job descriptions;
- Training records;
- Vacancy announcements;

Interviews with:

- Workers.

- 2.2.2. Job opportunities are open to both women and men under the same conditions.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Complaints/signals;
- Job descriptions;

Interviews with:

- Workers;
- Representatives of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

2.2.3. Work typically carried out by women (collecting NTFP, silvicultural activities, nurseries, etc.) is included in training and health & safety programs to the same extent as work typically carried out by men.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Training records.

Interviews with:

- Workers;
- Representatives of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

2.2.4. Women and men are paid the same wage, under the same conditions.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documentation for wages paid;
- Contracts;
- Job descriptions;
- CVs, diplomas, certificates of qualifications gained and work experience;

Interviews with:

- Workers;
- Representatives of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

2.2.5. Women are paid directly and using mutually agreed methods (e.g. direct bank transfer, direct payments, cash etc.).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documentation for wages paid;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees;
- Representatives of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

2.2.6. Maternity leave is provided according to national legislation.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents proving that the right for maternity leave has been used;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees;

- Representatives of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

2.2.7. Men have the opportunity to take paternity leave and there is no penalty for taking it.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents proving that the right for paternity leave has been used;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees;
- Representatives of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

2.2.8. (NON-SLIMF) Active participation of both genders in meetings and forums for decision-making is equally encouraged.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Invitations to participate in meetings, etc.;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees;
- Representatives of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

2.2.9. Confidential, safe and effective mechanisms exist for reporting cases of sexual harassment and gender-based or other types of *discrimination*\*.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of written document/internal *procedures*\*;
- Code of ethics of The Organization;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees to verify if there are such cases.

2.2.10. Workers are familiar with the mechanism for reporting cases of sexual harassment and gender-based or other types of *discrimination*\*.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- e.g. lists of persons instructed;
- Free access to the place where the written *procedures*\* related to workers' rights, the database of relevant national legislation etc. are being kept;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees.

2.2.11. Measures in all cases of sexual harassment and gender-based or other types of *discrimination*\* are undertaken in a timely and effective manner.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Complaint records, as well as evidences that these have been processed;
- Accusations/issued court decisions, measures taken;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees.

**2.3. The Organization\* shall implement health and safety practices to protect workers\* from occupational safety and health hazards. These practices shall, proportionate to scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities\*, meet or exceed the recommendations of the ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Forestry Work.**

2.3.1. Health and safety practices are implemented that meet or exceed the ILO requirements on safety and health in forestry.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Contract with occupational health service/consultant or ensured own health service;
- A program for risk assessment of the working places of The Organization;
- Health and safety instructions;
- Program for conducting trainings and instructions – primary instructions, working place instructions, periodic, daily and occasional instructions;

Field check:

- Check if the health and safety practices are observed by the workers;

Interviews with:

- Employees and workers, incl. contractor workers

2.3.2. The *forest machinery\** used complies with the requirements for labor safety in forestry work.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Instructions for safe work;
- Certificates from technical inspections of the machinery used;

Field check:

- To check the equipment and the condition of the machinery used incl. safety elements and devices, breaks and emergency shutdown systems;

Interviews with:

- Employees and workers, incl. contractor workers.

2.3.3. Workers are equipped with the necessary personal protective equipment and special clothing appropriate to the specifics of the assigned task. (see Annex 2 - Personal protective equipment).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Protocols confirming that clothing, equipment, etc. is provided;

Field check:

- Aiming to verify if personal protective equipment is available in accordance with Annex 2 of the Standard and it is in good condition;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees.

2.3.4. Use of personal protective equipment is required/enforced by the employer/contractor.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Orders, job descriptions, instructions, etc.;

Field check:

- To verify that personal protective equipment is available in accordance with Annex 2 of the Standard and it is in good condition;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees;

2.3.5. There are documents and records related to health and safety practices, the recording of accidents and the time lost due to accidents.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Plans for instruction;
- Schedules of the trainings on health and safety, etc.;
- Evidences of periodically performed instructions and trainings on health and safety;
- Up-to-date register of accidents.

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees.

2.3.6. (NON-SLIMF) The frequency and severity of accidents in the MU do not exceed national levels for the forestry sector.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Register/records of accidents;
- Publicly available statistics of the National Social Security Institute (operating register of National Social Security Institute).

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees.

2.3.7. A periodic review is made and where necessary health and safety practices are revised on the basis of available objective data.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents which prove that health and safety practices are up-to-date;
- Protocols for a comprehensive review of the policies and practices.

2.3.8. After each accident a comprehensive review of policies and practices related to health and safety is made and corrective measures are taken.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents which prove that health and safety practices are up-to-date;
- Protocols for a comprehensive review of the policies and practices.

**2.4. The Organization\* shall pay wages that meet or exceed minimum forest\* industry standards or other recognized forest\* industry wage agreements or living wages\*, where these are higher than the legal\* minimum wages. When none of these exist, The Organization\* shall through engagement\* with workers\* develop mechanisms for determining living wages\*.**

2.4.1. Wages paid by The Organization are not lower than the minimum wage rates for the country in all circumstances.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Payrolls of The Organization or its subcontractors;
- Check if the agreed salaries are not smaller than the minimum amounts established in the country.

Interviews with:

- Employees, including employees of contractors and companies in the region;
- Professional organizations;
- References to wage levels at the National Statistics Institute.

2.4.2. Wages and contributions paid by The Organization meet or exceed:

- 1) Minimum working wages for the state;
- 2) Officially recognized agreements for the forest sector, including collective workers' bargaining;
- 3) Officially agreed minimal incomes for provision\*.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Payrolls of The Organization or its subcontractors;
- Check whether the amount of social security contributions is in accordance with the requirements for minimum insurance threshold for the position;

Collective labour agreements.

Interviews with:

- Employees, including employees of contractors and companies in the region;
- Professional organizations;



2.4.3. Wages, salaries and contracts are paid on time and at the level specified in contracts.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Contracts;
- Trial balances, payment orders for wages, fees and social contributions;
- Bank statements;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees of The Organization and subcontractors.

2.4.4. Payments for insurance, social contributions, business trips, overtime and other items as specified in contracts are paid on time.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Trial balances, payment orders for wages, fees and social contributions;
- Bank statements;
- Petty cash orders for business trips;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees of The Organization and subcontractors.

**2.5. The Organization\* shall demonstrate that workers\* have job-specific training and supervision to safely and effectively implement the Management Plan\* and all management activities\*.**

2.5.1. A training programme ensuring that all workers contribute to the safe and effective implementation of the *planning documentation\** is available and is implemented.

The programme is consistent with the job specific tasks and responsibilities of the workers (including subcontractors) and includes, but is not limited to, the elements listed in Annex 3 (see Annex 3 - Contents of the training program).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if training programme is available and if it includes all the elements;
- Documentary evidences for update of the programme;
- Check for trainings/coaching (records, lists of participants, etc.);

Interviews with:

- Workers in The Organization and subcontractors.

2.5.2. Training of employees and forest workers is documented.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Trainings/coaching (records, lists of participants, etc.).

2.5.3. There is evidence that employees and forest workers operating in the MU have appropriate education and qualifications to do their jobs.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check for documents such as diplomas, certificates, etc.;
- Job descriptions;

Interviews with:

- Human resources specialist;
- Workers in The Organization and subcontractors.

**2.6. The Organization\* through engagement\* with workers\* shall have mechanisms for resolving grievances and for providing fair compensation\* to workers\* for loss or damage to property, occupational diseases\*, or occupational injuries\* sustained while working for The Organization\*.**

2.6.1. (NON-SLIMF) There is a publicly available mechanism for conflict resolution developed through *culturally appropriate\** engagement with workers and employees.

2.6.1. (SLIMF) Conflicts are resolved through *culturally appropriate\** engagement with workers.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check for publicly available mechanism;
- Documents proving the involvement of workers in developing the mechanism;

Interviews with:

- Workers in The Organization.

2.6.2. All complaints made by workers in The Organization are addressed *promptly\**, a decision is taken on them or they are in the dispute resolution process.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Complaints, records of disputes, orders etc.;

Interviews with:

- Workers/employees

2.6.3. (NON-SLIMF) Up-to-date records of workers grievances related to workers loss or damage of property, occupational diseases and injuries are maintained including:

- 1) Steps taken to resolve grievances;
- 2) Decisions on disputes including agreed compensation; and
- 3) Unresolved disputes, the reasons they are not resolved, and how they will be resolved.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Records;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

2.6.4. Fair compensation is provided to workers for work-related loss or damage of property and occupational disease or injuries.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents certifying paid compensation;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

### **PRINCIPLE\* 3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES'\* RIGHTS – N/A for Bulgaria**

**Note:** According to the definition by the United Nations, there are no indigenous peoples in Bulgaria that would feel or define themselves as such. Therefore, the principle is not applicable.

Criteria 3.1-3.6 can therefore be considered to be inapplicable in the case of Bulgaria. Aspects of this principle, which are logically related to the interests of the local population, are covered under Principles 2 (workers' rights) and 4 (community interests).

## PRINCIPLE\* 4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS

**The Organization\*** shall contribute to maintaining or enhancing the social and economic wellbeing of **local communities\***.

4.1. **The Organization\*** shall identify the **local communities\*** that exist within the **Management Unit\*** and those that are affected by **management activities\***. **The Organization\*** shall then, through **engagement\*** with these **local communities\***, identify their rights of **tenure\***, their rights of access to and use of **forest\*** resources and **ecosystem services\***, their **customary rights\*** and **legal\*** rights and obligations, that apply within the **Management Unit\***.

4.1.1. Local communities, affected and interested stakeholders within and outside of the Management Unit are identified and documented.

**Note:** Annex 4 to the standard gives an indicative list of interested and affected stakeholders.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- List of the local communities, affected and interested stakeholders (names and contacts);

#### Interviews with:

- Representatives of the local communities, affected and interested stakeholders.

4.1.2. The Organization has identified and is aware of the rights of local communities and affected stakeholders including those related to ownership, the access to and use of forest resources and ecosystem services.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Check for the availability of the following documents:
  1. Up-to-date map of the ownership of the MU;
  2. List of names and contacts of organizations, institutions, key representatives of the various interested stakeholders of the local communities;
  3. **Legal rights\*** and obligations of the local communities and interested stakeholders for access to forests and use of forest resources and ecosystem services are identified, including:
    - i. Use of wood;
    - ii. Use of non-timber forest products;
    - iii. The right to hunt;
    - iv. Recreation and tourism;
    - v. Free access;
    - vi. Places for gatherings, picnics and other cultural activities;
  4. Description of the rights and territories under dispute. Description of conflict.

#### Interviews with:

- Managers of The Organization and representatives of the local communities

4.1.3. The Organization has engaged local communities and affected stakeholders in the process of identifying their rights according to 4.1.2.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Minutes of meetings with local communities.

Interviews with:

- Representatives of local communities to check if local communities were involved in the process of identifying their rights.

**4.2. The Organization\* shall recognize and uphold\* the legal\* and customary rights\* of local communities\* to maintain control over management activities\* within or related to the Management Unit\* to the extent necessary to protect their rights, resources, lands and territories\*. Delegation by local communities\* of control over management activities\* to third parties requires Free, Prior and Informed Consent\*.**

4.2.1. Local communities are informed about planned management activities and the place of their implementation, and of when, where and how they can comment on them and request modification, to these activities to the extent necessary to protect their rights, resources and lands ownership.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documented proofs that local communities were given information about:
- Upcoming development or revision of the forest management plan of the MU;
- Information on planned *forestry activities\** and their venues (working places and forest sub-compartments) for next year.
- Information about the *procedures\** and time limits in which local communities and interested stakeholders may submit written comments and proposals on the forest management plan in process of development and forest management activities and/or the annual forest management planning;

Interviews with:

- Representatives of the local communities, and interested stakeholders.

4.2.2. Considering 4.2.1, local communities are informed in a *culturally appropriate\** way.

**Verifiers:**

Interviews with:

- Representatives of the local communities, and interested stakeholders.

4.2.3. There is evidence that forest management planning reflects the proposals of the local communities, depending on their legality and appropriateness.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Registry of submitted proposals by local people and interested stakeholders related to the forest management plan;

- Registry with answers to the interested stakeholders in relation to the proposals which they have made;
- Minutes and lists of participants from public consultations and meetings related to the management plan;
- Changes made to the management plan as a result of the proposals of interested stakeholders;

Interviews with:

- Representatives of the local communities.

4.2.4. The *legal rights*\* of local communities to maintain control over management activities are not violated by The Organization.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents proving that concrete corrective actions have been taken in case of identifying violations the rights of local communities related to the management activities;

Interviews with:

- Representatives of the local communities.

4.2.5. Where evidence exists that *legal rights*\* of local communities related to management activities have been violated the situation is corrected, through *culturally appropriate*\* engagement and/or through the dispute resolution process in Criteria 1.6 or 4.6.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Complaints and grievances;
- Minutes of meetings from consultation with interested stakeholders;

Interviews with:

- Representatives of the local communities.

4.2.6. There are no cases of access to and/or passage through the MU being denied by The Organization in violation of the *legal rights*\* of citizens.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Registry and documentation related to submitted complaints;

Interviews with:

- Representatives of the local communities.

**4.3. The Organization\* shall provide reasonable\* opportunities for employment\*, training and other services to local communities\*, contractors and suppliers proportionate to scale\* and intensity\* of its management activities\*.**

4.3.1. (NON-SLIMF) Appropriate opportunities for employment, training and other services are discussed and submitted to the local communities, contractors and suppliers.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Lists of contractor's workers who have been instructed;
- Photos, programs and lists of trainings, checklists, etc.;
- Policies/strategies for recruitment;
- Evidences in local media that local communities were informed about the job opportunities, trainings and services;
- Job advertisements in the labor office;
- Evidences for recruitment of employees from the local communities;

Interviews with:

- Local communities with workers and employees of contractors.

4.3.2. There is evidence that local people are preferred in case of recruitment for a vacancy, when candidates are equal in terms of education and professional experience.

**Verifiers:**

Interviews with:

- Local communities, with workers and employees of contractors.

**4.4. The Organization\* shall implement additional activities, through engagement\* with local communities\*, that contribute to their social and economic development, proportionate to the scale\*, intensity\* and socio-economic impact of its management activities\*.**

4.4.1. (NON-SLIMF) Opportunities for local social and economic development are identified by The Organization through *culturally appropriate\** engagement with local communities and other relevant organizations.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Report on the social impact assessment of the activity of The Organization or other analyzes.

Interviews with:

- Management staff and employees of (incl. if they are acquainted with the regional and municipal development plans);
- With local communities and stakeholders.

4.4.2. (NON-SLIMF) Projects and additional activities that contribute to local social and economic benefit are implemented and/or supported by The Organization. These projects and additional activities are proportionate to the socio-economic impact of the forest management activities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Activities supporting local socio-economic developments (incl. local initiatives and events) are stipulated (planned) in the financial documents of The Organization;
- Protocols, acts of donation, thank you letters and other documents proving material support by The Organization for the local community;

Interviews with:



- Management staff of The Organization;
- Representatives of the local communities.

**4.5. The Organization\*, through engagement\* with local communities\*, shall take an action to identify, avoid and mitigate significant\* negative social, environmental and economic impacts of its management activities\* on affected communities. The action taken shall be proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk\* of those activities and negative impacts.**

4.5.1. (NON-SLIMF) The Organization applies a system for Impact assessment corresponding to the scale and intensity of forest management operations. The system includes the following:

- 1) Identification of the affected groups;
- 2) Consultations with representatives of the affected groups in a *culturally appropriate\** way;
- 3) Identification of the negative social, environmental and economic impacts of forest management activities on these groups.

The assessment includes, but is not limited to the components listed in Annex 5.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documented social impact assessment;
- Documented meetings with local communities and other interested stakeholders, where the potential negative impacts of forest management activities has been discussed;
- List of identified negative impacts.

4.5.2. (NON-SLIMF) The Organization develops and implements measures to prevent and reduce negative impacts of forest management activities identified under 4.5.1. The measures are developed through engagement with local communities.

4.5.2. (SLIMF) The Organization develops and implements measures to prevent and reduce negative impacts of forest management activities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Publications in local media, pictures of joint events and other evidences of collaboration between MU and the local community;
- Document with measures developed to reduce the impact of identified negative effects;

Field check:

- Measures taken to reduce the impact of the identified negative effects;

Interviews with:

- Representatives of local communities and employees of The Organization.

**4.6. The Organization\*, through engagement\* with local communities\*, shall have mechanisms for resolving grievances and providing fair compensation\* to local communities\* and individuals with regard to the impacts of management activities\* of The Organization\*.**

4.6.1. (NON-SLIMF) A publicly available written dispute resolution *procedures\** is in place, developed through *culturally appropriate\** engagement with local communities.

4.6.1. (SLIMF) The Organization undertakes to solve conflicts through *culturally appropriate\** engagement with local communities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Existence of a written *procedures\** for dispute resolution and a mechanism for compensation of affected stakeholders;
- Written evidence that the *procedures\** has been consulted with local communities (minutes of meetings, lists of participants, photos, etc.);
- Web-site/information board of The Organization;

Interviews with:

- Managers of The Organization;
  - Representatives of the local communities.
- 4.6.2. (NON-SLIMF) Grievances related to the impacts of management activities are resolved within the timescale and sequence of the *procedures\** according to 4.6.1.
- 4.6.2. (SLIMF) Grievances related to impacts from management activities are considered and resolved in a timely manner.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Registry of grievances/complaints and the responses to them;
- Minutes of meeting with affected stakeholders;

Interviews with:

- Personnel of The Organization;
  - Representatives of the local communities.
- 4.6.3. (NON-SLIMF) Up-to-date documentation on grievances related to *forestry activities\** is maintained, including:
- 1) Actions taken to resolve disputes;
  - 2) The results of all completed *procedures\** for resolving disputes, including provision of fair compensation;
  - 3) Unresolved disputes, the reasons they are not resolved, and the necessary follow-up actions.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Register of complaints and responses to complaints as per the requirements of the indicator;

- Dossiers of disputes;

Interviews with:

- Personnel of The Organization;
- Staff of The Organization and representatives of the local communities.

4.6.4. (NON-SLIMF) A mechanism exists and is implemented when negotiating and providing fair compensation to local communities, natural and legal persons when their *legal rights\**, property, resources or livelihoods are negatively influenced/affected by forest management activities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documented mechanism and *procedures\** for compensation;

Interviews with:

- Affected stakeholders and managers of The Organization.

4.6.5. In disputed territories (regarding disputes related to the impact of forest management activities), no forest management activities take place until consent is reached by written agreement or until a final administrative or judicial decision is issued.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documented *procedures\**, incl. decisions and orders of the managers of The Organization;
- Documents of the leading cases and disputes, media publications, pictures, records of meetings of the disputing parties, agreements;
- Documents from cases and disputes, media publications, photos, minutes of meetings of the disputing parties, agreements;

Field check:

- Check if any activities take place in disputed territories;

Interviews with:

- Local communities and/or affected stakeholders.

**4.7. The Organization\*, through engagement\* with local communities\*, shall identify sites which are of special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance, and for which these local communities\* hold legal\* or customary rights\*. These sites shall be recognized by The Organization\*, and their management and/or protection\* shall be agreed through engagement\* with these local communities\*.**

4.7.1. (NON-SLIMF and public SLIMF) Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance for which local communities hold *legal rights\** are identified through *culturally appropriate\** engagement and are recognized by The Organization.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCV 6 in the HCVF Report;
- Minutes of meetings with local people and field visits;

- maps and photos;

Interviews with:

- Representatives of local communities, tourist associations, etc.

4.7.2. (NON-SLIMF and public SLIMF) Measures for management and/or protection of sites under 4.7.1 are developed and implemented through *culturally appropriate*\* engagement with local communities. When local communities determine that physical identification of sites in documentation or on maps would threaten the value or protection of the sites, then other means will be used.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documented measures for protection and management of sites under 4.7.1;
- Documented evidences that the measures for protection and management of sites under 4.7.1 are agreed/approved by the local communities (e.g. invitations and minutes of public discussions).

Field check

Interviews with:

- Representatives of local communities.

4.7.3. Whenever sites of special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance are newly observed or discovered, management activities cease immediately in the vicinity until protective measures have been agreed to with the local communities and as directed by local and national laws.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documented *procedures*\* for ceasing the forest management activities in the vicinity of newly discovered cultural or archeological objects;
- Documented cases of newly discovered sites of importance to local communities where *forestry activities*\* were ceased;

Field check

Interviews:

- With representatives of local communities.

## **PRINCIPLE\* 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST\***

**The Organization\* shall efficiently manage the range of multiple products and services of the Management Unit\* to maintain or enhance long-term\* economic viability\* and the range of social and environmental benefits.**

**5.1. The Organization\* shall identify, produce, or enable the production of, diversified benefits and/or products, based on the range of resources and ecosystem services\* existing in the Management Unit\* in order to strengthen and diversify the local economy proportionate to the scale\* and intensity\* of management activities\*.**

5.1.1. (NON-SLIMF) The range of timber and non-timber products and ecosystem services that could strengthen and diversify the local economy is documented.

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- Management objectives set out in the forest management plan;
- Assessment of timber and non-timber resources and ecosystem services in the forest management plan;
- Regional development plans for forests;
- Protected areas management plans, Natura 2000 sites management plans;
- Hunting management plan;
- HCVF Report;

#### Interviews

- Check whether staff, management, local people and businesses are aware of the kinds of resources and services within the territory of the MU.

5.1.2. Consistent with the management objectives, the identified timber and non-timber resources and ecosystem services are used by The Organization and/or are made available for others to use, thus helping to strengthen and diversify the local economy.

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- Forest management plan/program;
- Contracts with Contractors;
- Management Contracts;
- Lease contracts;
- Financial documents;
- Check of the companies that The Organization works with – whether they are local companies.

#### Field check:

- Check if there are local companies;
- Check exactly what resources and services are used and whether they meet management objectives;

- Check if there are any damages to some of the other values - such as species protection, other ecosystem services, etc.;

Interviews:

- Interviews provide information on whether staff and workers who work in the forests are local.
- With local logging and wood processing companies, traders and processors of non-timber forest products;
- With hunting and fishing associations, tenants and others.

5.1.3. Extraction and/or use of forest resources and ecosystem services is not permitted if such use would have a negative impact on objectives related to their conservation or protection.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Management objectives set out in the forest management plan;
- Inventory and assessment of the levels of use of forest resources;
- Inspection of the yield of timber and non-timber forest products;
- Impact assessment of yields and/or use of forest resources and ecosystem services for industrial/commercial purposes;

Interviews:

- With the aim to collect evidences/opinions about negative consequences of the exploitation of resources and services on the territory of MU.

5.1.4. When The Organization makes FSC promotional claims regarding the maintenance and/or enhancement of ecosystem services, FSC-PRO- 30-006 is followed regarding additional requirements.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- To verify conformance with the requirements of FSC-PRO-30-006.

**5.2. The Organization\* shall normally harvest products and services from the Management Unit\* at or below a level which can be permanently sustained.**

5.2.1. *Timber harvesting levels\** for the duration of the forest management plan/program are based on an analysis of the inventory of timber resources in terms of growth, productivity, levels of residues and maintenance of forest *ecosystem functions\**.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation\** related to the inventory of timber resources and justification of the total harvesting of timber, as well as the choice of species.

- 5.2.2. Based on the *timber harvesting levels*\* for the duration of the forest management plan, annual allowable cut is determined and is justified in terms of *sustainable yield*\* of timber, so that harvest rates will not exceed growth.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation*\* related to the inventory of timber resources and justification of the total harvesting of timber, as well as the choice of species;
- Forest management plans: is the average annual cut adjusted according to the identified protected and threatened species and HCV forests?

- 5.2.3. Actual annual harvest levels for timber are recorded (including sites, period of harvesting, tree species, assortments, quantities and relevant documentation) and this information is available for the duration of the forest management plan/program.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Annual reports or other documentation providing information about the actual yields of timber;
- Minutes from inspections of control bodies;

Interviews with:

- Staff of The Organization and representatives of control bodies.

- 5.2.4. The sum of annual yields of timber for the duration of the forest management plan/program does not exceed the total *timber harvesting levels*\* as defined under 5.2.1. and 5.2.2. Exceptions are permitted only in the cases of *large-scale natural disturbances*\* that cannot be compensated by the planned total harvesting levels for the period of the current forest management plan.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation*\* related to the inventory of timber resources and justification of the total harvesting of timber, as well as the choice of species;
- Annual reports or other documentation providing information about the actual yields of timber;
- Minutes from inspections of control bodies;
- Documented justification and evidences in the case of exceeding the annual harvesting rate;
- Register of felling carried out;

Interviews with:

- With staff of The Organization and representatives of control bodies.

- 5.2.5. Sustainable harvesting levels of non-timber forest products and services, which are controlled by The Organization, are determined using best available information, and are respected and controlled.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation*\* related to the determination and justification of the total and annual harvest levels of NTFP and the choice of species, including, but not limited to: official orders of the Ministry of Environment and Waters for the annual allowed quotas for extraction for medicinal plants; Game management plans and annual inventories of game populations, etc.
- Reports and results of local studies about NTFP;
- Check the data about the harvested amounts of NTFP per year for the duration of the forest management plan;
- In the case of exceeding the annual harvesting rate check for documented justification.

Interviews:

- Provide information on whether staff and workers are aware of the quantities NTFP specified for use. How the harvesting is allowed and how it is controlled?

**5.3. The Organization\* shall demonstrate that the positive and negative externalities\* of operations are included in the management plan\*.**

- 5.3.1. (NON-SLIMF) *Planning documentation*\* includes an analysis that takes into account the positive and negative social externalities of the implementation of forest management activities. local communities are given the opportunity to comment on the results of the analysis.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Planning documentation includes assessment about positive and negative impacts from the implementation of forest management activities in terms of social perspective;
- Strategy and studies/reports or social survey about possible positive and negative effects of forest management activities in the social aspect;
- HCVF Report, particularly HCV5 and 6. Does it include *threats*\* and recommended actions?

Field check:

- Check what actions for prevention, limitation or compensation are taken in case of presence of negative consequences in social terms;

Interviews:

- Provide information on whether staff and workers are familiar with the actions to be taken for the prevention, limitation or compensation of the negative consequences in social terms.

- 5.3.2. (NON-SLIMF) *Planning documentation*\* includes an analysis that takes into account the positive and negative environmental externalities of the implementation of forest management activities. local communities are given the opportunity to comment on the results of the analysis.



## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation*\* includes assessment about positive and negative impacts from the implementation of forest management activities in terms of environmental perspective;
- Strategy and studies/reports or social survey about possible positive and negative effects of forest management activities in the environmental aspect;
- HCVF Report, particularly part HCV1 and 3. Does it include *threats*\* and recommended actions?

### Field check:

- Check what actions for prevention, limitation or compensation are taken in case of presence of negative consequences in environmental terms;

### Interviews:

- Provide information on whether staff and workers are familiar with the actions to be taken for the prevention, limitation or compensation of the negative consequences in environmental terms.

5.3.3. (NON-SLIMF) The annual financial plan provides for costs of prevention, limitation or compensation of negative social or environmental externalities resulting from forest management activities

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation*\* includes assessment about positive and negative impacts from the implementation of forest management activities;
- Reports/studies about possible positive and negative effects of forest management operations;
- Annual financial plan of The Organization.

**5.4. *The Organization*\* shall use local processing, local services, and local value adding to meet the requirements of *The Organization*\* where these are available, proportionate to *scale, intensity and risk*\*. If these are not locally available, *The Organization*\* shall make *reasonable*\* attempts to help establish these services.**

5.4.1. (NON-SLIMF) There is evidence that part of the yield and sale of timber and NTFP is provided to local companies (processors/consumers), local goods, services and processing facilities are used so that added value is generated, without prejudice to national legislation.

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- Financial documents;
- Procurement *procedures*\* for use of timber of local merchants;
- Contracts signed with local companies;
- Timetable for the sites that are available for harvesting and sale of timber to local traders;
- Tender documentation;

- Applications of local merchants;
- Register of the quantities sold timber and non-timber forest product to local markets;

Field check:

- Check whether the services of local companies are used, whether local people are employed;

Interviews:

- With local business and interested stakeholders.

5.4.2. (NON-SLIMF) If no local goods, local services or processing facilities to generate added value exist, The Organization makes reasonable attempts through provision of information about possibilities to establish such.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Financial documents;
- Support for participation in projects;
- Minutes of meetings with local business/municipality;
- Correspondence with local companies.

Interviews:

- Local business and interested stakeholders.

**5.5. The Organization\* shall demonstrate through its planning and expenditures proportionate to scale, intensity and risk\*, its commitment to long-term\* economic viability\*.**

5.5.1. (NON-SLIMF) The management of the MU is based on a financial plan/budget which allocates funds to ensure implementation of activities included in the *planning documentation\** and standard requirements, and ensures long-term economic viability.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Financial documents;
- Budget of The Organization;

Interviews:

- Managers and accountants of The Organization.

5.5.2. (NON-SLIMF) Expenditures and investments are made to implement the management plan, in order to meet the requirements of the standard and to ensure long-term economic viability.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Financial documents;
- Budget of The Organization;

Interviews:

- Managers and accountants of The Organization.

5.5.3. (NON-SLIMF) Estimated revenues consider market trends and are sufficient to cover expenses and investments for forest management and to ensure long-term economic viability.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Financial documents;
- Budget of The Organization;

Interviews:

- Managers and accountants of The Organization.

## PRINCIPLE\* 6: ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES\* AND IMPACTS

**The Organization\* shall maintain, conserve\* and/or restore\* ecosystem services\* and environmental values\* of the Management Unit\*, and shall avoid, repair or mitigate negative environmental impacts.**

**6.1. The Organization\* shall assess environmental values\* in the Management Unit\* and those values outside the Management Unit\* potentially affected by management activities\*. This assessment shall be undertaken with a level of detail, scale\* and frequency that is proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities\*, and is sufficient for the purpose of deciding the necessary conservation\* measures, and for detecting and monitoring possible negative impacts of those activities.**

6.1.1. (NON-SLIMF) Best available information is used to identify environmental values that are potentially affected by management activities, within and outside of the Management Unit, including:

- 1) Forest ecosystem functions\*;
- 2) Biological diversity;
- 3) Water resources;
- 4) Soils;
- 5) Landscape values.

6.1.1. (SLIMF) Best available information is used to identify environmental values that are potentially affected by management activities, within and outside of the Management Unit, including:

- 1) Biological diversity;
- 2) Water resources.

**Note:** See Annex 11 for a list of sources of best available information for defining the environmental values.

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- Availability and comprehensiveness of the identified environmental values (Notes of the auditor whether such information is incorporated in the *planning documentation\**);

#### Interviews:

- Provides information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

6.1.2. The information about environmental values defined in 6.1.1 has a level of detail and is assessed at a frequency so that:

- 1) Impacts of management activities on the identified environmental values can be assessed as per Criterion 6.2;
- 2) Risks to environmental values can be identified as per Criterion 6.2;
- 3) Necessary conservation measures to protect values can be identified as per Criterion 6.3; and,
- 4) Monitoring of impacts or environmental changes can be conducted as per Principle 8.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Check about the relevance of the information gathered;
- Check if there were any consultations with local and national experts, interested stakeholders, etc.;

#### Interviews:

- With staff/responsible person.

## 6.2. **Prior to the start of site-disturbing activities, *The Organization\** shall identify and assess the *scale, intensity and risk\** of potential impacts of *management activities\** on the identified *environmental values\**.**

6.2.1. Prior to the start of site-disturbing activities, an *environmental impact assessment\** identifies potential present and future impacts of management activities on environmental values, from the stand level to the landscape level. In cases where this is required by national legislation, a formal *Environmental Impact Assessment\** (EIA), Ecological Assessment (EA), Appropriate Assessment (AA), etc. are/is conducted.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Check written documents in connection to the assessment as per 6.2.1; availability of EIA, EA, AA, etc., if such are required by the national legislation;

#### Interviews:

- Provides information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

## 6.3. ***The Organization\** shall identify and implement effective actions to prevent negative impacts of *management activities\** on the *environmental values\**, and to mitigate and repair those that occur, proportionate to the *scale, intensity and risk\** of these impacts.**

6.3.1. Management activities are planned and implemented to prevent negative impacts and to protect environmental values. The protection measures planned are included in the relevant technical documentation.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Check of the *planning documentation\** and the documents about technological implementation of the activities;

#### Field check:

- Check the following:
- Loss and damage of the biological diversity;
- Loss of productive area;
- Soil compaction and disturbance;
- Loss of fertility and food base;
- Impact on the hydrological regime;
- Soil erosion;

- Damages and disturbances in areas with special regime, etc.;

Interviews with:

- Staff and workers if and to what extent are familiar with the requirements and implementation of measures for protection of environmental values.

6.3.2. Where negative impacts on environmental values occur, measures are taken to mitigate or prevent further damage, and/or damaged values are repaired.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check of the technical documentation, protocols etc.;
- Check for planned measures to prevent and mitigate negative impacts;

Field check:

- Check for the occurrence of negative impacts and implement the planned measures for prevention and mitigation of negative impacts;

Interviews:

- Provides information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

**6.4. The Organization\* shall protect rare species\* and threatened species\* and their habitats\* in the Management Unit\* through conservation zones\*, protection areas\*, connectivity\* and/or (where necessary) other direct measures for their survival and viability. These measures shall be proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities\* and to the conservation\* status and ecological requirements of the rare and threatened species\*. The Organization\* shall take into account the geographic range and ecological requirements of rare and threatened species\* beyond the boundary of the Management Unit\*, when determining the measures to be taken inside the Management Unit\*.**

6.4.1. Best Available Information is used to identify rare, threatened and *protected species\**, and their habitats, that are present or likely to be present within and adjacent to the MU.

**Note:** Rare, threatened and *protected species\** are listed in the Bulgarian Biodiversity Act, Red Data Book of the Republic of Bulgaria, CITES Convention list, Bonn convention list, Bern Convention, and/or other lists at a national or European level.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF report, management plans of protected areas and Natura 2000 sites and other specialized studies and maps;
- Check whether and to what extent the information has been incorporated into the *planning documentation\**;

Field check:

- Check the presence and the status of species identified under 6.4.1;

Interviews with:

- Staff and workers, incl. these of the subcontractors if they are familiar with the presence of rare, threatened and *protected species\** and their habitats;
- Interested stakeholders.

6.4.2. Potential impacts of management activities on rare, threatened and *protected species*\* and their conservation status and habitats are identified.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF Report, technological and other relevant documentation;

Field check:

- To what extend forest management activities are implemented to avoid negative impacts;

Interviews:

- To what extend the staff and workers of the subcontractors are aware of the possible impacts of forest management activities on rare, threatened and *protected species*\*.

6.4.3. Management activities are modified to avoid the causes of negative impacts.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF Report, technological and other relevant documentation;

Field check:

- To what extend forest management activities are carried out in a way avoiding negative impacts;

6.4.4. Measures for protection of the identified rare, threatened and *protected species*\* and their habitats are applied, including through the provision of conservation zones, protection areas, connectivity, and other direct means for their survival and viability, such as species' recovery programs. Measures are proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk of the management activities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check of the *planning documentation*\* and maps; restoration programmes, etc.;

Field check:

- To what extend forest management activities are carried out in a way avoiding negative impacts; check to what extend are observed the regimes in the established protected areas and Natura 2000 sites;
- Review of the implementation of the planned measures.

Interviews:

- Provides information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

6.4.5. (NON-SLIMF) Measures are developed and applied to prevent hunting, fishing, trapping and collection of rare, threatened and *protected species*\*.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if *procedures*\* are in place for prevention of the activities described in the indicator;
- Check the observation protocols, analysis, etc.;

- Check for the presence of documents certifying the implementation of the developed measures for prevention (schedules about duties during weekends, records of findings for checks carried out, restricting access to forest areas with HCV etc.;

Interviews with:

- Staff and workers;
- Interested stakeholders and control institutions (Regional inspectorate on environment and water, Regional Forestry Directorate, etc.).

**6.5. The Organization\* shall identify and protect\* Representative Sample Areas\* of native ecosystems\* and/or restore\* them to more natural conditions\*. Where Representative Sample Areas\* do not exist or are insufficient, The Organization\* shall restore\* a proportion of the Management Unit\* to more natural conditions\*. The size of the areas and the measures taken for their protection\* or restoration\*, including within plantations\*, shall be proportionate to the conservation\* status and value of the ecosystems\* at the landscape\* level, and the scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities\*.**

6.5.1. Best Available Information is used to identify the native ecosystems within the MU that exist in natural environmental conditions or that existed previously but are now degraded due to *natural disturbances\** or anthropogenic impact.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF Report, specialized studies, etc.;
- Maps;
- Forest management plan;

Field check:

- Check the presence and status of the identified areas as described in the indicator;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

6.5.2. The Organization ensures the protection of representative sample areas of all native ecosystems present within the MU.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF Report;
- Nature 2000 standard data forms;
- Management plans of Protected areas and Natura 2000 sites;
- Forest regional plan for development;
- FMP (protection of these sample areas is incorporated in the FMP);
- Maps of the identified *old-growth forests\**;
- Planning documentation and maps;
- Programs for restoration/reintroduction;
- Check of issued felling permissions (through the website of the Executive Forest Agency).



Field check:

- Are there any activities taking place in the *old-growth forests*\*?
- What activities are implemented for protection of the representative sample areas;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

6.5.3. For ecosystems identified in accordance with the requirements of Indicator 6.5.1, of which no representative samples exist or where existing samples inadequately represent these ecosystems, *restoration areas*\* are designated in which The Organization implements activities/measures for restoration of these ecosystems.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Maps, HCVF Report, etc;

Field check:

- The territories envisaged and managed for the purpose of restoration of native ecosystems are inspected on the ground.

6.5.4. (NON-SLIMF) The size of the areas of the representative samples of native ecosystems and the *restoration areas*\* are determined depending on the nature protection and ecological value of the respective ecosystems. This value is determined for each ecosystem at the landscape level and MU level.

**Note:** The aim is to protect from negative anthropogenic impacts those forest ecosystems which are more rare and vulnerable, but also to preserve representative samples of ecosystems that are well represented and with a *favorable conservation status*\* (Annex 10 needs to be considered).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Maps, HCVF Report, etc.

6.5.5. At least 5% of the forested area of the MU is designated as *old-growth forests*\* (OGF), defined in accordance with the requirements of Principle 9 (see Addendum 1 - National HCVF Toolkit, Section HCV 3) and Annex 9). In the absence of sufficient forests having characteristics of *old-growth forests*\* on the territory of the MU, forests with potential for their transformation into OGF are identified and managed as OGF.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Maps, HCVF Report, etc.;

Field check:

- Check the respective territories identified;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

6.5.6 No forest management activities are allowed in the OGFs, except in cases of restoration of damages caused by *large-scale natural disturbances\**, affecting more than 30% of the area of the sub-compartment, designated as OGF.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Maps, HCVF Report, harvesting documentation etc.;

Field check:

- On-site inspection of OGFs;

Interviews:

- Obtain information on forest management activities in OGFs.

6.5.7. As an integral part of the *Conservation Areas Network\**, the representative sample areas of native ecosystems and *restoration areas\** are at least 10% of the area of the MU. In those areas forest management activities are not allowed except for activities for restoration of the forest to more natural conditions.

**Note:** OGF identified according to 6.5.5 may be an addition to these areas or may be included as part of them.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Maps, HCVF Report, etc.;

Field check:

- Check the respective territories identified;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

6.5.8. (NON-SLIMF) Representative samples areas of native ecosystems are shown on forest maps.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Maps.

**6.6. *The Organization\** shall effectively maintain the continued existence of naturally occurring native species\* and genotypes\*, and prevent losses of biological diversity\*, especially through habitat\* management in the Management Unit\*. The Organization\* shall demonstrate that effective measures are in place to manage and control hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting.**

6.6.1. Forest management activities maintain the features of the plant communities and habitats in the native ecosystems within the MU.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if in the *planning documentation\** are described the features of the plant communities and habitats and if forest management activities that could negatively impact naturally occurring species are assessed;

Field check:

- Check if the features of the plant communities and habitats in the native ecosystems are significantly influenced by the forest management activities;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted with the requirement of the indicator.

6.6.2. In cases where the management of the MU in the past has led to destruction of natural plant communities or *habitat features\**, measures for their restoration are undertaken.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation\**;

Field check:

- Check if restoration measures are in place;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted with the requirement of the indicator.

6.6.3. Forest management activities maintain, enhance, or restore *habitat features\** of native ecosystems, with the aim of maintaining the diversity of naturally occurring species and their genetic diversity.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Planning documentation;

Field check:

- Check whether the activities for maintenance, improvement or restoration of *habitat features\** of native ecosystems, specified in the *planning documentation\** are implemented;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

6.6.4. (NON-SLIMF) Up-to-date information is available on hunting, fishing, setting traps and collection of species, including allowable quotas of use.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Game hunting data;
- Acts of poaching;
- Permits for collection of herbs from the list of medicinal plants;
- Annual license for collection of mushrooms and non-medicinal plants and others.

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

6.6.5. (NON-SLIMF) Effective measures are taken to restrict hunting within the annual game management plan. Measures to control fishing, trapping and collection of species are implemented in a way ensuring the existence and natural distribution of native species and their genetic diversity.

6.6.5. (SLIMF) Effective measures to prevent trapping are implemented.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Game hunting data;
- Acts of poaching;
- Permits for collection of herbs from the list of medicinal plants;
- Annual license for collection of mushrooms and non-medicinal plants and others;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted.

**6.7. The Organization\* shall protect\* or restore\* natural water courses, water bodies\*, riparian zones\* and their connectivity\*. The Organization\* shall avoid negative impacts on water quality and quantity and mitigate and remedy those that occur.**

6.7.1. Natural watercourses and all water bodies are identified and mapped.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest maps;

Field check:

- Check to what extent the situation on the ground corresponds to the information in the *planning documentation\**.

6.7.2. Measures are implemented to protect watercourses, water bodies, riparian zones and their ecological connectivity, during the design, construction and maintenance of forest roads and skidding routes.

Measures include but are not limited to:

- 1) The number of stream crossings is minimized;
- 2) Stream crossings are planned before operations begin and are shown on relevant maps;
- 3) Where a watercourse has to be crossed, protective facilities are to be constructed (e.g. bridges, wooden trays, stone bottom, etc.) or culverts are to be placed.
- 4) Stream crossings are perpendicular to the stream;
- 5) New roads are not constructed in *streambeds\**;
- 6) Existing roads in *streambeds\** are closed and replacements are constructed;
- 7) Valley bottom roads and skidding routes are kept as far back from the stream as possible;
- 8) Culverts are designed so they do not obstruct the migration of fish, create fast water velocities or *riverbeds\** unsuitable for fish;

- 9) Drains do not drain into natural watercourses. Where this is unavoidable, silt traps are installed and cleaned regularly.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Projects for construction of forest roads;
- Technological plans for logging;

Field check:

- Check on site the emplacement of the forest roads and skidding routes;
- Presence of traces of sediments or other damages to water sources;
- Method of crossing the water courses;
- Presence of and method of placement of protective facilities;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the staff and the workers are acquainted with the requirements of planning/designing, construction and maintenance of forest roads and skidding routes, and the measures for protection of the water courses.

6.7.3. Measures are applied to protect watercourses, water bodies, riparian zones and their ecological connectivity during forest management operations. Measures include but are not limited to:

- 1) Harvesting machinery must not enter streams except at designated and designed stream crossings;
- 2) There shall be no hauling of timber and vehicle traffic along watercourses or *streambeds*\*. In cases where no other technological option exists, this is allowed upon the approval of the Head of The Organization after construction of a pit at the end of the road. The pit serves to trap the soil particles and is cleaned periodically;
- 3) Logging residues (branches, tops, etc.) are not stored in or adjacent to permanent and non-permanent watercourses\* and water bodies. Harvesting residues caught up in watercourses or *riverbeds*\* are *promptly*\* removed;
- 4) Barriers to watercourses, streams and fish ladders are not created;
- 5) Temporary wood stores are not built in or over *permanent watercourses*\*.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Technological plans for logging;
- Check to what extent the measures from the *planning documentation*\* correspond to the Programme of measures of the Water Basin Management Plan aimed at achieving a good condition - in terms of quality and quantity - of the surface and underground water bodies.

Field check:

- Check the implementation of the measures for protection of water courses, water bodies;
- riparian areas and their ecological connectivity;

Interviews:

- Staff/workers (incl. subcontractors) engaged with forest management activities on site are acquainted with the measures for protection of water courses, water bodies, riparian zones and their ecological connectivity.
- 6.7.4. For the protection of watercourses, water bodies, riparian zones and their ecological connectivity protection zones with a width of not less than 15 meters are established, along all *permanent watercourses*\* and water bodies where:
- 1) Harvesting does not take place or has a limited intensity of up to 5% of the protection zone standing volume.
  - 2) Harvesting in the protection zone does not create open spaces with a diameter bigger than 10 meters.
  - 3) Dead and dying trees in the protection zone are removed only if they endanger the lives and health of people or create conditions which impede water flow.
  - 4) No logging residues are disposed.

In the existing plantations or parts of them falling within the 15-meter zone along *permanent watercourses*\* and water bodies, clear fellings are allowed only in case that after felling The Organization restores the forest vegetation area with native species and genotypes.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Protection zones are reflected in technological plans for logging and other relevant documentation;

Field check:

- The regimes for protection of protection zones are implemented;

Interviews:

- Staff involved in the forest management activities (incl. subcontractors) is aware of the protection zone regimes.
- 6.7.5. Natural watercourses, water bodies, riparian zones and their ecological connectivity, water quantity and water quality that have been damaged by activities of The Organization (including activities in the past) are restored.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Presence of damaged natural watercourses, water bodies, riparian zones and their ecological connectivity; negative effects on the quality and quantity of water;
- Implementation of the restoration measures that were planned;

Interviews:

- Provides information on whether staff and workers are familiar with the requirements.
- Interviews with stakeholders (Regional Inspectorates for Environment and Water, Basin Directorates and others.).

6.7.6. Where continued degradation exists to watercourses, water bodies, water quantity and water quality caused by activities of The Organization (including activities in the past), measures are implemented that mitigate the negative impacts and stop degradation.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Natural watercourses, water bodies and riparian areas with continuous degradation are identified;
- Restoration measures are specified in the *planning documentation*\*;
- Check to what extent the measures in the *planning documentation*\* of The Organization correspond to the measures stipulated in the River Basin Management Plans (the plans of Basin Directorates) aimed at reaching good qualitative and quantitative status of surface and underground water bodies;

Field check:

- Check for damages on natural watercourses, water bodies and riparian areas as well as for negative effects on the quality and quantity of water;
- Implementation of the planned restoration measures;

Interviews:

- Provides information if the staff and workers are familiar with the requirements.
- Interviews with stakeholders (Regional Inspectorates for Environment and Water, Basin Directorates and others).

6.7.7. Where continued degradation exists to watercourses, water bodies, water quantity and water quality caused by the activities of third parties, The Organization informs the responsible authorities and assists in the implementation of measures for mitigation of the negative impacts and cessation of degradation.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Correspondence, agreements and other documentation showing that The Organization has informed the relevant responsible authorities.

Interviews with:

- Responsible authorities.

**6.8. *The Organization*\* shall manage the *landscape*\* in the *Management Unit*\* to maintain and/or restore\* a varying mosaic of species, sizes, ages, spatial scales\* and regeneration cycles appropriate for the *landscape values*\* in that region, and for enhancing environmental and economic *resilience*\*.**

6.8.1. A varying mosaic of species, sizes, ages, spatial scales, and regeneration cycles is maintained appropriate to natural forest types at a landscape level.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation*\* – forest inventory data and maps;

Field check:

- Check to what extent the identified elements are preserved;
- Check to what extent forest management operations maintain and/or restore the diversity of the elements mentioned in the criteria;

Interviews:

- Check if the relevant staff of The Organization is familiar with this requirement;

6.8.2. (NON-SLIMF) Where the characteristics of the forest differ significantly from its natural structure or does not have natural levels of diversity, measures and actions to improve and restore diversity are undertaken appropriate to the landscape.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Assessment to what extent the planned activities maintain or lead to restoration of the natural diversity.

Field check:

- Implementation of the measures on the field.

Interviews:

- Check if the relevant staff of The Organization is familiar with this requirement.

**6.9. The Organization\* shall not convert natural forest\* or High Conservation Value Areas\* to plantations\*, or to non-forest land-use\*, nor transform plantations\* on sites directly converted from natural forest\* to non-forest\* land use, except when the conversion\*:**

- a) Affects a very limited portion\* of the Management Unit\*, and**
- b) Will produce clear, substantial, additional\*, secure long-term conservation\* and social benefits in the Management Unit\*, and**
- c) Does not damage or threaten High Conservation Values\*, nor any sites or resources necessary to maintain or enhance those High Conservation Values\*.**

6.9.1. There is no conversion of natural forest or High Conservation Value Areas to plantations, or to non-forest land-use, nor transformation of plantations on sites directly converted from natural forest to non-forest land use, except when the conversion:

- 1) Affects a very limited portion of the MU; and
- 2) Will produce clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation and social benefits in the MU; and
- 3) Does not damage or threaten High Conservation Values, nor any sites or resources necessary to maintain or enhance those High Conservation Values.

**Note:** FSC policy on excision (FSC-POL-20-003) would apply if the conversion is related to the construction of *infrastructure\** of national importance or of national security and defense, and this conversion exceeds the limits outlined in Indicator 6.9.1.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Records/information related to conversion of natural forest/HCV to plantation or to non-forest land use.



- Analysis of the benefits of conversions

Field check:

- Verification if registered conversions and/or changes of use correspond to the real situation observed on the field.

**6.10. Management Units\* containing plantations\* that were established on areas converted from natural forest\* between 1 December 1994 and 31 December 2020 shall not qualify for certification, except where:**

- The conversion affected a very limited portion\* of the Management Unit\* and is producing clear, substantial, additional\*, secure long-term conservation\* benefits in the Management Unit\*, or**
- The Organization\* which was directly\* or indirectly\* involved in the conversion\* demonstrates restitution\* of all social harms\* and proportionate\* remedy\* of environmental harms\* as specified in the applicable FSC Remedy Framework, or**
- The Organization\* which was not involved in the conversion\* but has acquired Management Units\* where conversion\* has taken place demonstrates restitution\* of priority social harms\* and partial remedy\* of environmental harms\* as specified in the applicable FSC Remedy Framework.**

6.10.1. Based on Best Available Information, accurate data is compiled on all conversions between 1 December 1994 and 31 December 2020 within the Management Unit.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Records/information for conversion of natural forest/HCV to plantations between 1 December 1994 and 31 December 2020.

Field check:

- Check if observed conversions of natural forest/HCV to plantations are documented.

6.10.2. Areas converted from natural forest to plantation between 1 December 1994 and 31 December 2020 are not certified, except where:

- 1) The conversion affected a very limited portion of the MU and is producing clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation benefits in the MU; or
- 2) The Organization which was directly or indirectly involved in the conversion demonstrates restitution of all social harms and proportionate remedy of environmental harms as specified in the applicable FSC Remedy Framework, or
- 3) The Organization which was not involved in conversion but has acquired Management Units where conversion has taken place demonstrates restitution of priority social harms and partial remedy of environmental harms as specified in the applicable FSC Remedy Framework.
- 4) The Organization qualifies as a small-scale smallholder.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Records/information for conversion of natural forest/HCV to plantations between 1 December 1994 and 31 December 2020;
- Assessment of the share of conversions from the area within the scope of the certification;

- Analysis of the benefits of conversions.

Field check:

- Check if observed conversions of natural forest/HCV to plantations are documented;
- To verify if the measures for restitution of social/environmental harms are applied.

Interviews:

- With forest managers to verify if social/environmental harms as result of conversion are identified and restitution measures are taken;
- With affected stakeholders to verify if measures for restitution of social/environmental harms are agreed.

**6.11. Management Units\* shall not qualify for certification if they contain natural forests\* or High Conservation Value Areas\* converted after 31 December 2020, except where the conversion\*:**

- Affected a very limited portion\* of the Management Unit\*, and:**
- Is producing clear, substantial, additional\*, secure long-term\* conservation\* and social benefits in the Management Unit\*, and**
- Did not threaten High Conservation Values\*, nor any sites or resources necessary to maintain or enhance those High Conservation Values\*.**

6.11.1. Based on Best Available Information, accurate data is compiled on all conversions of natural forests and High Conservation Value Areas after 31 December 2020 within the Management Unit.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Records/information for conversion of natural forest/HCV to plantations or to non-forest land use after 31 December 2020.

Field check:

- Check if observed conversions of natural forest/HCV to plantations or to non-forest land used are documented.

6.11.2. Areas where natural forests or High Conservation Value Areas have been converted after 31 December 2020 are not certified, except where the conversion:

- 1) Affected a very limited portion of the Management Unit, and
- 2) is producing clear, substantial, additional, secure long-term conservation and social benefits in the Management Unit, and
- 3) did not threaten High Conservation Values, nor any sites or resources necessary to maintain or enhance those High Conservation Values.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Records/information for conversion of natural forest/HCV to plantations or to non-forest land use after 31 December 2020;
- Analysis of the benefits of conversions.

Field check:

- Verification if registered conversions and/or changes of use correspond to the real situation observed on the field.

## PRINCIPLE\* 7: MANAGEMENT PLANNING

**The Organization\*** shall have a **management plan\*** consistent with its policies and **objectives\*** and proportionate to **scale, intensity and risks\*** of its **management activities\***. The **management plan\*** shall be implemented and kept up to date based on monitoring information in order to promote **adaptive management\***. The associated planning and procedural documentation shall be sufficient to guide staff, inform **affected stakeholders\*** and **interested stakeholders\*** and to justify management decisions.

7.1. **The Organization\*** shall, proportionate to **scale, intensity and risk\*** of its **management activities\***, set policies (visions and values) and **objectives\*** for management, which are environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically viable. Summaries of these policies and **objectives\*** shall be incorporated into the **management plan\***, and **publicized\***.

7.1.1. The Organization has written policies (vision and values) for the management of its forest territories and these policies are in conformance with the requirements of this standard.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation\**;

#### Interviews:

- Interviews with the interested stakeholders regarding the extent to which the policies of The Organization contribute for the fulfilment of the requirements of the Standard.

7.1.2. Specific, operational management objectives that address the requirements of this standard are defined and documented.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- *Planning documentation\**. The auditor checks if in the *planning documentation\** are included specific management objectives that lead to fulfilment of the requirements of the Standard.

7.1.3. (NON-SLIMF) A summary of the defined policies (vision and values) and of the specific management objectives are included in the management plan and **publicized\***.

7.1.3. (SLIMF) The Organization provides the summary of the defined policies (vision and values) and of the specific management objectives upon request.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- The auditor checks if there is a summary available and if it is **publicized\***.

7.2. **The Organization\*** shall have and implement a **management plan\*** for the **Management Unit\*** which is fully consistent with the policies and **management objectives\*** as established according to **Criterion\*** 7.1. The **management plan\*** shall describe the natural resources that exist in the **Management Unit\*** and explain how the plan will meet the FSC certification requirements. The **management plan\*** shall cover **forest\*** management planning and social management planning proportionate to **scale, intensity and risk\*** of the planned activities.

7.2.1. The management plan includes management actions, *procedures\**, strategies and other measures to achieve the management objectives (defined according to 7.1.2).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- General check-up of the *planning documentation\**. The auditor checks if the *planning documentation\**, includes *procedures\**, strategies and other measures for achieving the management objectives defined according to 7.1.2.

7.2.2. The management plan includes an assessment of the natural resources and environmental values within the MU including:

- 1) Description of the physical and geographical characteristics of the MU (topography, soil, geological characteristics, water resources, etc.);
- 2) Description of the timber resource (inventory);
- 3) Description of the non-timber resources (and/or inventory where a methodology exists);
- 4) Protection areas and zones;
- 5) Current and potential presence of rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (required according to 6.4.1 and 6.5.1);
- 6) High conservation values.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if the listed elements are present in the Management plan.

7.2.3. (NON-SLIMF) The management plan includes an assessment of the social, economic and cultural resources and conditions in accordance with Principles 2-6 and Principle 9.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if the listed elements are present in the Management plan.

7.2.4. The management plan includes an assessment of the main social and environmental risks within the MU in accordance with Principles 2-6 and Principle 9.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if the listed elements are present in the Management plan.

7.2.5. When The Organization makes promotional claims regarding the maintenance and/or enhancement of ecosystem services as additional contribution from the FSC certification (see 5.1.4) the management plan includes an assessment of the promoted ecosystem services.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if the listed elements are present in the Management plan.

7.2.6. The management plan includes programmes and activities to guarantee workers rights, occupational health and safety and gender equality in accordance with Principle 2.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Developed programmes and *procedures*\* to guarantee the workers rights, healthy and safe working conditions and gender equality.

7.2.7. (NON-SLIMF) The management plan includes programmes and activities regarding community relations (including resolution of disputes) and the social and economic development of local communities in accordance with Principles 1, 4, 5 and 7.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of impact assessment;
- Developed programmes and *procedures*\* for arrangement of the community relations and support for the local social and economic development.

7.2.8. The management plan provides information on and justifications for the planned forestry management activities, the silvicultural systems used, harvesting methods and the necessary equipment in accordance with Principle 10.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check-up if the required elements are present in the Management plan.

7.2.9. The management plan includes rationale for harvesting rates of timber and tree species and other natural resources in accordance with Principle 5.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Rationale for harvesting rates of timber and tree species and other natural resources is available.

7.2.10. The management plan includes programmes and activities regarding the identification, protection and/or restoration of:

- 1) Rare and endangered species and their habitats;
- 2) water bodies and riparian zones;
- 3) Landscape connectivity, including wildlife corridors;
- 4) Ecosystem services for which The Organization makes promotional claims in accordance with Criterion 5.1 and FSC-PRO-30-006;
- 5) Representative samples of all native ecosystems in accordance with Principle 6;
- 6) High conservation value in accordance with Principle 9.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of HCVF reports;

- *Procedures\** for identification and protection of rare and endangered species, their habitats and biodiversity elements;
- *Procedures\** for protection of water bodies and riparian zones;
- *Procedures\** to guarantee the landscape connectivity.

7.2.11. The management plan includes *procedures\** for assessment of the impacts from forest management activities and measures for prevention and mitigation of the identified negative impacts of:

- 1) The environmental values defined in accordance with Principles 6 and 9;
- 2) The social values identified in accordance with Principles 2-4 and Principle 9;
- 3) The ecosystem services for which The Organization makes promotional claims that they are maintained and improved as result of FSC certification, in accordance with Criterion 5.1 and FSC-PRO-30-006.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of HCVF reports;
- *Procedures\** for identification and protection of rare and endangered species, their habitats and biodiversity elements;
- *Procedures\** for protection of water bodies and riparian zones;
- *Procedures\** for assessment, prevention and mitigation of the identified negative impacts from forest management activities over the ecological and social values.

7.2.12. The management plan includes a description of the monitoring programmes including monitoring for:

- 1) Growth and yield in accordance with Principle 5;
- 2) The ecosystem services for which The Organization makes promotional claims that they are maintained and improved as result of FSC certification, in accordance with Criterion 5.1 and FSC-PRO-30-006;
- 3) Environmental values defined in accordance with Principles 6 and 9;
- 4) Impacts from forest management activities defined in accordance with Principle 10;
- 5) The high conservation values identified in accordance with Principle 9;
- 6) The engagement of interested stakeholders in accordance with Principles 2-5 and Principle 9.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of HCVF reports;
- *Procedures\** for monitoring of the described elements.

7.2.13. The management plan includes maps (on paper and in electronic format) of the natural resources, protection areas and zones, planned activities and ownership of the MU.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of maps.

**7.3. The *management plan*\* shall include *verifiable targets*\* by which progress towards each of the prescribed *management objectives*\* can be assessed.**

7.3.1. The management plan defines verifiable targets for the achievement of the management objectives related to the yield of products from the forest.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of verifiable targets related to the yield of forest products;

Interviews with:

- Responsible personnel of The Organization.

7.3.2. The management plan defines verifiable targets for achievement of the management objectives related to regeneration and forest cover.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of verifiable targets related to regeneration and forest cover;

Interviews with:

- Responsible personnel of The Organization.

7.3.3. The Management plan defines verifiable targets for achievement of the management objectives related to protection of water bodies.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of verifiable targets related to protection of water bodies;

Interviews with:

- Responsible personnel of The Organization.

7.3.4. (NON-SLIMF) The management plan defines verifiable targets for achievement of the management objectives related to soil erosion and compaction.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of verifiable targets related to soil erosion and compaction;

Interviews with:

- Responsible personnel of The Organization.

7.3.5. The management plan defines verifiable targets for achievement of the management objectives related to populations of wild flora and fauna, biodiversity and the condition of the identified high conservation values.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of verifiable targets related to populations of wild flora and fauna, biodiversity and the status of the identified high conservation values;



Interviews with:

- Responsible personnel of The Organization and experts.

7.3.6. (NON-SLIMF) The management plan defines verifiable targets for achievement of the management objectives related to services provided to local communities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of verifiable targets related to the services provided to the local communities;

Interviews with:

- Responsible personnel of The Organization and local communities.

7.3.7. The management plan defines verifiable targets for achievement of the management objectives related to work safety.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of verifiable targets related to work safety;
- Documentary check-up to determine if the number of work accidents is being stable or diminishing/improvement of the working conditions.

7.3.8. (NON-SLIMF) The management plan defines verifiable targets for achievement of the management objectives related to economic viability of The Organization.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of verifiable targets related to the economic viability of The Organization (the targeted financial objectives).

**7.4. The Organization\* shall update and revise periodically the management planning and procedural documentation to incorporate the results of monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement\* or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.**

7.4.1. The management plan is revised and updated taking into account the results of the periodic monitoring carried out in accordance with Criterion 8.2.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if the management plan is up-to-date;
- Check if the results of the periodical monitoring have been integrated in the updated management plan.

7.4.2. The management plan is revised and updated periodically to incorporate the results of external inspections and assessments, as well as certification audits.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if the management plan is up-to-date;

- Check if the results of the outer inspections and assessments, as well as certification audits have been integrated in the updated management plan;

Interviews with:

- Responsible personnel of The Organization.

7.4.3. The management plan is revised and updated periodically to incorporate the results of stakeholder engagement.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if in the management plan have been integrated applicable results from the consultations with interested stakeholders;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

7.4.4. The management plan is revised and updated periodically to incorporate new scientific and technical information.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if in the management plan have been integrated applicable new technical and scientific information.

7.4.5. The management plan is revised and updated periodically consistent with the changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check if in the management plan have been integrated applicable results from assessments and analyses of the changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.

**7.5. The Organization\* shall make *publicly available\** a summary of the *management plan\** free of charge. Excluding *confidential information\**, other relevant components of the *management plan\** shall be made available to *affected stakeholders\** on request, and at cost of reproduction and handling.**

7.5.1. (NON-SLIMF) A summary of the management plan (including overview/thematic maps) excluding confidential information is made publicly available at no cost.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability and accessibility of the summary of the management plan;

Interviews with:

- With interested stakeholders.

7.5.2. Relevant components of the management plan, excluding confidential information, are available to affected stakeholders on request at the actual costs of reproduction and handling.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of a *procedure*\* for providing the management plan (excluding confidential information) on request;

Interviews:

- With interested and affected stakeholders.

**7.6. The Organization\* shall, proportionate to scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities\*, proactively and transparently engage affected stakeholders\* in its management planning and monitoring processes, and shall engage interested stakeholders\* on request.**

7.6.1. (NON-SLIMF) The Organization implements mechanisms for engagement of affected stakeholders in the process of the 10-year planning of forest management activities taking into account their interests as well as other interested stakeholders on request.

7.6.1. (SLIMF) The Organization informs the affected and interested stakeholders of the possibility to participate in the planning of the forest management activities according to their interests.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of relevant mechanisms and how they are applied;

Interviews with:

- Affected and interested stakeholders.

7.6.2. (NON-SLIMF) In the process of annual planning of forest management activities, mechanisms are applied for informing and consulting affected stakeholders as well as other interested stakeholders on request.

7.6.2. (SLIMF) The Organization informs the affected and interested stakeholders of the possibility to participate in the annual planning of the forest management activities according to their interests.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of relevant mechanisms and how they are applied;

Interviews with:

- Affected and interested stakeholders.

7.6.3. *Procedures*\* are applied to guarantee that The Organization undertakes *culturally appropriate*\* engagement of the affected stakeholders in the process of planning of forest management activities including:

- 1) identification of rights (Criterion 4.1);
- 2) identification of sites (Criterion 4.7);
- 3) identification of impacts (Criterion 4.5);
- 4) processes to support the social and economic development of the local communities (Criterion 4.4);
- 5) dispute resolution processes (Criterion 1.6 and 2.6) and
- 6) *collective bargaining*\* at the level of The Organization (Criterion 2.4);

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- Availability of relevant *procedures*\* and how they are applied;

### Interviews with:

- Affected stakeholders.
- 7.6.4. (NON-SLIMF) *Procedures*\* are applied that guarantee that The Organization undertakes activities to engage affected and interested stakeholders in the assessment, management and monitoring of high conservation values.
- 7.6.4. (SLIMF) The Organization has undertaken activities for engagement of affected and interested stakeholders in the assessment, management and monitoring of HCV.

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- Availability of relevant *procedures*\* and how they are applied;

### Interviews with:

- Affected and interested stakeholders.
- 7.6.5. (NON-SLIMF) The *procedures*\* for engagement of the affected and interested stakeholders describe how:
- 1) the appropriate representatives and contact points (including if applicable local institutions, organizations and authorities) are identified;
  - 2) appropriate communication channels that allow information to flow freely in both directions are established and used;
  - 3) the equal engagement of all present interested groups (including women, youths, elderlies, minorities) is guaranteed;
  - 4) all meetings, questions discussed and agreements reached are recorded;
  - 5) the approval of records of meetings by the participants is guaranteed;
  - 6) the interested stakeholders engaged in the consultation process will be informed of the results and how those results and their stipulated application will be approved before the forest management activities continue.

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- Check up for availability of relevant *procedures*\* and how they are applied;
- Check up for conformity of the *procedures*\* with the requirements of 7.6.5;

### Interviews with:

- Affected and interested stakeholders.
- 7.6.6. The affected stakeholders are informed in advance of the planning and monitoring processes that may have negative impacts on them and their interests and they are provided with opportunity to participate in these processes.

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- Availability of written documentation (protocols, minutes, etc.) proving that the affected stakeholders were informed in advance for the planning and monitoring processes and they were provided with opportunity to participate in these processes;

Interviews with:

- Affected stakeholders.

7.6.7. On request interested stakeholders are provided with opportunity to participate in the monitoring of the forest management activities affecting their interests.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of written documentation (protocols, minutes, etc.) proving that the interested stakeholders were given the opportunity to participate in the monitoring of the forest management activities on their request;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders.

## PRINCIPLE\* 8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

**The Organization\*** shall demonstrate that, progress towards achieving the **management objectives\***, the impacts of **management activities\*** and the condition of the **Management Unit\***, are monitored and evaluated proportionate to the **scale, intensity and risk\*** of **management activities\***, in order to implement **adaptive management\***.

**8.1. The Organization\*** shall monitor the implementation of its **Management Plan\***, including its policies and **management objectives\***, its progress with the activities planned, and the achievement of its **verifiable targets\***.

8.1.1. A system for annual monitoring of the implementation of the management plan, including the policies, management objectives and verifiable targets, is available and applied.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Check up for the availability of a system (an order of the Director of The Organization) and/or written plan/method for monitoring that includes all the elements mentioned in the indicator;

#### Interviews:

- With the responsible personnel of The Organization regarding their knowledge on the system for monitoring and their responsibilities related to the system.

**8.2. The Organization\*** shall monitor and evaluate the environmental and social impacts of the activities carried out in the **Management Unit\***, and changes in its environmental condition.

8.2.1. The social impacts of management activities are monitored consistent with Annex 7.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Availability of a documented system for monitoring;
- Availability of written notes from implemented monitoring – check for lists, analyses, summaries;

#### Interviews:

- With the personnel responsible for the monitoring and local communities.

8.2.2. The environmental impacts of management activities are monitored consistent with Annex 7.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Availability of a documented system for monitoring;
- Availability of written notes from implemented monitoring – check for lists, analyses, summaries;

#### Interviews:

- With the responsible personnel regarding their knowledge on the method for monitoring and their relevant responsibilities.

8.2.3. Changes in environmental conditions are monitored consistent with Annex 7.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Availability of a documented system for monitoring;
- Availability of written notes from implemented monitoring – check for lists, analyses, summaries;

Interviews:

- With the employees doing the field inspections – chief of district, assistant forester, etc.;
- With the responsible personnel regarding their knowledge on the monitoring methods and their relevant responsibilities.

**8.3. The Organization\* shall analyze the results of monitoring and evaluation and feed the outcomes of this analysis back into the planning process.**

8.3.1. The Organization adapts the management activities according to the analysis of the monitoring results.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Management plan;
- Documents related to preparation, planning and implementation of the forest management activities – tree marking documents, technological plans, plans statements;
- Evidences that the risks, changes or deviations, identified during the monitoring have been included in the forest management planning process;
- Availability of documents with analysis of the monitoring results;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the responsible personnel is informed how the monitoring results are being included in the annual planning and implementation of the *forestry activities\**.

8.3.2. If monitoring results show non-conformities with the *FSC Standard\** then the management objectives, verifiable targets as well as management activities are revised.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Management plan;
- Availability of documents with analysis of the monitoring results;

Field check

Interviews:

- With management and personnel of The Organization.

**8.4. The Organization\* shall make *publicly available\** a summary of the results of monitoring free of charge, excluding *confidential information\**.**

8.4.1. A summary of the monitoring results excluding confidential information is made publicly available, and is provided freely and at no cost.

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- Availability of publicly available summary – on the information board, website of The Organization, etc.;

### Interviews with:

- With representatives of the local communities.

**8.5. The Organization\* shall have and implement a tracking and tracing system proportionate to scale, intensity and risk\* of its management activities\*, for demonstrating the source and volume in proportion to projected output for each year, of all products from the Management Unit\* that are marketed as FSC certified\*.**

8.5.1. A system is implemented to track and trace all products from the certified forest that are marketed as FSC certified. If requested by the certification body, the Organization provides:

- 1) Support to *transaction verification\** by providing *FSC Transaction\** data;
- 2) Support to *fibre testing\** by surrendering samples and specimens of materials and information about species composition for verification.

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- Check up for available *procedures\** according to the indicator – an order, system, plan for tracing of the products;

### Interviews:

- With the personnel regarding their knowledge of the system and their relevant responsibilities.

8.5.2. Information about all products sold as FSC certified is documented and kept, including:

- 1) Common and scientific species name;
- 2) Product name or description;
- 3) Volume (or quantity) of product;
- 4) Information to trace the material to the source of origin logging block;
- 5) Logging or production date;
- 6) If basic processing activities take place in the forest, the date and volume produced.

## Verifiers:

### Documentary check:

- Accounting documentation – invoices, waybills, transport tickets, sale contracts;
- Files of the logged sites – tree marking documents, wood assortment lists, handing over protocols.

8.5.3. Sales invoices for FSC certified products and the accompanying documentation are kept for a minimum of five years. The documents identify at a minimum, the following information:

- 1) Name and address of purchaser;



- 2) The date of sale;
- 3) Common species name;
- 4) Product description;
- 5) The volume (or quantity) sold;
- 6) Certificate code;
- 7) The FSC Claim “FSC 100%” identifying products sold as FSC certified.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Accounting documentation – invoices, waybills, transport tickets, sale contracts;
- Files of the logged sites – tree marking documents, wood assortment lists, handing over protocols.

## PRINCIPLE\* 9: HIGH CONSERVATION VALUES\*

**The Organization\*** shall maintain and/or enhance the **High Conservation Values\*** in the **Management Unit\*** through applying the **precautionary approach\***.

9.1. **The Organization\***, through **engagement\*** with **affected stakeholders\***, **interested stakeholders\*** and other means and sources, shall assess and record the presence and status of the following **High Conservation Values\*** in the **Management Unit\***, proportionate to the **scale, intensity and risk\*** of impacts of **management activities\***, and likelihood of the occurrence of the **High Conservation Values\***:

**HCV 1 – Species diversity.** Concentrations of **biological diversity\*** including endemic species, and **rare\***, **threatened\*** or endangered species, that are **significant\*** at global, regional or national levels.

**HCV 2 – Landscape\*-level ecosystems\*** and mosaics. **Intact Forest Landscapes\*** and large **landscape\*-level ecosystems\*** and **ecosystem\*** mosaics that are **significant\*** at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

**HCV 3 – Ecosystems\*** and **habitats\***. **Rare\***, **threatened\***, or **endangered ecosystems\***, **habitats\*** or **refugia\***.

**HCV 4 – Critical\* ecosystem services\***. **Basic ecosystem services\*** in **critical\*** situations, including **protection\*** of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.

**HCV 5 – Community needs.** Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of **local communities\*** or **Indigenous Peoples\*** (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through **engagement\*** with these communities or **Indigenous Peoples\***.

**HCV 6 – Cultural values.** Sites, resources, **habitats\*** and **landscapes\*** of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of **critical\*** cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of **local communities\*** or **Indigenous Peoples\***, identified through **engagement\*** with these **local communities\*** or **Indigenous Peoples\***.

- 9.1.1. Within the MU, a specialized research has been carried out to assess the presence and condition of high conservation values in compliance with the *Practical Guide for Identifying, Managing, and Monitoring of High Conservation Value Forests in Bulgaria\**. (See Addendum 1).

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- Availability of a documented research on the HCV forests/HCVF report;

#### Field check:

- Check of the identified HCV forests for conformity of the documented information with the situation on the field;

#### Interviews:

- Provide information whether the personnel is acquainted with the HCV research.

- 9.1.2. The results of the research according to 9.1.1 are presented in a report and the identified HCV forests are mapped.

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- HCVF Report;
- Maps with the identified HCV forests;

Interviews:

- Provide information whether the personnel is acquainted with the presence of HCV.
- 9.1.3. During the research carried out according to 9.1.1, consultations with *affected* and interested stakeholders and experts who are versed in the HCV categories have been held and documented. The consultations are conducted in a *culturally appropriate\** way.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Lists of the experts and interested stakeholders who were consulted and took part in the development of the HCVF report;
- Letters to the interested stakeholders;
- Documentation from public discussions, opinions, statements, etc.

Interviews:

- Provide information whether the local interested stakeholders are acquainted with the presence of HCV forests in the region and how they have been consulted or engaged in identification of the HCV forests.
- 9.1.4. The report according to 9.1.2 is publicly available on the website of The Organization and the public version excludes information about localities of rare and threatened species. In case, The Organization does not have a website, the report is available on request.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Website of The Organization;
  - Correspondence with stakeholders who have requested the report.
- 9.1.5. The report according to Indicator 9.1.2 is updated when new information becomes available, after justification and consultation with the interested stakeholders. Change of the already identified *old-growth forests\** is not allowed except in the cases of *large-scale natural disturbances\**. (see the Note at Indicator 6.5.5).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF Report;
- Letters from interested stakeholders;
- Justifications;
- Documents proving public consultations were held;

Interviews with:

- Interested stakeholders and staff of The Organization.
- 9.1.6. (NON-SLIMF) Affected and interested stakeholders are informed that they can submit new information to The Organization to update the report according to 9.1.2.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Letters to interested stakeholders;
- List of participants and minutes from meetings with interested and affected stakeholders;

#### Interviews with:

- Interested and affected stakeholders and personnel of The Organization.

## 9.2. **The Organization\* shall develop effective strategies that maintain and/or enhance the identified High Conservation Values\*, through engagement\* with affected stakeholders\*, interested stakeholders\* and experts.**

9.2.1. *Threats\** to the identified High Conservation Values are identified in accordance with the *Practical Guide for Identifying, Managing, and Monitoring of High Conservation Value Forests in Bulgaria\** and are documented.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- HCVF report with identified *threats\** for the HCV;

#### Field check:

- Check if the *threats\** for HCV are correctly identified;

#### Interviews:

- Provides information of the personnel is acquainted with the presence of HCVF and the *threats\** for the identified HCV.

9.2.2. The management plan includes specific actions (measures) to maintain and/or enhance the identified High Conservation Values that are applied prior to and during the commencement of forest management activities.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Availability of specific actions (measures) for maintenance and enhancement the identified HCV in the HCVF report;
- Files of the sites with implemented management activities;

#### Field check:

- Check if the stipulated specific actions for maintenance and enhancement of the HCV are considered and applied prior to and during the management activities;

#### Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted with the presence of HCV and with the measures that were stipulated to be applied prior to and during the management activities.

9.2.3. Affected and interested stakeholders and experts in the relevant topics are engaged in the development of specific actions to maintain and/or enhance the identified High Conservation Values.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Lists of the experts, affected and interested stakeholders who were consulted and participated in the development of actions for maintenance and enhancement of the HCV;
- Letters to the affected and interested stakeholders;
- Documents from public consultations and discussions, opinions, statements, etc.;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the local affected and interested stakeholders are acquainted with the presence of HCVF in the region and how they were engaged and consulted in development of actions for maintenance and enhancement of the identified HCV.

9.2.4. (NON-SLIMF) The specific actions developed are effective to maintain and/or enhance the High Conservation Values.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF report with defined actions for maintenance and enhancement of the identified HCV;
- Availability of *procedures*\* that guarantee the implementation of actions for maintenance and enhancement of the identified HCV;
- Files of the sites with implemented forest management activities – check if prior to forest management activities the presence of HCV was considered and relevant protection measures were stipulated in the technical documentation – technological plans, tree marking documents, etc.;

Field check:

- Check if the measures applied for maintenance and protection of the HCVF are effective;

Interviews:

- Provide information for the effectiveness of the applied measures for maintenance and protection of the HCV.

**9.3. The Organization\* shall implement strategies and actions that maintain and/or enhance the identified High Conservation Values\*. These strategies and actions shall implement the precautionary approach\* and be proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities\*.**

9.3.1. The Organization applies the developed specific actions to maintain and/or enhance the High Conservation Values and High Conservation Value Areas.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF report with defined actions for maintenance and enhancement of the identified HCV;
- Availability of *procedures*\* to guarantee the application of the actions for maintenance and enhancement of the identified HCV;
- Files of the sites with implemented forest management activities are being held – check if prior to forest management activities the presence of HCV was considered and relevant protection measures were stipulated in the technical documentation – technological plans, tree marking documents, etc.;
- Check of issued felling permissions (through the website of the Executive Forest Agency);

Field check:

- Check if the measures for maintenance and enhancement of the HCV were considered and applied prior to and during the implementation of the forest management activities;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted and applies measures for maintenance and enhancement of the HCVs.

9.3.2. The applied specific actions prevent damages and risks to High Conservation Values, even when the scientific information is incomplete or inconclusive, or the vulnerability and sensitivity of High Conservation Values are uncertain.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF report with defined actions for maintenance and enhancement of the identified HCV;
- Files of the sites with implemented forest management activities;

Field check:

- Check if measures for maintenance and protection of the HCV are being considered and applied;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted and applies measures for maintenance and enhancement of the HCVs.

9.3.3. Activities that harm High Conservation Values cease immediately and actions are taken to restore and protect the High Conservation Values.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- *Procedures\** or an order for the actions to be implemented in case of harmed HCVs;
- Files of the sites with implemented forest management activities;

Field check:

- Check for activities that harmed the HCV;
- Check if there have been undertaken measures to restore HCV harmed by the forest management activities.

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted with the *procedures\** for cessation of activities that harm the identified HCV and measures undertaken to restore the harmed HCV.

9.4. **The Organization\*** shall demonstrate that periodic monitoring is carried out to assess changes in the status of **High Conservation Values\***, and shall adapt its management strategies to ensure their effective **protection\***. The monitoring shall be proportionate to the **scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities\***, and shall include **engagement\*** with **affected stakeholders\***, **interested stakeholders\*** and experts.

9.4.1. In accordance with the recommendations for monitoring of High Conservation Values in the *Practical Guide for Identifying, Managing, and Monitoring of High Conservation Value Forests in Bulgaria\**, a system is applied for periodic monitoring of the identified High Conservation Values and the effectiveness of actions implemented to maintain and/or enhance the High Conservation Values.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF report and its “Recommendations for monitoring” sections;
- Developed system/programme for monitoring – a *procedure\**; an order, etc.;
- Filled in forms from implemented monitoring;

Field check:

- Check if the recommendations for monitoring provided in the HCVF report are applied;

Interviews:

- Provides information if the personnel is acquainted and applies a programme for monitoring.

9.4.2. (NON-SLIMF) The monitoring program includes engagement with experts, affected and interested stakeholders.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- List of the experts who participated in the development of the HCVF report and its sections “Recommendations for monitoring”;
- Letters and invitations to the affected and interested stakeholders and experts to participate in the monitoring activities;
- Developed system/programme for monitoring – a *procedure\**, an order, etc.;

Interviews with:

- Local affected and interested stakeholders and experts about the opportunities given to them to participate in the monitoring of the HCV and about the extent they can actually participated.

9.4.3. (NON-SLIMF) The monitoring program has sufficient scope, detail and frequency to detect changes in High Conservation Values, relative to the initial assessment and status identified for each High Conservation Value.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF report and its “Recommendations for monitoring” sections;
- Developed system/programme for monitoring – a *procedure\**, an order, etc.;

- Completed forms from implemented monitoring;
- Documented changes in the condition of the identified HCV;

Field check:

- Check if the recommendations for monitoring provided in the HCVF report are applied;
- Check if the system for monitoring allows to determine changes in the identified HCV;

Interviews:

- With responsible personnel of The Organization regarding their knowledge on the monitoring program and to assess the scale, level of detail and frequency of the HCV monitoring system.

9.4.4. (NON-SLIMF) The results from the monitoring are documented in standard forms and an annual written analysis is made on this basis.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF report and its “Recommendations for monitoring” sections;
- Files of the forest sites;
- Completed forms from implemented monitoring;
- Written annual analysis;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the responsible personnel are acquainted with the recommendations for monitoring and how they fill in the monitoring forms.

9.4.5. Management strategies and actions are adapted when monitoring or other new information show that these strategies and actions are insufficient to ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of High Conservation Values.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- HCVF report and “Recommendations for monitoring” sections;
- Annual analysis of the results from the monitoring;
- Management plan;
- Files of the forest sites (logging sites);
- Reports, statements, findings protocols, etc.;
- Letters and statements from interested stakeholders for changes in the HCVs;
- Changes made in the measures for protection and/or the system for monitoring in the HCVF report and the relevant *procedures*\*;

Field check:

- Check if the adapted actions are being applied;



Interviews:

- Provide information if the responsible personnel use the information from the monitoring for changes/adaptation of the actions if necessary;
- Provide information if the relevant personnel are acquainted and apply the changes/adaptation in the actions.

## **PRINCIPLE\* 10: IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

**Management activities\* conducted by or for The Organization\* for the Management Unit\* shall be selected and implemented consistent with The Organization\*'s economic, environmental and social policies and objectives\* and in compliance with the Principles\* and Criteria\* collectively.**

**10.1. After harvest or in accordance with the management plan\*, The Organization\* shall, by natural or artificial regeneration methods, regenerate vegetation cover in a timely fashion to pre-harvesting\* or more natural conditions\*.**

10.1.1. Harvested sites are regenerated in a timely manner that:

- 1) Protects affected environmental values; and
- 2) Is suitable to recover overall pre-harvest or natural forest composition and structure.

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for logging;
- Technological plans for afforestation;

#### Field check:

- Check if the actions were implemented in accordance with what was stipulated in the plans.
- Check of the condition of the natural regeneration, supported regeneration and of the artificially made *forest cultures\**;

#### Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and forest workers are acquainted with the appropriate methods for regeneration after harvest;
- Provide information if the stipulated in the documentation activities are being implemented;
- Local communities are also being interviewed (about the pre-harvesting conditions, affected environmental values etc.).

10.1.2. Regeneration fellings in natural forests are designed to ensure natural regeneration of the basic tree species typical for the region and in accordance with the site conditions and the economic objectives of the MU.

### **Verifiers:**

#### Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Tree-marking documentation of the harvesting areas where regeneration fellings are carried out;
- Technological plans for logging;
- Technological plans for afforestation;

#### Field check:

- On the field is checked if the planned regeneration fellings are implemented to ensure natural regeneration of the basic local tree species. Check of the natural regeneration status, supported regeneration or artificially made *forest cultures*\*;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and forest workers are acquainted with the specifics of the silvicultural systems for natural regeneration. Check if the stipulated in the documentation activities are implemented in accordance with the provisions of management plan and relevant regulations.

10.1.3. Planting can be used for restoration of degraded natural forest ecosystems, for supplementing natural regeneration and after *large-scale natural disturbances*\*, if the following requirements are observed:

- 1) Planting is carried out only on parcels where the natural regeneration is straitened and only local species and origins are used for it;
- 2) Natural succession processes and the growth of the present early-successional local tree species are promoted.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for afforestation;
- Relevant documentation in case of *large-scale natural disturbances*\*;

Field check:

- Check if the afforestation meets the requirements of the indicator;

Interviews:

- Provides information if the workers are acquainted and applies the requirements of the indicator.

10.1.4. Activities related to the regeneration of coppices lead to their transformation into high forest, except if other economic objectives are stipulated for them in the management plan.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Tree marking documentation of coppice stands in which regeneration fellings are implemented;

Field check:

- On the field is checked if the planned regeneration fellings are implemented in a way leading to natural seed regeneration of the forest. Check of the status of natural regeneration or planted trees;

Interviews:

- Provides information if the workers are acquainted with the main objective for the management of coppice forests and if the stipulated regeneration activities are being implemented in accordance with the forest management plan and regulations.

10.1.5. (NON-SLIMF) Activities related to regeneration of plantations are implemented in a way that leads to regeneration of the forest vegetation in accordance with the management plan and the requirements of national legislation. In cases where the objective is transformation of the plantation into forests with more natural species composition and structure, only native species and origins are used for regeneration.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for harvesting;
- Technological plans for afforestation;

Field check:

- Check if the stipulated activities were implemented as described in the plans. Check if the planned transformation is implemented through afforestation with native species and origins;

Interviews:

- Provides information if the workers are acquainted with the requirements of the indicator.

10.1.6. (NON-SLIMF) When artificial regeneration of plantations is prescribed in the management plan the afforestation is carried out within two years of the stand harvest.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documentation for harvesting and afforestation;

Field check:

- Check if the harvested plantations are reforested;

Interviews:

- Provides information if the workers are acquainted with the deadlines for afforestation of harvested plantations and whether the deadline is being observed.

10.1.7. Forests of artificial origin that are not plantations are managed in a way and methods enhancing their transformation into natural forests:

- 1) The methods enhance the regeneration of native tree species typical for forests in the region;
- 2) The silvicultural activities contribute to the creation and maintenance of structural characteristics typical for the natural forests in the region.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for harvesting;
- Technological plans for afforestation;

Field check:

- Check if the activities are implemented in accordance with the documentation;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the workers are acquainted with the requirements for forest restoration.

10.1.8. Efforts are made to restore the natural species composition and structure of degraded forest ecosystems.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for afforestation;
- Documentation for cases of *large-scale natural disturbances\**;

Field check:

- Check if the requirements of the indicator are observed;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the workers are acquainted and applies the requirements of the indicator.

10.1.9. Artificial afforestation of *natural open fields\** is not allowed, except for control of erosion and when the assessment under 6.2.1 has not shown negative impacts.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for afforestation;
- conducted *environmental impact assessments\** as per 6.2.1;

Field check:

- Check if *natural open fields\** are not afforested;

Interviews:

- Provides information if the workers are acquainted with the requirement that *natural open fields\** shall not be afforested.

**10.2. The Organization\* shall use species for regeneration that are ecologically well adapted to the site and to the management objectives\*. The Organization\* shall use native species\* and local genotypes\* for regeneration, unless there is clear and convincing justification for using others.**

10.2.1. Forests of local tree species are not transformed into plantations or into *forest cultures\** of alien species.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for harvesting;
- Technological plans for afforestation;

Field check:

- Check if forests of local tree species are transformed into forests of alien species or plantations;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the workers are acquainted and apply the requirements of the indicator.

10.2.2. Species used for planting by The Organization are native species of local provenance and are ecologically well adapted to the site.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for afforestation;
- Documentation for cases of *large-scale natural disturbances\**;
- Documents with justification of the necessity of afforestation with alien species and genotypes;

Field check:

- Check if the requirements of the plans are implemented on the field;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and forest workers are acquainted with the species used in planting and what are their ecological site demands.

10.2.3. *Non-native species\** and non-local genotypes are not used unless clear and convincing justification is provided.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents justifying the need of using *non-native species\** and non-local genotypes.

10.2.4. The area planted with alien species and genotypes does not exceed 5% of the forested area.

**Note:** Areas managed as plantations are not included in the calculation of the area afforested with *non-native species\** and genotypes.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for planting.

10.2.5. (NON-SLIMF) The choice of species for planting is clearly justified and documented in relation to the planting objectives and the general management objectives.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;

- Technological plans for afforestation;
- Documentation for cases of *large-scale natural disturbances\**;
- Documents with justification for the necessity of afforestation with alien species and genotypes;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and forest workers are acquainted with the species used for planting and what are the economic or ecological objectives.

**10.3. The Organization\* shall only use alien species\* when knowledge and/or experience have shown that any invasive impacts can be controlled and effective mitigation measures are in place.**

10.3.1. Alien species listed in Annex 8 are not used for afforestation.

**Note:** *Robinia pseudacacia* can be used for afforestation only in plantations (see the guidelines in Annex 6) where the forest managers strictly control the distribution of the species.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans for afforestation;

Field check:

- Check if reforestations are made with species from Annex 8;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted with and applies the requirements of the indicator.

10.3.2. The Organization performs annual monitoring and controls the distribution of *invasive species\** on its territory and is alert for possible negative ecological impacts.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans;
- Documented programme/system for monitoring and control of *invasive species\**;

Field check:

- Check if uncontrolled distribution of alien species and negative environmental impact over neighbouring territories are in place;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted and applies a programme/system for monitoring and control of the distribution of *invasive species\**.

10.3.3. Programmes for removal of alien species with clear invasive potential are developed and applied with the exception of trees grown within plantations.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Documented programme for monitoring and control of *invasive species*\*.
- Programme for removal of alien species with invasive potential;

Field check:

- Check if there is invasive distribution of alien species and if measures were applied to control the distribution;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and the forest workers are acquainted and apply the programme for removal of alien species with invasive potential.

**10.4. The Organization\* shall not use genetically modified organisms\* in the Management Unit\*.**

10.4.1. The Organization does not use genetically modified organisms in the Management Unit.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Documented orders that prohibit the use of GMO;
- Documents related to the use of GMO in forest management activities;

Field check:

- Check if GMO were used;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted with and applies the prohibition for GMO use.

**10.5. The Organization\* shall use silvicultural\* practices that are ecologically appropriate for the vegetation, species, sites and management objectives\*.**

10.5.1. Silvicultural systems are applied that create and maintain species, age and structural diversity both on stand and landscape levels. Priority is given where appropriate to fellings with long-term regeneration period and selection fellings.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Tree-marking documentation of the harvested stands;

Field check:

- Check if suitable silvicultural systems are used;

Interviews:



- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted with the suitable silvicultural systems and practices.

10.5.2. Clear fellings are not applied, except in plantations and poplar, willow, linden and low-stem forests. The logging areas of the linden stands are not larger than 1 ha, and the uncut strip between them is not less than twice the height of the stand.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Tree-marking documentation of the stands in which harvesting was made;

Field check:

- Check if clear fellings are carried out in forest types different from those specified in the indicator;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel apply the clear fellings limitations.

10.5.3. Thinnings in the managed stands are carried out in accordance with the following principles:

- 1) the collective and individual stability of the stands is ensured;
- 2) the growth of *trees of the future\** is supported by applying the principles of *positive selection\**;
- 3) the linear systematic felling and thinning from below are not used;
- 4) the presence of single trees of valuable species as well as valuable genetic forms are promoted.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Tree-marking documentation;
- Technological plans;

Field check:

- Check if the mentioned in the indicator principles are applied;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel are acquainted with the principles mentioned in the indicator.

10.5.4. Thinnings and regeneration fellings are designed to retain elements important for maintenance of the biological diversity in the forest ecosystem (*old-growth islands\**, *tranquility zones\**, single and groups of *biotope trees\**, specific *micro-habitats\**, etc.).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;

- Tree-marking documentation;
- Technological plans;

Field check:

- Check if elements important for maintenance of biodiversity mentioned in the indicator are retained in the forests;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is acquainted with the requirements for retention of elements important for maintenance of biodiversity in the forest ecosystem.

10.5.5. If no other objectives are specified in the forest management plan, the management of *forest cultures*\* is designed to promote their transformation into natural forests through:

- 1) support of the regeneration of local native species;
- 2) formation and maintenance of structural stand characteristics typical for the natural forests in the region.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Tree-marking documentation;
- Technological plans;

Field check:

- Check if the principles mentioned in the indicator are applied;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel are acquainted with and apply the indicator.

**10.6. The Organization\* shall minimize or avoid the use of fertilizers\*. When fertilizers\* are used, The Organization\* shall demonstrate that use is equally or more ecologically and economically beneficial than use of silvicultural\* systems that do not require fertilizers\*, and prevent, mitigate, and/or repair damage to environmental values\*, including soils.**

10.6.1. Fertilizers are not used except in plantations and forest nurseries.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Register of used fertilizers;
- Technological plans for afforestation;
- Invoices for purchased fertilizers;

Interviews:

- Provide information if fertilizers are used and if the personnel is aware of the requirement to diminish the usage of fertilizers,

Field check:

- Check of the forest nurseries;
- Check of store premises;

- Check of areas prepared for planting with the use of fertilizers.

10.6.2. The use of fertilizers in plantations and nurseries is admissible only in cases of justified necessity.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Results of soil analyses;
- Justifications for the use of fertilizers;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware of the requirements of the indicator.

10.6.3. The use of fertilizers in cases according to 10.6.2 is kept to minimum levels.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documents proving that the usage of fertilizers is minimized or is in process of minimization aiming at complete termination of the usage of fertilizers;

Interviews:

- Provide information if fertilizers are used and if the personnel is aware of the requirements of the indicator.

10.6.4. In plantations and forest nurseries, fertilizers are not used in buffer zones of 20 m from water sources, water bodies and localities of rare and threatened species.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check of forest nurseries;
- Check of store premises;
- Check of areas that are in preparation process for planting and fertilization is planned for them;

Interviews:

- Provide information if fertilizers are used and if the personnel is aware of the requirements of the indicator.

10.6.5. (NON-SLIMF) The usage of fertilizers is documented by recording the following information:

- 1) type of fertilizers;
- 2) location of the site where they were used;
- 3) fertilized area;
- 4) date of use;
- 5) quantity of fertilizers used;

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Register of the used fertilizers;

Interviews:

- Provide information if fertilizers are being used and if the personnel is aware of the requirement to keep a register of the fertilizers use.

10.6.6. When fertilizers are used, environmental values are protected, including through implementation of measures to prevent damage.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Programme or guideline for protection of the environmental values in the cases when fertilizers are used;
- Instructions for application of measures for prevention of negative impacts;

Field check:

- Check if there are negative impacts from the usage of fertilizers and what measures for prevention of the negative impacts were applied;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware of and applies the measures for prevention of the negative impacts from the use of fertilizers.

10.6.7. Negative environmental impacts from the use of fertilizers are mitigated and damaged environmental values are restored.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Programme, instructions or other documentation for implementation of measures for mitigation and/or restoration of negative impacts from the use of fertilizers;

Field check:

- Check if there are negative impacts from the use of fertilizers and what measures are taken to mitigate the impact or to restore the damages;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies measures for mitigation and/or restoration of the negative impacts caused by the use of fertilizers.

**10.7. The Organization\* shall use *integrated pest management\** and *silviculture\** systems which avoid, or aim at eliminating, the use of chemical *pesticides\**. The Organization\* shall not use any chemical *pesticides\** prohibited by FSC policy. When *pesticides\** are used, The Organization\* shall prevent, mitigate, and/or repair damage to *environmental values\** and human health.**

10.7.1. Integrated *pest\** management, including selection of specific silviculture systems, is used to minimize the frequency, extent and amount of chemical pesticide applications, aiming at non-use or overall significant reduction of applications.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Programmes for monitoring and control of the *pests\** and results of these programmes;
- Programme for diminishing the usage of chemical pesticides;

- Technological plans;
- Reports from the Forest Protection Stations;

Field check:

- Check of the applied methods for control of the *pests*\*;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the programmes for monitoring and control of the *pests*\* and diminishing of the usage of chemical pesticides.

10.7.2. The use of pesticides is in conformance with the requirements of Clause 4.12 of the most recent FSC pesticide policy.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Programmes for monitoring and control of the *pests*\* and results of the implementation of these programmes;
- Programme for diminishing the usage of chemical pesticides;
- Registers of pesticides used;
- developed *Environmental and Social Risk Assessments*\* (ESRA);
- technological plans;
- reports from the Forest Protection Station;

Field check:

- Check of the implementation of current FSC pesticide policy;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the current FSC pesticide policy.

10.7.3. The use of chemical pesticides is based on written analysis of the most appropriate alternative methods and is allowed only when:

- 1) Alternative products and practices are not known;
- 2) The known alternative products and practices have been proven to be ineffective;
- 3) The use of alternative products and practices is significantly more expensive than the chemical pesticides;
- 4) The selected product, application method, timing and pattern of use present the least risk in terms of social and environmental damage, higher efficiency and equal or greater social and environmental benefits.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Written analysis of the alternative methods;

Field check:

- Check for possible social and environmental damages/benefits;

Interviews:

- Provide information of the personnel is aware of the requirement for documentation of the alternative methods that were considered and rejected prior to use of chemical pesticides;
- With stakeholders in order to identify social and environmental damages/benefits resulting from the use of chemical pesticides.

10.7.4. Prior to using chemical pesticides, an *Environmental and Social Risk Assessment\** (ESRA) is developed for each active substance intended for use, and the results are made available to affected stakeholders upon request.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Registers of pesticides used;
- Developed *Environmental and Social Risk Assessments\** (ESRA);
- Technological plans;
- Reports from the Forest Protection Station;

Interviews:

- Provide information of the personnel is aware and if implements the requirements of ESRA.

10.7.5. The conditions of the developed *Environmental and Social Risk Assessments\** (ESRA) are integrated into site-operational plans for each site and are applied.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Registers of pesticides used;
- Developed ESRA;
- Technological plans;
- Reports from the Forest Protection Station;

Field check:

- Verify the implementation of the FSC pesticide Policy;

Interviews:

- Provide information of the personnel is aware and applies the FSC pesticide Policy.

10.7.6. *Environmental and Social Risk Assessment\** (ESRA) is reviewed annually and if necessary, revised.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Review of developed ESRA; and their revisions;

Interviews:

- Provide information of the workers are aware and apply the requirements for review and revision of ESRA.

10.7.7. Affected and interested stakeholders are informed about the preparation/revision of the ESRA and are provided with an opportunity for *culturally appropriate\** engagement.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Evidence of informing the affected and interested stakeholders on the development/revision of the ESRA;
- Protocols from the participation of affected and interested stakeholders in the processes of development/revision of ESRA;

Interviews:

- Provide information on whether the personnel is familiar with and applies the requirements for elaboration and revision of the ESRA;
- With affected and interested stakeholders.

10.7.8. A register of the pesticides used is kept. The register contains information on:

- 1) trade name of the used product;
- 2) *active ingredients*\*;
- 3) quantity of the used *active ingredients*\*;
- 4) date/period of use;
- 5) number and frequency of applications;
- 6) location of the site treated;
- 7) size of the treated area within the site;
- 8) method of application;
- 9) reason for use of the pesticides;

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Register of the used pesticides;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the workers are aware with the requirements for registration of the used chemical pesticides.

10.7.9. The use of pesticides complies with the ILO document "Safety in the use of chemicals at work" regarding requirements for transport, storage, handling, application and emergency *procedures*\* for cleanup following accidental spillages.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- A valid risk assessment that includes measures for health and safety working conditions in pesticides use;
- Evidence for trainings of the personnel responsible for work and storage of pesticides;

Field check:

- Check if the health and safety instructions for work with and storage of pesticides are observed;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the workers are aware and observe the health and safety instructions for work with and storage of pesticides.

10.7.10. *Procedures\** with measures for timely neutralization of spills or other accidents with pesticides are in place. Detailed documentation is kept about all incidents involving pesticides.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Written *procedures\** for applying of urgent measures for neutralization of spills or other accidents with pesticides;
- Documentation of performed instructions of the personnel;
- Register of accidents;
- Written instructions for work with pesticides;

Field check:

- Check if means for neutralization of spills or other accidents with pesticides are available on the field;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the *procedures\** in case of spill or other accidents.

10.7.11. Personnel using pesticides is trained for work with pesticides and management of urgent situations.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documentation of performed trainings of the personnel;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the measures for use of pesticides.

10.7.12. When pesticides are used the following general requirements are respected:

- 1) Chemical pesticides are applied in the minimum effective quantities strictly following the instructions of the producer and the relevant regulations;
- 2) The usage of pesticides is prohibited within 20 meters of water courses and within 30 meters of still water reservoirs, dams and lakes;
- 3) The usage of chemical pesticides is forbidden if heavy rainfalls are expected, if the weather is wet and windy, or over land which is frozen, snow covered or dry from drought;
- 4) Soaking of seedlings treated with chemical pesticides into water courses, lakes, marshes, water sources, karst springs or other water bodies is prohibited;
- 5) Protection zones where chemical pesticides shall not be applied are established around the habitats of rare and threatened species, rare plant communities, riparian sites and *wetlands\**.

**Verifiers:**



Documentary check:

- Documented instructions for the usage of chemical pesticides that include the requirements of the indicator;
- Register of the used pesticides;

Field check:

- Check if the requirements of the indicator are applied on the field;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the norms for usage of chemical pesticides.

10.7.13. Not less than 3 days and not more than 15 days before the use of chemical pesticides that may have negative impacts on people, domestic and farm animals (including bees), products and activities (for instance if the use is planned to be close to large unfenced areas, bee hives, pastures, arable land, etc.) the relevant communities and local interested parties are informed (for instance farmers, beekeepers, herb-gatherers, mushroom-gatherers, tourist associations, etc.) of the chemical pesticides that will be used, the area that is to be treated and the potential negative impacts.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documented *procedures*\* for informing the communities and local interested parties in case of use of chemical pesticides;
- Evidence that the local communities and interested parties were informed before the use of chemical pesticides;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the *procedures*\* for informing the local municipalities and interested parties before the use of chemical pesticides;
- With the municipalities and local interested parties.

**10.8. The Organization\* shall minimize, monitor\* and strictly control the use of biological control agents\* in accordance with internationally accepted scientific protocols\*. When biological control agents\* are used, The Organization\* shall prevent, mitigate, and/or repair damage to environmental values\*.**

10.8.1. The use of biological control agents is minimized, monitored and strictly controlled. Biological control agents are used only in cases of scientifically proven necessity and in accordance with the national legislation.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- *Procedure*\* for use of biological control agents that includes instructions for diminishing the use and the methods for control and monitoring;
- Register of the used biological control agents;
- Motivation for the use of biological control agents;
- Evidence for implemented monitoring and control in the cases when biological control agents were used;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware with the requirements for control and monitoring of the biological control agents.

10.8.2. (NON-SLIMF) The use of biological control agents is documented by keeping a register with information about the type, quantity, period, location, area and reason for use.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Register of the used biological control agents;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware with the requirement for keeping a register of the biological control agents.

10.8.3. Damage to environmental values caused by the use of biological control agents is prevented and restoration measures are applied where damage occurs.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Programme for the use of biological control agents;
- HCVF Report – to check if biological control agents were used in HCVF;
- Documented activities of applying measures for prevention and mitigation of negative impacts by the usage of biological control agents over the environmental values  
Documented restoration measures in the cases of caused damage;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware with the requirements for applying measures for prevention and mitigation of the negative impacts from biological control agents over the environmental values. Provide information if in the cases of caused damage restoration measures were applied.

**10.9. The Organization\* shall assess risks\* and implement activities that reduce potential negative impacts from Natural Hazards\* proportionate to scale, intensity, and risk\*.**

10.9.1. (NON-SLIMF) A risk assessment is available regarding the type, frequency and level of impact from natural hazards and *natural disturbances\** that potentially may occur within the MU (for instance floods, strong winds, avalanches, fires, landslides, etc.) and the possible negative impacts on the *infrastructure\**, forest resources and communities.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documented risk assessment regarding the type, frequency and level of impact from natural hazards and natural disturbances that potentially may occur on the territory of the MU (for instance floods, strong winds, avalanches, fires, landslides, etc.);
- Forest management plan;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware of the risk from natural hazards and *natural disturbances\** that may happen on the territory of the MU and the possible negative impacts.

10.9.2. (NON-SLIMF) When preparing the assessment according to 10.9.1 the following documents are to be used:

- 1) Plans for management of the risk from floods;
- 2) Plans for fire prevention and fire combating;
- 3) National program for prevention and control of landslides on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, erosion and abrasion at the Black Sea coast and the Danube River banks;
- 4) National program for protection in cases of disaster and annual plans related to the program;
- 5) Operational documents at a district level.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Check of the documented assessment according to 10.9.1;
- Check of the documents according to 10.9.2.

10.9.3. (NON-SLIMF) Measures are planned and applied to reduce the anticipated negative impacts from potential natural hazards and *natural disturbances*\*.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Documentation for planned and applied measures for reduction of the expected negative impacts from the potential natural hazards and *natural disturbances*\*;
- Forest management plan;

Field check:

- Check if the planned measures for reduction of the expected negative impacts are applied;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the planned measures for reduction of the expected negative impacts.

10.9.4. The risk for management activities to increase the frequency, distribution or severity of natural hazards is assessed.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Assessment of the risk from the management activities regarding the resistance to natural hazards. The assessment includes the natural hazards (e.g. floods, avalanches, fires, etc.) typical for the MU;

Field check:

- Check if on the field the applied forest management activities have diminished the resistance of the forest regarding *natural disturbances*\* and if they have affected the risk to increase the frequency, distribution or severity of the natural hazards;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel are aware with the negative impacts from the management activities regarding the resistance of the forest and the risk to increase the frequency, distribution or severity of the natural hazards.

10.9.5. Management activities are modified and/or measures are developed and implemented that reduce the identified risks.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Assessment of the risk from the implemented forest management activities regarding the resistance of the forest to natural hazards and increase of the frequency, distribution or severity from natural hazards resulting from forest management activities;
- Developed measures for change of the applied practices in case of negative assessment;

Field check:

- Check if measures are applied for diminishing the risk from negative impacts from natural hazards resulting from the forest management activities;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel are aware of the planned measures for reduction of the risk of negative impacts from natural hazards resulting from forest management activities.

**10.10. The Organization\* shall manage *infrastructural development\**, transport activities and *silviculture\** so that water resources and soils are protected, and disturbance of and damage to rare and threatened species\*, habitats\*, ecosystems\* and landscape values\* are prevented, mitigated and/or repaired.**

10.10.1. Planning, development, maintenance and utilization of *infrastructure\** within the MU ensures the protection of:

- 1) *Ecosystem functions\** of forests;
- 2) Biological diversity;
- 3) Water resources and water bodies;
- 4) Soils;
- 5) Landscape values.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Management plan (check up to what extent the documents include preventive measures regarding the indicator);
- Technical projects for development of certain *infrastructure\**;
- Environmental assessments in conformity with the legislation;
- Assessments of the impact from small *infrastructure\** (assessments that are not obligatory according to the national legislation);

Field check:

- Check if the applied measures and actions fulfil the requirements of the indicator on the field – evidences for erosion, mechanical damage on the trees, etc.;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware with the measures and actions related to the requirements of the indicator.

10.10.2. The following norms are observed in the development, maintenance and usage of forest roads:

- 1) new roads are planned in advance on topographical maps that show water courses;
- 2) roads are planned in a way that allows minimum changes to the terrain;
- 3) where possible roads are set on natural benches, ridges and flatter slopes;
- 4) construction of roads is minimized in steep and narrow valleys, in landslide risk or other unstable areas and where natural drainage channels or water courses exist;
- 5) roads are not built through ecologically vulnerable areas;
- 6) embankments and cuttings are stabilized to prevent erosion;
- 7) drains and culverts are designed to minimize erosion.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plans;
- Plans for forest roads;
- Forest maps;

Field check:

- Check if the forest roads meet the requirements of the indicator;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the requirements of the indicator.

10.10.3. The following norms are observed during the implementation of forest management activities:

- 1) machinery and technologies are used that minimize the damages to vegetation, soil and road *infrastructure*\*;
- 2) transportation and extraction of wood is not allowed on forest roads of 4th category nor on skidding routes when soils are saturated (due to heavy rainfall, snowmelt, etc.);
- 3) after logging, the skidding routes where erosion processes may develop are restored and/or measures to avoid erosion are applied (piles of branches, hurdles, cross ditches, etc.).

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plans;
- Tree-marking documentation;
- Technological plans;

Field check:

- Check if the requirements of the indicator are observed;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel are aware and applies the requirements of the indicator.

10.10.4. Negative impacts on water resources, soils, rare and endangered species, habitats, ecosystems and landscape, due to development, maintenance and operation of *infrastructure*\* are avoided or mitigated, and the affected environmental values are restored in a timely manner. Where negative impacts are identified, forest management activities are modified to prevent further damage.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Plans, projects and programs with compensatory measures and activities for elimination of the negative impacts over biological diversity, environmental and landscape values;

Field check:

- Check for the implementation of preventive and restoration measures (restoration of habitats and water courses, prevention of erosion, etc.);

Interviews:

- Provides information if the staff is familiar with and implements the measures and actions related to the reduction of negative impacts and restoration of the damaged values.

**10.11. The Organization\* shall manage activities associated with harvesting and extraction of timber and non-timber forest products\* so that environmental values\* are conserved, merchantable waste is reduced, and damage to other products and services is avoided.**

10.11.1. Harvesting and extraction practices for timber and non-timber forest products are implemented in a manner that conserves environmental values as identified in Criterion 6.1 and High Conservation Values identified in accordance with Criteria 9.1 and 9.2.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans;
- HCVF report;
- Other relevant documents;

Field check:

- Checks for damages on the field;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel are aware of the identified environmental values and the measures for their protection.

10.11.2. Logging and cutting of wood to assortments is carried out in a manner ensuring optimal economic use of wood resources and reduction of wood waste with commercial value.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Trainings/instructions of the personnel and forest workers for optimal use of the wood and reduction of wood waste with commercial value;

Field check:

- Check for damages on trees that are left after the logging, unused wood with commercial value, etc.;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel knows and applies the requirements for optimal usage of the wood and protection of other forest resources.

10.11.3. (NON-SLIMF) Harvested wood is extracted from harvesting sites and transported from the roadside wood storages in a timely manner to avoid reduction of the wood value.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Felling permits;
- Wood transport documentation;
- Other relevant documents;

Field check-up:

- Check if on the harvesting areas and roadside wood storages there is harvested wood not extracted or transported in a timely manner.

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and forest workers are aware and apply the requirements of the indicator.

10.11.4. In the implementation of thinnings and regeneration fellings, standing and fallen *deadwood\** and dying trees are retained that are preferably of a diameter over 22 cm. The *deadwood\** volume is not less than 10% of the *growing stock of the stand\** before logging. If 10% of the growing stock is not available in the stand, measures are implemented to ensure accumulation of the necessary amount of *deadwood\** in future.

**Applicability Note:** The requirement of the indicator does not apply to plantations.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Tree-marking documentation;
- Other relevant documents – orders, *procedures\**, instructions;

Field check:

- In the harvested areas the auditor checks the quantities of dead wood and dying trees left after the logging operations;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and forest workers are aware and apply the requirements of the indicator for dead wood retention.

10.11.5. Felling and wood extraction are designed and conducted in such a way as to reduce damages to the remaining standing trees and regeneration. If necessary, measures are applied for individual or group protection of the remaining standing trees.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Forest management plan;
- Technological plans;
- Other relevant documents – orders, *procedures\**, instructions;

#### Field check:

- Check if there are damages on the remaining standing trees and if measures for protection are applied;

#### Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and forest workers are aware and apply the requirements of the indicator.

### **10.12. The Organization\* shall dispose of waste materials\* in an environmentally appropriate manner.**

10.12.1. The Organization applies waste management system on its territory, including:

- 1) Rules for collection of waste in appropriate places (including in logging sites);
- 2) Measures to prevent illegal disposal and waste disposal in forests, including waste from visitors;
- 3) Prohibition of disposal of waste in water bodies, by burying or by direct combustion;
- 4) Rules for transport, storage or disposal of chemicals, fuels, oils, containers, liquid and solid waste in an environmentally appropriate and legal manner.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Plan for waste management;
- Other relevant documents – *procedures\**, orders, instructions;

#### Field check:

- Checks if there is waste in the forest and logging sites;

#### Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel and forest workers know the rules for waste management.

10.12.2. During forestry operations within the territory of the MU, measures are applied for:

- 1) the use of spills proof containers for keeping, transport and refueling with fuel and lubricants;
- 2) avoid spillage of fuel or lubricants from the *forest machinery\**;
- 3) use of fuel/lubricant absorption kits in case of spillage;
- 4) respect the fire prevention rules.

### Verifiers:

#### Documentary check:

- Plan for management of fuel and oil;



- Technological plans;
- Other relevant documents – *procedures\**, orders, instructions;

Field check:

- Check the placement of storages and observation of the rules for refueling and the availability of appropriate absorbents;
- Availability of fire-fighting equipment, according to the requirements of the legislation;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the rules for work with fuel and oil and the *procedures\** for action in case of spills.

10.12.3. Only biodegradable oil is used to lubricate the chains of chainsaws used in *forestry activities\** on the territory of the MU.

**Verifiers:**

Documentary check:

- Plan for management of fuel and oil;
- Other relevant documents – *procedures\**, orders, instructions;

Field check:

- In the field it is checked whether the requirements of the indicator are met;

Interviews:

- Provide information if the personnel is aware and applies the requirements of the indicator.

## G ANNEXES

(Normative section)

### Annex 1 List of the applicable legislation

\*The list is indicative and does not claim for absolute comprehensiveness.

The Organization is obliged to comply with all national legislation, the relevant local regulations and ratified international conventions.

#### 1. Legal rights to harvest

##### 1. customary rights protected *Tenure:* by national legislation

State property law, Private property law, Municipal property law.

Gathering non-timber forest products:

Law on medicinal plants, Biodiversity Law.

Gathering wood and access to forest:

Forestry Act.

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##### 1.1. legal status and registration of the organization

Commercial Law.

Law for Non-Profit Organizations.

Forestry Act.

Denominations Act.

Law on community centres.

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##### 1.2. legal status of the Management Unit including property rights and use

Commercial Law.

Law for Non-Profit Organizations.

Forestry Act.

Denominations Act.

Law on community centers.

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##### 1.3.1. animal welfare and protection of animal health requirements

Law on Protection of Animals. Veterinary Law and relevant regulations.

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##### 1.2.2. borders of the Management Unit

Cadaster Act.

Forest Act.

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Ordinance № 6 of 5.02.2004 on the organization of forests and forest lands and hunting areas in the Republic of Bulgaria (Ordinance for inventory of forest areas and forest planning).

Ordinance №18 of 7.10.2025 on the inventory and forest planning in forest territories.

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**1.3.3. timely payment of taxes and other duties**

Law on Local Taxes and Fees.  
Law on Value Added Tax.  
Law on Corporate Income Tax.  
Law on Taxes on personal income.  
State Budget Act (for the relevant year).

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**1.4., 1.8. prevention and control of illegal activities in forests**

Forestry Act.  
Protected Areas Act.  
Biodiversity Act.  
Medicinal Plants Act.  
Law on Hunting and Game Protection.  
Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture.  
Ordinance № 1 of 30.01.2012 on control and protection of forest areas and the amending regulations.  
Ordinance No 8 of 11.05.2012 on the terms and conditions to protect forest areas from fire.  
Ordinance №8 of August 5, 2011 for felling in forests.

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**1.5. transportation and marketing of forest products**

Applicable International law: CITES Convention.  
National law: Forestry Act.  
Biodiversity Act.  
Customs Act.  
Instruction for cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Water, "Customs" Agency and the Bulgarian Agency for Food Safety to enhance the effectiveness of control on entry, trade, transit and export of specimens of endangered species of wild fauna and flora.  
Ordinance № 6 of 07.10.2019 r. for the requirements for control the use of domestic firewood.

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**2.1. principles and workers' rights**

Applicable International law: Convention No. 29 of ILO.  
National law: Constitution of the Republic of Bulgarian Labour Code.  
Law on Combating of Traffic of Human Beings.

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Penalty Code.

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Applicable International law: Convention No. 87 of ILO.  
National law: Law for Non-Profit Organizations.  
Law on Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria.  
Law for the Ministry of the Interior.  
Law on Meetings, Demonstrations and Parades.  
Law on Settlement of Collective Labour Disputes.  
Labour Code.  
Penalty Code.  
Law on Civil Servants.

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Applicable International law: Convention No. 98 of ILO.  
National law: Labour Code.  
Law on Civil Servants.  
Law on Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria.  
Law on the Ministry of the Interior.  
Railway Transport Act.

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Applicable International law: Convention No. 100 of ILO.  
National law: Labour Code.  
Law on Protection from Discrimination.  
Rules for the structure and activities of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

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Applicable International law: Convention No. 105 of ILO.  
National law: Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria.  
Labour Code.  
Law on Combating the Traffic of Human Beings.  
Penalty Code.

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Applicable International law: Convention No. 111 of ILO.  
National law: Rules for the structure and activities of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.  
Rules for the structure and organization of the work of the National Council on Equality between Women and Men.  
Law on Protection from Discrimination.

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Labour Code.  
Social security Code.  
Law on Civil Servants.  
Law on employment promotion.

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Applicable International law: Convention No. 138 of ILO.  
National law: Labour Code.  
Ordinance № 6 on the conditions and procedure for granting work permits to persons under 18 years.  
Ordinance on the work of persons under 15 years of age.

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Applicable International law: Convention No. 182 of ILO.  
National law: Law on Child Protection.  
Law on Combating the Traffic of Human Beings.  
Law on Family Allowances.  
Ordinance № 6 on the conditions and procedure for granting work permits to persons under 18 years.  
Labour code.  
Penalty Code.

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**2.2. gender equality** Law on Protection from Discrimination.

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**2.3. protection of workers from occupational accidents and diseases** Applicable International law: Convention No. 155 of ILO.  
National law.

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Applicable International law: Safety and health in forestry work: An ILO code of practice.  
National law: Rules on health and safety at work in forests.

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**2.3.4. register of occupational accidents** Ordinance for the establishment, investigation, registration and reporting of accidents.

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**2.4. remunerations, minimum wage** Labour Code.  
Decrees of the Council of Ministers to determine the minimum wage.  
Law on Obligations and Contracts.  
Collective and branch contract.

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**4.2. legal rights of local communities**

Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria.  
Property law.  
Law on Hunting and Game Protection.  
Protected Areas Act.  
Forestry Act.  
Medicinal plants Act.

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**5.1. full use of the various benefits of forests**

Forestry Act.  
Medicinal Plants Act.

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**5.2., 10.1. volume of production/logging**

Forestry Act.  
Ordinance № 6 of 5.02.2004 on the organization of forests and forest lands and hunting areas in the Republic of Bulgaria (Ordinance for inventory of forest areas and forest planning)

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**5.4. support for local economy**

Forestry Act.  
Ordinance on the terms and conditions for awarding the implementation of activities in forest areas - state and municipal property, and for the use of timber and non-timber forest products.

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**6.2. impacts on environmental values**

Law on Environmental Protection.  
Ordinance on the conditions and procedures for implementation of environmental impact assessment.  
Biodiversity Act.  
Ordinance on the conditions and procedures for implementation of appropriate assessment for plans, pro-grams, projects and investment proposals with the objective and conservation purpose of protected zones (Natura 2000 zones).  
Protected Areas Act.  
Ordinance № 5 of 07.31.2014 for construction in forest areas without change of land use.

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**6.4. protection of rare and endangered species and their habitats**

Applicable International law: CITES Convention.  
Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats).  
National law: Ordinance № 8 of August 5, 2011 for felling in forests.  
Forestry Act.  
Protected Areas Act.

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**6.7. protection of water streams and water bodies**

Water Act.

Law on Environmental Protection.

Ordinance № 3 of 2000 on the terms and conditions for research, design, approval and operation of sanitary zones around water sources and facilities for drinking water supply and around the sources of mineral water used for therapeutic, prophylactic, drinking and hygiene needs.

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**6.9. change of land and forest use**

Forestry Act.

Law on Spatial Planning.

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**7.2., 7.3., 7.4. forest management plan**

Ordinance № 18 of 7.10.2025 on the inventory and forest planning in forest territories.

Ordinance № 2 of 7 .02.2013 on the conditions and procedures for afforestation of forest areas and agricultural land used for creating special protection and commercial forests and forests in protected areas, inventory created cultures, reporting and registration.

Ordinance № 21 of 11.12.2012 on the terms and conditions for determination, approval, registration and cancellation of the sources of forest reproduction base, collection and extraction of forest reproductive material, their grading, trade and import.

Ordinance № 8 of August 5, 2011 for felling in forests.

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**7.5. access to information for interested**

Law on access to public information.

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**10.7., 10.8. forest protection and use of chemicals**

Forestry Act.

Ordinance № 9 of 5.12.2019. On the protection of forest territories from pests, diseases and other damages.

Ordinance № 2 of 3.01.2012 on the conditions, methods and procedures for the application of plant protection products in forest areas.

Ordinance № 8 of 11.05.2012 on the terms and conditions to protect forest areas from fire.

Ordinance № 4 of 15.02.2012 on the procedure for registration of forest nurseries and production of saplings in state nurseries.

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**10.12. waste**

Law on waste management.

Forestry Act.

Ordinance from 1999 for treatment and transportation of production waste

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## Annex 2 Personal Protective Equipment

### Personal Protective Equipment (Safety and health in Forestry work, ILO Code of practice, 1998)

The choice of specific PPE should be made by The Organization taking into account the results of the risk assessment that every employer is required to conduct, in accordance with Art. 16 paragraph 1 pt. 1 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, as well as in compliance with the instructions provided by the manufacturer of machines, hazardous substances or products.

Table 1. Non-exhaustive list of personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for forestry operations.

Parts of the body to be protected	Feet	Legs	Trunk, arms and legs	Hands	Head	Eyes	Eyes/face	Hearing
PPE normally appropriate:	Safety shoes and boots <sup>1</sup>	Safety trousers <sup>2</sup>	Tight-fitting clothes	Gloves	Safety helmet	Goggles	Visor (mesh)	Ear-muffs <sup>3</sup>
<b>Operations</b>								
<b>Planting <sup>4</sup></b>								
-Manual	√			√ <sup>5</sup>				
-Mechanized	√		√					√ <sup>6</sup>
<b>Weeding/cleaning</b>								
-Smooth-edged tools	√			√		√		
-Handsaw	√			√				
-Chain-saw	√ <sup>7</sup>	√	√	√ <sup>8</sup>	√	√	√	√
-Brush saw								
-With metal blade	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
-With nylon filament	√	√		√		√		√
-Rotating knife/flail	√		√	√				√ <sup>6</sup>
<b>Pesticide application</b>	To comply with those specified for the particular substance and application technique							
<b>Pruning *</b>								
-Hand tools	√ <sup>9</sup>			√	√ <sup>10</sup>	√		



<b>Logging, cropping and cutting on pieces</b> <sup>11</sup>								
-Hand tools	√		√	√ <sup>12</sup>	√			
-Chain-saw	√ <sup>7</sup>	√	√	√ <sup>8</sup>	√		√	√
-Hand tools	√		√		√			√
<b>Felling</b>								
-Hand tools	√			√				
-Mechanized	√		√	√		√		√ <sup>6</sup>
<b>Splitting</b>								
-Hand tools	√			√		√		
-Mechanized	√		√	√		√		√
<b>Extraction</b>								
-Manual	√			√	√ <sup>13</sup>			
-Chute	√			√	√ <sup>13</sup>			
-Animal	√			√	√ <sup>13</sup>			
-Mechanized								
-skidder	√		√	√ <sup>14</sup>	√			√ <sup>6</sup>
-forewarder	√		√		√			√ <sup>6</sup>
-cable crane	√		√	√ <sup>14</sup>	√			√ <sup>6</sup>
-helicopter	√		√ <sup>15</sup>	√ <sup>14</sup>	√ <sup>16</sup>	√		√
<b>Stacking/loading</b>	√		√	√	√			√ <sup>6</sup>
<b>Chipping</b>	√		√	√	√		√	√ <sup>6</sup>
<b>Tree climbing</b> <sup>17</sup>								
-Using a chain-saw <sup>18</sup>	√ <sup>7</sup>	√	√	√ <sup>8</sup>	√ <sup>19</sup>	√	√	√
-Not using chain-saw	√				√			

Notes: \*If for the pruning it is required to climb trees higher than 3 meters, protective equipment against falls must be used.

1 With integrated steel toes for medium or high pressure and/or cold-proof.

2 Safety pants with pads; in hot weather/climate can be used leggings. Protective pants and leggings that are easily flammable and fusible should not be used for extinguishing fires.

3 Earplugs are generally not suitable for forestry activities because of risk of infection.

4 When planting chemically treated plants and during treatment of plants with chemicals, PPE comply with chemical hazards.

5 When planting spiny seedlings or chemically treated plants.

6 When the noise level in the workplace exceeds 85 dB (A).

7 Safety boots with protected front and bowler.

8 Cut-resistant material attached on the rear side of the left hand.

9 Whenever possible injury by falling branches.

10 When pruning on height of over 2.5 meters.

11 Felling includes cross-cutting and removing branches.

12 When using a handsaw.

13 When the drawing of the material happens close to the unstable trees or branches.

14 Only when handling logs; when working with a winch or towing hook.

15 Well visible colours.

16 With chinstrap.

17 regarding the equipment for climbing trees, see Chapter 15 of this Code. (Safety and health in Forestry work, ILO Code of practice, 1998)

18 The use of chain-saws is forbidden for pruning of standing trees at a height greater than the height of the shoulders of the worker and for work in the crowns of standing trees.

19 Helmets for climbing are recommended; if those are not available, safety helmets with chinstraps can be used.

For all the above-mentioned forestry activities, the use of a vest with a signal color and reflective elements is required. For activities associated with work at height (typically over 1,5 m to the ground), including climbing trees, systems to protect against falls from height (safety belts/harnesses and ropes) are also required. When working outdoors in adverse weather conditions, cold-proof clothing and shoes shall be provided.

### Annex 3 Content of a Training Program

The Content of a Training Program is to ensure that all workers contribute to the safe and effective implementation of the planning documentation.

The program should include, but is not limited to the following guidelines consistent with the tasks and responsibilities of workers (including subcontractors):

1. Knowledge and compliance with applicable law (according to Criterion 1.5)
2. Knowledge of the content and specifics of the basic conventions of the ILO (according to Criterion 2.1)
3. To distinguish and report cases of sexual harassment and gender discrimination (according to Criterion 2.2)
4. Safe handling and disposal of hazardous substances in order to avoid health risks (according to Criterion 2.3)
5. Implementation of particularly dangerous activities or those requiring special responsibilities and the requisite equipment/specialized protective clothing (e.g. Techniques for felling and hauling, fire protection, etc.). (According to Criterion 2.5)
6. Identification of the places of special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual interest of local communities and the implementation of conservation measures before commencement of forestry activities in order to avoid negative impact (according to Criterion 4.7)
7. Respecting the legal rights of local communities regarding forest management activities (according to Criterion 4.2)
8. Assessment of the social, economic and environmental impact and development of appropriate measures to limit the negative impacts. (according to Criterion 4.5)
9. Implementation of measures related to the maintenance and/or improvement of ecosystem services related to the safe implementation of these measures (criterion 5.1).
10. Use and storage of pesticides. (according to Criterion 10.7)
11. Applying of urgent measures to neutralize spills or other accidents with chemicals. (according to Criterion 10.12)

## **Annex 4 Indicative list of interested and affected stakeholders**

\*This list is not exhaustive and should only serve as a benchmark for The Organization in the performance of indicator 4.1.1

Local governance

Municipal administration

Mayors and deputy mayors of settlements within the Management Unit

State structures

Regional Forest Directorate

State administration on a regional level

Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water

Basin Directorates

Service "Fire Safety and Population Protection"

Border Police

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Forest Research Institute, Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, etc.) and other scientific institutions which somehow could be related to the Management Unit

Directorates of national and nature parks

### **Companies from the forestry sector**

Companies engaged in logging and trade of timber

Wood processing enterprises

### **NGOs**

Association of hunters and fishermen – hunting parties

Environmental associations

Travel companies and tourist groups

Caving clubs and clubs for extreme sports

Youth and scouting organizations

Scientific clubs and experts in the field of biodiversity (botanists, zoologists, etc.).

### **Forest owners**

Private owners (companies and individuals)

Municipalities

### **Religious institutions**

The State as a forest owner (Ministry of Agriculture and Food)

Religious communities

Church boards

Mosque boards

### **Local people**

People employed in tourism

People employed in the forestry sector

Collectors of non-timber forest products for trade and personal use

Groups for fire safety

People dependent on firewood

Farmers and beekeepers

## **Annex 5 Impact Assessment Components**

### **Components of the Assessment of the impact from the activities of The Organization (Impact Assessment):**

Regarding the requirements of Indicator 4.5.1 the Impact assessment shall be implemented by engaging the interested and affected stakeholders and shall include but is not limited by the following components:

- Place of the Management Unit in the local development and role of The Organization.
- Scope of the activity of The Organization and spheres of the social impact.
- Identification of the affected and interested stakeholders.
- Cultural specifics of the affected and interested stakeholders that shall be taken into consideration when communicating with them.
- Identification of the legal rights of local communities and affected stakeholders regarding the activities of The Organization.
- Current and potential positive and negative impacts from the activities of The Organization incl. social, ecological and economic.
- Measures for overcoming the identified negative impacts.
- Ways to inform and hold consultations with the affected and interested stakeholders as well as for resolving disputes.
- Opportunities for The Organization to support the local social and economic development (according to Criterion 4.4).

### **Methods for gathering of information for the objectives of the Social Assessment:**

- Consultation meetings;
- Interviews (through meetings and phone);
- Group discussions;
- Document review;
- Observations.

## Annex 6 Requirements for afforestation with *Robinia pseudoacacia* in FSC certified forest areas

*Robinia pseudoacacia* is a tree species included in the list of invasive alien species (Annex 8 of the National FSC FM Standard). According to Indicator 10.3.1 of the Standard, alien species listed in Annex 8 are not used for afforestation. A note to the same indicator states that *Robinia pseudoacacia* can be used for afforestation only in plantations, provided that forest managers strictly control the spread of the species.

The applicable indicators to consider when planning afforestation with *R. pseudoacacia* in FSC certified forestry units require that:

There is no conversion of natural forest or High Conservation Value Areas to plantations or to non-forest land use, nor conversion of natural forests to non-forest land use, nor transformation of plantations on sites directly converted from natural forest to non-forest land use, except in some specific cases described in the Standard (Indicator 6.9.1.).

Artificial afforestation of natural open fields is not allowed except for control of erosion and when the assessment under 6.2.1 has not shown negative impacts (Indicator 10.1.9.).

Forests of local tree species are not transformed into plantations nor into forest cultures of alien species (Indicator 10.2.1.).

Non-native species and non-local genotypes are not used unless clear and convincing justification is provided (Indicator 10.2.3.) .

The area planted with alien species and genotypes does not exceed 5% of the forested area (Note: Areas managed as plantations are not included in the calculation of the area afforested with non-native species and genotypes.) (Indicator 10.2.4.).

The choice of species for planting is clearly justified and documented in relation to the planting objectives and the general management objectives (Indicator 10.2.5.).

Given the above indicators, afforestation (establishment of plantations) with *R. pseudoacacia* in certified forest territories is not allowed for areas that are classified as:

- 1) Natural forest or „Forests, in which all or almost all trees are native species, which have many of the essential characteristics and key elements of natural forest ecosystems, incl. wealth of biodiversity, soil characteristics and others. For the purposes of the national standard forest cultures classify as natural forests when they are composed of native species within their natural range distribution and are managed through objectives and methods that are valid for the natural forests“.
- 2) Forest cultures or „Forests created through afforestation or planting, or by using combined methods (natural and artificial regeneration), often consisting of one or several species at the same age and with even spatial structure“.
- 3) Natural open fields or „Natural and semi-natural habitats in forest areas where coverage with trees and shrubs is not higher than 20% and that can be defined as coastal sand dunes or inland dunes; shrub communities; natural and semi-natural grasslands (meadows, fields, pastures, steppes, barren lands and non-timber-producing areas, which are habitats of conservation importance and habitats of protected species, etc.); raised bogs, mires and bogs; rocky habitats and caves“, except in areas for which there is a clearly proven need for afforestation to control erosion processes (it is recommended to prove this need with photographs if this is not visible on the ground after afforestation).

It should be considered that the category/classification of territories with natural forests and forest cultures, which have not yet been regenerated after felling, does not change.

The forest areas where afforestation with *R. pseudoacacia* can be planned and implemented may include:

- 1) Plantations, or „Forested areas created through afforestation and/or planting of fast-growing local and exotic tree species. The main objective of management is intensive production of wood and/or wood products. In these forests, short rotations are applied“, including cleared and unregenerated plantations;
- 2) Arable lands (e.g. game fields, artificially created meadows, etc.);
- 3) Open spaces that do not meet the definition of natural open fields (e.g. areas not covered with forest but suitable for this or non-timber productive areas that do not represent habitats of conservation importance and habitats of protected species).

The decision to use *R. pseudoacacia* in afforestation shall be supported with a documented, clear and convincing rationale for the need to use this particular tree species and not native tree species that are adapted to the conditions of the relevant site.



## Annex 7 Monitoring of the implementation of the Planning documentation

Monitoring of the implementation of the Planning documentation, the impact of management activities over the environment and social sphere, and changes in the environment. Deadlines for revision of planning documentation regarding the results of periodic monitoring

\*Monitoring is not limited to the requirements of this annex

Elements of the Planning documentation  (Note: There will be differences depending on the scale, intensity and risk as well as on the authorization	Monitored object (partial list)	Frequency of monitoring	Who monitors this site?  Note: There will be differences depending on the scale, intensity and risk as well as on the authorization	Frequency of the update of Planning documentation
<b>Financial plan</b>	Implementation of the financial plan Incomes/Expenses	On every three months	Chief financial officer/accountant	Annually
<b>Social agreements</b>	Implementation of social agreements between employers and employees	Yearly	A representative of the employees/union leader	Pursuant to the requirements of relevant labour laws When changing working conditions
	Complaints from employees	Yearly	A representative of the employees/union leader	If necessary
<b>Plan/program for training and qualification of the personnel</b>	Professional qualification of staff Implementation of the plan/pro-gram for training and qualification	Yearly or as stipulated in the plan/program for training and qualification of the personnel	Management staff	Annually

<b>Healthy and safe working conditions incl. for the workers of the subcontractors</b>	Availability and use of personal protective equipment and special clothing	Current	Staff responsible for the safety of the personnel of The Organization;  Operational staff for the workers of the subcontractors	If necessary
	Observance of the techniques and requirements for work safety	Current	Staff responsible for the safety of the personnel of The Organization;  Operational staff for the workers of the subcontractors	If necessary
	Occupational accidents	Current	Staff responsible for the safety	If necessary
<b>Engagement of the interested stakeholders</b>	Engagement of the affected and interested stakeholders in the planning of the activities	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	If necessary
<b>Illegal activities in the forests</b>	Reports and evidence of illegal logging and other illegal practices Complaints Feedback	Current	Management and operational staff  Legal advisor, External experts (NGOs, etc.).	If necessary
<b>Forest management plan</b>		On every 10 years with a supervision on the 5 <sup>th</sup> year	Management personnel, owners, etc.	On every 10 years with a supervision on the 5 <sup>th</sup> year
<b>Changes in the borders, ownership, functionality and land use of the territories within</b>	Borders of the Management Unit  Change of ownership (restitution) Change of land use	Current  Yearly	Management personnel, owners, etc.	If necessary

<b>the Management Unit</b>	Announcement of new protected areas			
<b>Health condition of the forest</b>	Diseases and pests	Current Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	If necessary
<b>Use/yields and forest management activities</b>	Annual yields of timber and non-timber products	Yearly	Management staff	Annually or if necessary
	Area of regeneration fellings and thinnings	Yearly	Management staff	Annually or if necessary
	Afforestation	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
	Construction and maintenance of forest roads and installations	Yearly	Management staff	Annually or if necessary
	Usage of fertilizers and pesticides	Yearly	Management staff, Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
<b>HCV forests</b>	Identified HCV forests on the territory of the Management Unit	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
<b>Representative sample areas of natural forest eco-systems</b>	Health, dynamics of structure and composition, succession processes, negative trends	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
<b>Ecosystem services (in case The Organization promotes through FSC the maintenance and</b>	Promoted ecosystem services	Yearly	Management and Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary

enhancement of ecosystem services)

<b>Impact of management activities on the environment</b>	Regeneration processes in different silvicultural systems	Yearly	Operational staff	If necessary
	Availability and distribution of invasive species	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	If necessary
	Rare and endangered habitats	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
	Populations of rare and endangered species	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
	Negative impacts from the use of biological agents, pesticides and fertilizers	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
	Frequency, distribution and extent of damage caused by natural disasters resulting from forestry activities	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	If necessary
	Negative impacts on water resources	Yearly	Operational staff	Annually or if necessary
	Negative impacts on the soil (erosion, compaction, pollution, etc.)	Yearly	Operational staff	Annually or if necessary

	Condition of permanent and temporary forest roads	At field visits and annually	Operational staff	Annually or if necessary
	Presence of waste in forest areas	At field visits and annually	Operational staff	Annually or if necessary
<b>Impact of management activities on the social sphere</b>	Impacts on the rights and property of local affected and interested parties	Yearly	Management staff	If necessary
	Management of complaints and signals	Current	Management staff	If necessary
	Impacts on drinking water sources and other uses of water resources	Yearly	Management staff and operational staff	If necessary
	Use of wood and non-wood products from local companies	Yearly	Management staff	If necessary
	Supply wood to the local people	Yearly	Management staff and operational staff	Annually
	Places of cultural, historical, economic environmental, religious and spiritual significance for local communities	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts (sociologist, historian, cultural expert, etc..)	If necessary
<b>Changes in the environment</b>	Rare and endangered habitats	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary

Populations of rare and endangered species	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
Protected territories and zones	Yearly	Operational staff, external experts	Annually or if necessary
Large natural disturbances	Yearly		If necessary

## Annex 8 List of invasive species

### List of invasive and potentially invasive alien tree and shrub species in Bulgaria

The list of species that must not be used for afforestation in FSC certified units is aligned with the National report for the condition and protection of the environment of the Republic of Bulgaria from 2010 (edition 2012) that is available at: <http://eea.government.bg/bg/soer/2010/biodiversity-nem/biologichno-raznoobrazie-natsionalna-ekologichna-mrezha-1>

№	Species	Invasive status
1	<i>!Acer negundo</i>	Invasive
2	<i>!Ailanthus altissima</i>	Invasive
3	<i>!Amorpha fruticose</i>	Invasive
4	<i>Broussonettia papyrifera</i>	Potentially invasive
5	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	Invasive
6	<i>Koelreuteria paniculate</i>	Potentially invasive
7	<i>Lycium barbarum</i>	Potentially invasive
8	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Invasive
9	<i>Fraxinus Americana</i>	Invasive
9	<i>!Robinia pseudacacia</i>	Invasive

With the “!” symbols are marked the species that are included in the List of most dangerous invasive alien species that threaten the biodiversity of Europe.

## Annex 9 Requirements for identification and designation of Old-Growth Forests on the territory of MU

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist forest managers in the identification and selection of old-growth forests on the territory of the management unit (MU) that they manage and that is subject to certification.

Indicator 6.5.5 of the Standard requires at least 5% of the wooded area of the MU to be designated as old-growth forests (OGF) where forest management activities are not allowed, except in cases of restoration of damages caused by large-scale natural disturbances, occupying more than 30% of the area of the relevant sub-compartment, defined as old growth forest (OGF).

As defined in the Standard, Old-Growth Forests (OGFs) are Forests in the final phase of their development whose stands have reached a significant age and are not significantly influenced by large-area natural and anthropogenic disturbances. These are characterized by uneven spatial and age structure; presence of old living trees with diameters close to the maximum for the tree species and habitat; standing and fallen large dead trees in various stages of decomposition.

Sources of information about the territory of the MU:

1. For the state forestry territories: the sub-compartments included in Orders No. RD49-421/2.11.2016, No. RD49-493/13.12.2016 and No. RD49-330/10.11.2020 of the Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests for designation of old growth forests (in state forest territories managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests);
2. Report about high conservation value forests (HCVF report);
3. Protected areas such as natural parks, protected habitats (especially recategorized buffer zones around reserves), natural landmarks, ancient trees;
4. Protected sites from Natura 2000 network;
5. Surveys of habitats of rare and endangered species occurring on the territory of the MU, which require/recommend designation of the OGFs
6. Forest Management Plan (FMP);
7. Inaccessible/difficult to access forest basins;
8. Watersheds.

Guidelines for the identification and selection of old-growth forests:

A list of the main types of natural forests occurring on the territory of the Management Unit (MU) shall be drawn by using information from the forest management plan and the HCVF report (see table "Representative samples and OGFs" from the procedures to the National Standard).

For each main type of forest identified on the territory of MU, with the exception of forests dominated by hornbeam and birch (share of the species in the first floor  $> 0.5$ ) shall be selected the stands with the highest average age of the first floor in which no felling has been conducted at least for the last 30-40 years. The area of the selected stands shall be not less than 5% of the total area of the respective forest type. In the presence of a greater percentage of stands of one type of forest, which have typical characteristics of OGF (see the definition above), it is allowed for this type of forest to allocate more than 5% of OGFs at the expense of other types of forests, in which these characteristics are underrepresented or absent;

In the absence of stands of the highest age classes, which have not been logged in the last 30-40 years and which meet the minimum area requirement (5%), stands of the same or the next lower age class shall be added to the sample, in which the density of the first floor is not less than 0.6;

For forest types that are rarely found within the territory of the MU and/or in the neighbouring territories, it is recommended to allocate a larger percentage of their area to forests in the phase of old-growthness.



Information about such forest types can be found in the HCVF Report. These forest types are most often identified as High Conservation Value category 3 (from the HCVF Report). Priority shall be given to those forests for which no forest management activities are planned (e.g. riverside forests, forests growing on steep slopes, etc.), which can be left up to 100% of their area. After that, at least 5% of the OGFs of all other forest ecosystem types being priority for conservation shall be set aside, and those that are defined as rare and vulnerable or of very limited distribution shall be designated with a larger percentage of their area;

Forests in protected sites of the Natura 2000 network according to the respective restrictions introduced by the Biodiversity Act and/or the Declaration Order, if they do not have a Management Plan in place. In the presence of a management plan for the concrete Natura 2000 site, OGFs shall be selected primarily from those sites which are included in the areas for maintaining and restoring the habitats of the species subject to protection (or similar such areas);

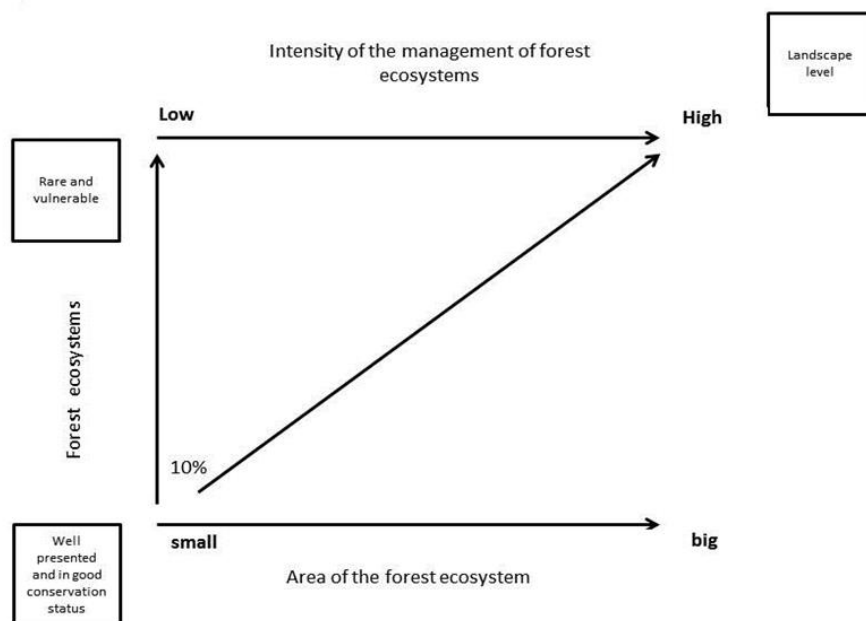
Stands in which habitats of rare and protected species are identified and for which management/conservation measures recommend to be classified as old-growth forests – shall be included as a matter of priority in the OGFs sample, regardless of the fact that they may be of a lower age or in them have been carried out fellings;

Forests in inaccessible/hardly accessible forest basins and terrains have potential to be selected as OGFs;

Stands in watershed areas are also suitable to be set aside as OGFs, which will improve their water protection functions and prevent possible conflicts with local communities and other institutions.

It is recommendable that the area of a complex of an OGF is not less than 40 ha, and depending on their spatial distribution, OGFs are selected to be relatively evenly distributed on the territory of the MU. Ensuring the connectivity of these complexes with corridors that are also composed of OGFs will further contribute to the better functionality of the OGF network.

## Annex 10 Defining the representative sample areas



The area of the representative sample areas of natural forest ecosystems is defined considering the following subordinations:

1. If a certain forest ecosystem is widely distributed on the territory of the MU representative sample areas are set aside that are not less than 10% of the total area of this ecosystem within the MU. Depending on its spatial distribution it is recommended that the representative samples are uniformly distributed over the whole area of the MU.
2. If certain forest ecosystem is rarely met on the territory of the management unit, then larger percentage of its total territory shall be identified as representative samples.
3. Aiming at the protection of the landscape it is generally expected that the area of the representative samples shall grow with the growth of the intensity of the management.

## **Annex 11 Sources of best available information**

### **Sources of best available information for identification of the environmental values on the territory of the Management Unit and beyond it that are or potentially may be affected by the management activities.**

1. For ecosystem services – information from the HCV report, District plan for development of forest territories, management plans of protected territories and zones, specialized research, etc.
2. For biodiversity – data from the inventories of the Management Unit, specialized scientific research, HCV report, management plans of protected territories and zone, orders for promulgation of protected territories and zones, topical lists of rare and threatened species at the Bulgarian Red Data Book., CITES, Bern and Bonn Conventions and other relevant lists on national and European level, etc.
3. For water resources – topical information about water bodies on the territory of the Management Unit from check-ups made by the River-basin Directorates and Regional environment inspectorates (regional authorities of the Ministry of environment and waters) related to significant problems of the management of water on the territory of the Management Unit and outer territories outside it.
4. For soils – soil maps, information from the inventory of the Management Unit, specialized scientific research, management plans of protected territories and zones, etc.
5. For the landscape values – reports on the condition, specialized scientific research, management plans of protected territories and zones, etc.
6. For all values 1-5 – consultations with local and national experts and interested stakeholders.

## Annex 12 Glossary of terms

Normative definitions for terms are given in FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms. This glossary includes internationally accepted definitions whenever possible. These sources include, for instance, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) as well as definitions from online glossaries as provided on the websites of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Invasive Alien Species Programme of the Convention on Biological Diversity. When other sources have been used, they are referenced accordingly.

“National interpretations of glossary of terms are normative and shall apply in addition to the international definition”.

The term ‘based on’ means that a definition was adapted from an existing definition as provided in an international source.

Words used in the International Generic Indicators, if not defined in this Glossary of Terms or other normative FSC documents, are used as defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary or the Concise Oxford Dictionary.

**Active ingredient:** Part of the product that provides the pesticidal action. (Source: FAO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management & <http://www.fao.org/pesticide-registration-toolkit/information-sources/terms-and-definitions/terms-and-definitions-s>).

**Adaptive management:** A systematic process of continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of existing measures (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Glossary definitions as provided on IUCN website).

### **Additionality:**

- Additionality outside the Management Unit: Conservation and/or restoration outcomes over and above those already achieved or planned to be achieved, and that would not have been achieved without the support and/or intervention of the organization.
- Projects must either be new (i.e., not already being implemented or planned), amended or extended so that conservation and/or restoration outcomes are enhanced beyond what would have been achieved, or planned or funded to be achieved without The Organization planning to remedy for historical conversion.
- Additionality inside the Management Unit: Conservation and/or restoration outcomes above and beyond those required by the applicable *FSC Standards*\*.

**Affected stakeholder:** Any person, group of persons or entity that is or is likely to be subject to the effects of the activities of a Management Unit. Examples include, but are not restricted to (for example in the case of downstream landowners), persons, groups of persons or entities located in the neighbourhood of the Management Unit. The following are examples of affected stakeholders:

- Local communities
- Indigenous Peoples
- Workers
- Forest dwellers
- Neighbours
- Downstream landowners
- Local processors
- Local businesses
- Tenure and use rights holders, including landowners

- Organizations authorized or known to act on behalf of affected stakeholders, for example social and environmental NGOs, labour unions, etc.
- Other right holders.

(Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Affected Rights Holder:** Integrated within „Affected Stakeholder“ (See above).

**Alien species:** A species, subspecies or lower taxon, introduced outside its natural past or present distribution; includes any part, gametes, seeds, eggs, or propagules of such species that might survive and subsequently reproduce (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Invasive Alien Species Programme. Glossary of Terms as provided on CBD website).

**Applicable law:** Means applicable to The Organization as a legal person or business enterprise in or for the benefit of the Management Unit and those laws which affect the implementation of the FSC Principles and Criteria. This includes any combination of statutory law (Parliamentary-approved) and case law (court interpretations), subsidiary regulations, associated administrative procedures, and the national constitution which invariably takes legal precedence over all other legal instruments (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Best Available Information:** Data, facts, documents, expert opinions, and results of field surveys or consultations with stakeholders that are most credible, accurate, complete, and/or pertinent and that can be obtained through reasonable effort and cost, subject to the scale and intensity of the management activities and the Precautionary Approach (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Binding Agreement:** A deal or pact, written or not, which is compulsory to its signatories and enforceable by law. Parties involved in the agreement do so freely and accept it voluntarily (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Biological control agents:** Organisms used to eliminate or regulate the population of other organisms (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Glossary definitions as provided on IUCN website).

**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 (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992, Article 2).

**Biotope trees:** Standing live or dead trees with specific characteristics that are actual or potential habitat for living organisms, including: old trees; hollow trees or trees with nests, trees with significant coverage of mosses, lichens and mushrooms, single trees in open spaces; high/higher than the average/trees at the edge of the forest; trees with indications to be used by animal organisms; trees that provide food base; groups of trees with significant landscape value and/or biological nature. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Chemical pesticide:** synthetically produced pesticide. (Source: FSC-POL-30-001 V3-0 FSC Pesticides Policy).

**Child:** any person under the age of 18 (Source: ILO Convention 182, Article 2).

**Child labour:** Work that deprives persons under the age of 18 of their childhood, of developing their potential, of their dignity and which is detrimental to both their physical and mental development as well as their educational development. (Source: ILO clarification)

**Collective bargaining:** a voluntary negotiation process between employers or employers' organization and workers' organization\*, with a view to the regulation of terms and conditions of employment by means of collective agreements (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 98, Article 4).

**Confidential information:** Private facts, data and content that, if made publicly available, might put at risk The Organization, its business interests or its relationships with stakeholders, clients and competitors. This may be information that is shared by agreement between two parties who are not entitled to share this information with third parties. This is all business information that the relevant company does not want to be publicly available. (Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; the definition is complemented by the Bulgarian NSDG to bring more clarity in the Bulgarian context).

**Connectivity:** A measure of how connected or spatially continuous a corridor, network, or matrix is. The fewer gaps, the higher the connectivity. Related to the structural connectivity concept; functional or behavioral connectivity refers to how connected an area is for a process, such as an animal moving through different types of landscape elements. Aquatic connectivity deals with the accessibility and transport of materials and organisms, through groundwater and surface water, between different patches of aquatic ecosystems of all kinds (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on R.T.T. Forman. 1995. Land Mosaics. The Ecology of Landscapes and Regions. Cambridge University Press, 632pp).

**Conservation/Protection:** These words are used interchangeably when referring to management activities designed to maintain the identified environmental or cultural values in existence long-term. Management activities may range from zero or minimal interventions to a specified range of appropriate interventions and activities designed to maintain, or compatible with maintaining, these identified values (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Conservation Areas Network:** Those portions of the Management Unit for which conservation is the primary and, in some circumstances, exclusive objective; such areas include Representative Sample Areas, conservation zones, Protection Areas, connectivity areas and High Conservation Value Areas (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Conservation zones and Protection Areas:** Defined areas that are designated and managed primarily to safeguard species, habitats, ecosystems, natural features or other site-specific values because of their natural environmental or cultural values, or for purposes of monitoring, evaluation or research, not necessarily excluding other management activities. In the context of Bulgaria protected areas are the sites(zones) of the European ecological network Natura 2000 designated under the Biological Diversity Act (BDA) and protected areas designated under the Protected Areas Act (PAA). For the purposes of this standard the definition of "conservation zones and protection areas", except the territories under BDA and PAA includes certain HCVF, and other areas designated and managed by The Organization in order to protect natural and cultural values. (Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0 FSC; the definition is complemented by the Bulgarian NSDG to bring more clarity in the Bulgarian context).

**Conversion:** A lasting change of natural forest cover or High Conservation Value areas, induced by human activity. This may be characterized by significant loss of species diversity, habitat diversity, structural complexity, ecosystem functionality or livelihoods and cultural values. The definition of conversion covers gradual forest degradation as well as rapid forest transformation (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0)

- **Induced by human activity:** In contrast to drastic changes caused by natural calamities like hurricanes or volcanic eruptions. It also applies in cases of naturally ignited fires where human activities (e.g. draining of peatlands) have significantly increased the risk of fire.

- **Lasting change of natural forest cover:** Permanent or long-term change of natural forest cover. Temporary changes of forest cover or structure (e.g. harvesting followed by regeneration in accordance with the FSC normative framework) is not considered conversion.
- **Lasting change of High Conservation Value (HCV) areas:** Permanent or long-term change of any of the High Conservation Values. Temporary changes of HCV areas that do not negatively and permanently impact the values (e.g. harvesting followed by regeneration in accordance with Principle 9) is not considered a lasting change.
- **Significant loss of species diversity:** Loss of species is considered significant where rare species and threatened species or other locally important, keystone and/or flagship species are lost, whether in terms of numbers of individuals or in terms of number of species. This refers to both displacement and extinction.

NOTE: The establishment of ancillary infrastructure necessary to implement the objectives of responsible forest management (e.g. forest roads, skid trails, log landings, fire protection, etc.) is not considered conversion.

**Conversion Threshold:** The point at which degradation and/or clearing has occurred to an extent where recovery to natural forest conditions and/or High Conservation Value Areas is unlikely to be achieved without direct intervention (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).

NOTE: Examples of direct intervention include but are not limited to removal of exotic species, physical protection of existing remnant native vegetation, re-wetting of drained soils, reintroduction of appropriate native species, and reintroduction of High Conservation Value species where suitable habitat remains or is re-established.

**Core area:** The portion of each Intact Forest Landscape designated to contain the most important cultural and ecological values. Core areas are managed to exclude industrial activity. Core Areas meet or exceed the definition of Intact Forest Landscape (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Critical:** The concept of criticality or fundamentality in Principle 9 and HCVs relates to irreplaceability and to cases where loss or major damage to this HCV would cause serious prejudice or suffering to affected stakeholders. An ecosystem service is considered to be critical (HCV 4) where a disruption of that service is likely to cause, or poses a threat of, severe negative impacts on the welfare, health or survival of local communities, on the environment, on HCVs, or on the functioning of significant infrastructure (roads, dams, buildings etc.). The notion of criticality here refers to the importance and risk for natural resources and environmental and socio-economic values (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Criterion** (pl. Criteria): A means of judging whether or not a Principle (of FSC) has been fulfilled (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0).

**Culturally appropriate (mechanisms/ways):** Use of tools and approaches for reaching target groups (local communities and other interested stakeholders), which are in harmony with their customs, values, sensitivity, culture and lifestyle. Cultural characteristics may be associated with religious, traditional or purely technical capabilities and preferences of local people. Cultural characteristics of a community can exclude the possibility of communication through letters or just the opposite - only the written communication can be acceptable. In other cases, the cultural characteristics may require communication to happen in certain places and at certain times for people and to be used language suitably adapted to be understood from the stakeholders or other measures may have to be taken to ensure effective communication. (Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; the definition is complemented by the Bulgarian NSDG to bring more clarity in the Bulgarian context).

**Customary law:** Interrelated sets of customary rights may be recognized as customary law. In some jurisdictions, customary law is equivalent to statutory law, within its defined area of competence and may replace the statutory law for defined ethnic or other social groups. In some jurisdictions customary law complements statutory law and is applied in specified circumstances (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on N.L. Peluso and P. Vandergeest. 2001. Genealogies of the political forest and customary rights in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, Journal of Asian Studies 60(3):761–812).

**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. In the context of Bulgaria, the customary rights are legal rights. (Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0; the definition is complemented by the Bulgarian NSDG to meet the national specifics).

**Deadwood:** A collection of inanimate wood biomass in the forest (except the forest floor), which is the result of natural processes and rotting or from forestry operations. Deadwood consists of standing dead wood (standing dead trees and broken stems, resulting from natural processes was) lying dead wood (fallen and uprooted trees, stems and branches as a result of natural processes and logging activities) and stumps (part of the base of the stem which remains after cutting it). (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Direct involvement:** Situations in which the associated organization or individual is first-hand responsible for the unacceptable activities (Source: FSC-POL-01-004 V2-0).

**Discrimination:** Discrimination: Any unfavorable treatment of a person based on sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, citizenship, origin, religion or belief, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal or social status, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, property status or any other signs established by law or in an international agreement to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a signatory. (Source: Developed by the National Working Group, adapted from the Law on Protection against Discrimination)

**Dispute:** An expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization presented as a complaint to The Organization, relating to its management activities or its conformity with the FSC Principles and Criteria, where a response is expected (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on FSC-PRO-01-005 V3-0 Processing Appeals).

**Dispute of substantial duration:** Dispute that continues for more than twice as long as the predefined timelines in the FSC System (this is, for more than 6 months after receiving the complaint, based on FSC-STD-20-001).

**Dispute of substantial magnitude:** For the purpose of the International Generic Indicators, a dispute of substantial magnitude is a dispute that involves one or more of the following:

- Affects the legal or customary rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- Where the negative impact of management activities is of such a scale that it cannot be reversed or mitigated;
- Physical violence;
- Destruction of property;
- Presence of military bodies;
- Acts of intimidation against forest workers and stakeholders (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Due consideration:** To give such weight or significance to a particular factor as under the circumstances it seems to merit, and this involves discretion (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on Black's Law Dictionary, 1979).



**Economic viability:** The capability of developing and surviving as a relatively independent social, economic or political unit. Economic viability may require but is not synonymous with profitability (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on the definition provided on the website of the European Environment Agency).

**Eco-regional:** Large unit of land or water containing a geographically distinct assemblage of species, natural communities, and environmental conditions (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on WWF Global 200. [http://wwf.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/ecoregions/about/what\\_is\\_an\\_ecoregion/](http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/ecoregions/about/what_is_an_ecoregion/)).

**Ecosystem:** A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992, Article 2).

**Ecosystem function:** An intrinsic ecosystem characteristic related to the set of conditions and processes whereby an ecosystem maintains its integrity (such as primary productivity, food chain, biogeochemical cycles). Ecosystem functions include such processes as decomposition, production, nutrient cycling, and fluxes of nutrients and energy. For FSC purposes, this definition includes ecological and evolutionary processes such as gene flow and disturbance regimes, regeneration cycles and ecological seral development (succession) stages. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on R. Hassan, R. Scholes and N. Ash. 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Series. Island Press, Washington DC; and R.F. Noss. 1990. Indicators for monitoring biodiversity: a hierarchical approach. Conservation Biology 4(4):355–364).

**Ecosystem services:** The benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include:

- provisioning services such as food, forest products and water;
- regulating services such as regulation of floods, drought, land degradation, air quality, climate and disease;
- supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling; and
- cultural services and cultural values such as recreational, spiritual, religious and other non-material benefits (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on R. Hassan, R. Scholes and N. Ash. 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Series. Island Press, Washington DC).

**Employment and Occupation:** includes access to vocational training, access to employment and to particular occupations, and terms and conditions of employment (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 111, Article 1.3).

**Engaging/engagement:** The process by which The Organization communicates, consults and/or provides for the participation of interested and/or affected stakeholders ensuring that their concerns, desires, expectations, needs, rights and opportunities are considered in the establishment, implementation and updating of the management plan (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESRA):** A process to predict, assess and review the likely or actual environmental and social effects of a well-defined action, evaluate alternatives, and design appropriate mitigation, management and monitoring measures. In the context of the FSC Pesticides Policy, it relates to chemical pesticide use. (Source: FAO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines, 2015).

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** Systematic process used to identify potential environmental and social impacts of proposed projects, to evaluate alternative approaches, and to design and incorporate appropriate prevention, mitigation, management and monitoring measures (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-

2, based on Environmental impact assessment, guidelines for FAO field projects. Food and agriculture organization of the United Nations (FAO). Rome).

**Environmental harm:** Any impact on the environment values as a result of human activity that has the effect of degrading the environment, whether temporarily or permanently (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).

**Environmental values:** The following set of elements of the biophysical and human environment:

- ecosystem functions (including carbon sequestration and storage);
- biological diversity;
- water resources;
- soils;
- atmosphere;
- landscape values (including cultural and spiritual values).

The actual worth attributed to these elements depends on human and societal perceptions (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Equal remuneration\* for men and women workers\* for work of equal value:** refers to rates of remuneration established without discrimination\* based on sex (ILO Convention 100, Article 1b).

**Externalities:** The positive and negative impacts of activities on stakeholders that are not directly involved in those activities, or on a natural resource or the environment, which do not usually enter standard cost accounting systems, such that the market prices of the products of those activities do not reflect the full costs or benefits. Examples of different types of negative externalities are different types of pollution as a result of forest management activities and the destruction of certain types of organisms and ecosystems, deterioration of the local microclimate due to inappropriate silvicultural activities and others. Examples of positive externalities are: provision of drinking water from the well-kept forests in water catchment areas, providing clean air, microclimate with healing qualities, providing access to the forest for recreation and gathering non-timber forest products due to the construction of forest roads, the provision of good conditions for aesthetic enjoyment, creating good conditions for the existence of genetic and biological diversity in forests that are managed in a nature friendly way and others. Some of the positive externalities are can be characterized as ecosystem services, whose value was not calculated and not taken into account. (Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0; this definition is complemented by the Bulgarian NSDG to bring more clarity in the national context).

**Fair compensation:** Remuneration that is proportionate to the magnitude and type of services rendered by another party or of the harm that is attributable to the first party (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

### **Favorable Conservation Status:**

To determine the favorable status of species and habitats, the following indicators are used:

1. The conservation status of a species will be taken as "favorable" when:
  - population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
  - the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
  - there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis;
2. The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as "favorable" when:

- its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favorable as defined above.

(Source: EU Habitat Directive)

**Fertilizer:** Mineral or organic substances, most commonly N, P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>O, which are applied to soil for the purpose of enhancing plant growth (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Fibre Testing:** a suite of wood identification technologies used to identify the family, genus, species and origin of solid wood and fibre based products (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Forced or compulsory labour:** work or service exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself/herself voluntarily (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 29, Article 2.1).

**Forest:** A tract of land dominated by trees:

1. that covers area not smaller than 1 decare (0,1 ha), height of adult trees not less than 5 m., width of stand measured between the stams of endmost trees not less than 10 m. and projection of tree crowns not less than 10 of 100 from the area of the stand;
2. areas that are in process of regeneration and have not yet reached the minimum crown projection (10 of 100) and the minimum height of trees 5 m., but are soon expected to reach those minimum levels;
3. areas which as a result of human interference or because of other reasons are temporarily without trees but are to be regenerated;
4. protection forest belts and lines of trees larger than 0.1 ha and width over 10 m;
5. forest stands into systems and facilities for protection from the destructive impacts of water;
6. *Pinus mugo* formations;
7. Communities of trees and bushes along water bodies.

(Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0. Derived from FSC Guidelines for Certification Bodies, Scope of Forest Certification, Section 2.1 first published in 1998, and revised as FSC-GUI-20-200 in 2005, and revised again in 2010 as FSC-DIR-20-007 FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations, ADVICE-20-007-01; this definition is complemented by the Bulgarian NSDG to meet the specifics of the national context and legislation and more specifically the definition for a forest according to the Bulgarian Forestry Act)

**Forest cultures:** Forests created through afforestation or planting, or by using combined methods (natural and artificial regeneration), often consisting of one or several species at the same age and with even spatial structure. Forest cultures, which over time have acquired basic characteristics and key elements of the natural forest ecosystems can be considered as natural forests, and their regeneration will not be considered for conversion. In the Bulgarian context the main difference between Forest cultures and Plantations is that short rotations are not planned and implemented in Forest cultures. Thus, they often have or gain many of the characteristics of natural forests. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG to meet the national specifics and terminology)

**Forest machinery:** Self-propelled, non-self-propelled and stationary machines, equipment, installations, apparatus, manual and mechanized tools used in forests. (Source: Developed by the National SDG)

**Forestry activities:** Activities related to felling, extraction, storage, processing and transportation of timber and timber products; pruning; production of reproductive materials; afforestation; use of pesticides and biological control agents; fertilization; construction and maintenance of forest roads and facilities. (Source: Developed by the National SDG).

**Formal and informal workers organization:** association or union of workers, whether recognized by law or by The Organization or neither, which have the aim of promoting workers rights and to represent workers in dealings with The Organization particularly regarding working conditions and compensation (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**MU:** See the definition of “Management Unit”.

**Fragmentation:** The process of dividing habitats into smaller patches, which results in the loss of original habitat, loss in connectivity, reduction in patch size, and increasing isolation of patches. Fragmentation is considered to be one of the single most important factors leading to loss of native species, especially in forested landscapes, and one of the primary causes of the present extinction crisis. In reference to Intact Forest Landscapes, the fragmentation of concern is understood to be that caused by human industrial activities. (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, adapted from Gerald E. Heilman, Jr. James R. Strittholt Nicholas C. Slosser Dominick A. Dellasala, *BioScience* (2002) 52 (5): 411-422.)

**Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):** A legal condition whereby a person or community can be said to have given consent to an action prior to its commencement, based upon a clear appreciation and understanding of the facts, implications and future consequences of that action, and the possession of all relevant facts at the time when consent is given. Free, prior and Informed Consent includes the right to grant, modify, withhold or withdraw approval (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on the Preliminary working paper on the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples (...) (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/2004/4 8 July 2004) of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 19–23 July 2004).

**FSC certified (product):** FSC certified material that is eligible to carry an FSC label and to be promoted with the FSC trademarks. (Source: FSC-STD-40-004 V2-0)

**FSC Standard/Forest Stewardship Standard:** The normative document which specifies the requirements with which a forest management enterprise must conform in order to obtain certification. (Source: FSC-STD-20-002 V2-1)

**FSC Transaction:** Purchase or sale of products with FSC claims on sales documents (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Gender equality:** Gender equality or gender equity means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, adapted from FAO, IFAD and ILO workshop on ‘Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty’, Rome, 31 March to 2 April 2009.).

**Genetically modified organism:** An organism in which the genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination. (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on FSC-POL-30-602 FSC Interpretation on GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms)).

**Genotype:** The genetic constitution of an organism (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Good faith:** A process of engagement where the parties make every effort to reach an agreement, conduct genuine and constructive negotiations, avoid delays in negotiations, respect agreements concluded and under development, and give sufficient time to discuss and settle disputes (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, adapted from Motion 40:2017).

**Good Faith in negotiation:** The Organization (employer) and workers' organizations make every effort to reach an agreement, conduct genuine and constructive negotiations, avoid unjustified delays in negotiations, respect agreements concluded and give sufficient time to discuss and settle collective disputes (Gerning B, Odero A, Guido H (2000), Collective Bargaining: ILO Standards and the Principles of the Supervisory Bodies. International Labour Office, Geneva).

**Growing stock of the stand:** The total amount of wood in the stand expressed mostly by its volume (m3). (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Habitat:** The place or type of site where an organism or population occurs (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Article 2).

**Habitat features:** Forest stand attributes and structures, including but not limited to:

- Old commercial and non-commercial trees whose age noticeably exceeds;
- The average age of the main canopy;
- Trees with special ecological value (biotope trees);
- Vertical and horizontal complexity;
- Standing dead trees;
- Dead fallen wood;
- Forest openings attributable to natural disturbances;
- Nesting sites;
- Small wetlands, bogs, fens;
- Ponds;
- Areas for procreation (Birds and deer coupling places, hollow trees, entrances of caves, rock crevices, etc.);
- Areas for feeding and shelter, including seasonal cycles of breeding;
- Areas for migration;
- Areas for hibernation. (Areas used for hibernation or winter shelters, for example dens of bears, winter gatherings of pygmy cormorant, hollow trees and entrances to caves used by bats, etc.).

(Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; complemented by NSDG)

**Hazardous work (in the context of child labour):** any work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, should not be undertaken by anyone under the age of 18 years. Hazardous child labour is work in dangerous, or unhealthy conditions that could result in a child being killed or injured/maimed (often permanently) and/or made ill (often permanently) as a consequence of poor safety and health standards and working arrangements. In determining the type of hazard child labour referred to under (Article 3(d) of the Convention No 182, and in identifying where they exist, consideration should be given, inter alia, to

- Work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- Work underground, under water at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;
- Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;

- Work in unhealthy environment which may, for examples, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
- Work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Labour Organization (ILO), 2011: IPEC Mainstreaming Child labour concerns in education sector plans and Programmes, Geneva, 2011& ILO Handbook on Hazardous child labour, 2011).

**Heavy work (in the context of child labour):** refers to work that is likely to be harmful or dangerous to children’s health (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on FSC report on generic criteria and indicators based on International Labour Organization (ILO) Core Conventions principles, 2017).

**High Conservation Value (HCV):** Any of the following values:

- **HCV 1:** Species Diversity. Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered species, that are significant at global, regional or national levels.
- **HCV 2:** Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics. Intact Forest Landscapes, large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.
- **HCV 3:** Ecosystems and habitats. Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia.
- **HCV 4:** Critical ecosystem services. Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.
- **HCV 5:** Community needs. Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or Indigenous Peoples (for example for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water), identified through engagement with these communities or Indigenous Peoples.
- **HCV 6:** Cultural values. Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or Indigenous Peoples, identified through engagement with these local communities or Indigenous Peoples (Source: based on FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**High Conservation Value Areas:** Zones and physical spaces which possess and/or are needed for the existence and maintenance of identified High Conservation Values (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**ILO Core (Fundamental) Conventions:** these are labour standards that cover fundamental principles and rights at work: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. The eight Fundamental Conventions are:

- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on FSC report on generic criteria and indicators based on International Labour Organization (ILO) Core Conventions principles, 2017).

**ILO Committee on Freedom of Association:** a Governing Body Committee set up in 1951, for the purpose of examining complaints about violations of freedom of association, whether or not the country concerned had ratified the relevant conventions. Is composed of an independent chairperson and three representatives each of governments, employers, and workers. If it decides to receive the case, it establishes the facts in dialogue with the government concerned. If it finds that there has been a violation of freedom of association standards or principles, it issues a report through the Governing Body and makes recommendations on how the situation could be remedied. Governments are subsequently requested to report on the implementation of its recommendations (Source: FSC report on generic criteria and indicators based on ILO Core Conventions principles, 2017).

**ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Followup, adopted by the International Labour conference at its Eighty-sixth Session, Geneva, 18th June 1998 (Annex revised 15 June 2010):** is a resolute reaffirmation of ILO principles (art 2) which declares that all Members, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question, have an obligation, arising from the very fact of membership in The Organization, to respect, to promote and to realize, in good faith\* and in accordance with the Constitution, the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions, namely:

- Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- The elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
- The effective abolition of child labour; and
- The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on FSC report on generic criteria and indicators based on International Labour Organization (ILO) Core Conventions principles, 2017).

**Income for provision:** The income for provision is the basis on which the obligatory insurance taxes are being calculated and paid by the employers. For the employees this is the gross monthly payment which they receive. Annual minimal incomes for provision are being defined by the Law on the budget of state social insurance for all occupations. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Indicator:** A quantitative or qualitative variable which can be measured or described, and which provides a means of judging whether a 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 Management Unit and are the primary basis of forest evaluation (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Indigenous Peoples:** People and groups of people that can be identified or characterized as follows:

- The key characteristic or Criterion is self-identification as Indigenous Peoples at the individual level and acceptance by the community as their member;
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies;
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources;
- Distinct social, economic or political systems;
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs;
- Form non-dominant groups of society;
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, adapted from United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous, Factsheet 'Who are Indigenous Peoples' October 2007; United Nations Development Group, 'Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues' United Nations 2009, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 13 September 2007).

**Indirect involvement:** Situations in which the associated organization or individual, with a minimum ownership or voting power of 51%, is involved as a parent or sister company, subsidiary, shareholder or Board of Directors to an organization directly involved in unacceptable activities. Indirect involvement also includes activities performed by subcontractors when acting on behalf of the associated organization or individual (Source: FSC-POL-01-004 V2-0).

**Infrastructure:** In the context of forest management, roads, bridges, culverts, log landings, quarries, impoundments, buildings and other structures required in the course of implementing the management plan (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Intact Forest Landscape:** a territory within today's global extent of forest cover which contains forest and non-forest ecosystems minimally influenced by human economic activity, with an area of at least 500 km<sup>2</sup> (50,000 ha) and a minimal width of 10 km (measured as the diameter of a circle that is entirely inscribed within the boundaries of the territory) (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on Intact Forests/Global Forest Watch. Glossary definition as provided on Intact Forest website. 2006-2014).

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** Careful consideration of all available pest control techniques and subsequent integration of appropriate measures that discourage the development of pest populations and keep pesticides and other interventions to levels that are economically justified and reduce or minimize risks to human and animal health and/or the environment. IPM emphasizes the growth of a healthy crop with the least possible disruption to agro-ecosystems and encourages natural pest control mechanisms. (Source: FAO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management & <http://www.fao.org/pesticide-registration-toolkit/information-sources/terms-and-definitions/terms-and-definitions-s>).

**Intensity:** A measure of the force, severity or strength of a management activity or other occurrence affecting the nature of the activity's impacts (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Interested stakeholder:** Any person, group of persons, or entity that has shown an interest, or is known to have an interest, in the activities of a Management Unit. The following are examples of interested stakeholders:

- Conservation organizations, for example environmental NGOs;
- Labor (rights) organizations, for example labour unions;
- Human rights organizations, for example social NGOs;
- Local development projects;
- Local governments;
- National government departments functioning in the region;
- FSC national offices;
- Experts on particular issues, for example high conservation values.

(Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Internationally accepted scientific protocol:** A predefined science-based procedure which is either published by an international scientific network or union, or referenced frequently in the international scientific literature (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Invasive species:** Species that are rapidly expanding outside of their native range. Invasive species can alter ecological relationships among native species and can affect ecosystem function and human health (Source: Based on World Conservation Union (IUCN). Glossary definitions as provided on IUCN website).

**Lands and territories:** For the purposes of the Principles and Criteria these are lands or territories that Indigenous Peoples or local communities have traditionally owned, or customarily used or occupied, and



where access to natural resources is vital to the sustainability of their cultures and livelihoods (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on World Bank safeguard OP 4.10 Indigenous Peoples, section 16 (a). July 2005.).

**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 (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Glossary definitions as provided on IUCN website).

**Landscape values:** Landscape values can be visualized as layers of human perceptions overlaid on the physical landscape. Some landscape values, like economic, recreation, subsistence value or visual quality are closely related to physical landscape attributes. Other landscape values such as intrinsic or spiritual value are more symbolic in character and are influenced more by individual perception or social construction than physical landscape attributes (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on website of the Landscape Value Institute).

**Large-scale natural disturbances:** See the definition for natural disturbances in the current glossary.

**Legal:** In accordance with primary legislation (national or local laws) or secondary legislation (subsidiary regulations, decrees, orders, etc.). 'Legal' also includes rule-based decisions made by legally competent agencies where such decisions flow directly and logically from the laws and regulations. Decisions made by legally competent agencies may not be legal if they do not flow directly and logically from the laws and regulations and if they are not rule-based but use administrative discretion (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Legally competent:** Mandated in law to perform a certain function (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Legal registration:** National or local legal license or set of permissions to operate as an enterprise, with rights to buy and sell products and/or services commercially. The license or permissions can apply to an individual, a privately-owned enterprise or a publicly-owned corporate entity. The rights to buy and sell products and/or services do not carry the obligation to do so, so legal registration applies also to Organizations operating a Management Unit without sales of products or services; for example, for unpriced recreation or for conservation of biodiversity or habitat (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Legal rights:** Rights recognized and protected by law. In the context of Bulgaria this also includes the customary rights (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG). Pls. see also definition for legal.

**Legal status:** The way in which the Management Unit is classified according to law. In terms of tenure, it means the category of tenure, such as communal land or leasehold or freehold or State land or government land, etc. If the Management Unit is being converted from one category to another communal indigenous land) the status includes the current position in the transition process. In terms of administration, legal status could mean that the land is owned by the nation as a whole, is administered on behalf of the nation by a government department, and is leased by a government Ministry to a private sector operator through a concession. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0).

**Light work:** national laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons 13 to 15 years of age on light work which is- a) not likely to be harmful to their health or development; and b) not such as to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138, Article 7).

**Living wage:** The remuneration received for a standard work week by a worker in a particular place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and her or his family. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, health care, transport, clothing, and other essential needs including provision for unexpected events. (Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; A Shared Approach to a Living Wage. ISEAL Living Wage Group. November 2013).

**Local communities:** Communities of any size that are in or adjacent to the Management Unit, and also those that are close enough to have a significant impact on the economy or the environmental values of the Management Unit or to have their economies, rights or environments significantly affected by the management activities or the biophysical aspects of the Management Unit (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Local laws:** The whole suite of primary and secondary laws (acts, ordinances, statutes, decrees) which is limited in application to a particular geographic district within a national territory, as well as secondary regulations, and tertiary administrative procedures (rules/requirements) that derive their authority directly and explicitly from these primary and secondary laws. Laws derive authority ultimately from the Westphalian concept of sovereignty of the Nation State (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**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 (Source: FSC-STD-01-002 V1-0).

**Low-stemmed forests:** Stands of Black locust, Oriental hornbeam, South European flowering ash and Thorny locust, in which coppice regeneration is planned. (Source: Developed by the National Working Group)

**Management activities:** All activities assigned or implemented by The Organization incl. administrative tasks forest management activities, planning, monitoring and others. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Management objective:** Specific management goals, practices, outcomes, and approaches established to achieve the requirements of this standard (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Management plan/planning documentation:** The two words are used interchangeably in the Bulgarian standard. They mean the set of documents, reports, records, statements, maps, etc., which describe, justify and regulate the implementation of activities related to the Management Unit. In the context of Bulgaria this includes the Regional Development Plan for forest territories, forest management plan, as well as additional documentation related/developed to/in connection with the management of the territory of the Management Unit and its certification. (The term planning documentation is often used in the indicators of the Bulgarian National Standard in spite of the FSC term “Management Plan”. The term “Planning documentation” was introduced by the BG NSDG in order to avoid confusion with the Bulgarian term “Forest management plan” which is something different from the FSC definition of “Management Plan”.) (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Management Unit:** A spatial area or areas submitted for FSC certification with clearly defined boundaries managed to a set of explicit long-term management objectives which are expressed in a management plan. This area or areas include(s):

- all facilities and area(s) within or adjacent to this spatial area or areas under legal title or management control of, or operated by or on behalf of The Organization, for the purpose of contributing to the management objectives; and
- all facilities and area(s) outside, and not adjacent to this spatial area or areas and operated by or on behalf of The Organization, solely for the purpose of contributing to the management objectives (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Micro-habitat:** Specific habitat of small size or limited distribution, which differs in nature from the surrounding larger habitat. Typical examples of micro-habitats in forest ecosystems are fallen trunks, damp places, rock formations, and others. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Minimum age (of employment):** The minimum age of employment is the age of 16 years. Persons between the ages of 15 and 16 may be employed to perform work which is light and not hazardous or harmful to health and to their proper physical, mental and moral development, and whose implementation would not preclude regular school attendance or participation in vocational training programs. (Source: adapted by the National SDG).

**National laws:** The whole suite of primary and secondary laws (acts, ordinances, statutes, decrees), which is applicable to a national territory, as well as secondary regulations, and tertiary administrative procedures (rules/requirements) that derive their authority directly and explicitly from these primary and secondary laws (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Native species:** Species, subspecies, or lower taxon, occurring within its natural range (past or present) and dispersal potential (that is, within the range it occupies naturally or could occupy without direct or indirect introduction or care by humans) (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Invasive Alien Species Programme. Glossary of Terms as provided on CBD website).

**Natural conditions/native ecosystem:** For the purposes of the Principles and Criteria and any applications of restoration techniques, terms such as 'more natural conditions', 'native ecosystem' provide for managing sites to favor or restore native species and associations of native species that are typical of the locality, and for managing these associations and other environmental values so that they form ecosystems typical of the locality. Further guidelines may be provided in FSC Forest Stewardship Standards (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Natural forest:** Forests, in which all or almost all trees are native species, which have many of the essential characteristics and key elements of natural forest ecosystems, incl. wealth of biodiversity, soil characteristics and others. For the purposes of the national standard forest cultures classify as natural forests when they are composed of native species within their natural range distribution and are managed through objectives and methods that are valid for the natural forests (see the definition for "forest cultures"). (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Natural disturbances:** Events outside the natural cycle of failure of individual trees, that as a result from the action of natural abiotic and biotic factors alter the composition, structure and processes in forest ecosystems. Depending on the size of the territory affected by the disturbances and scale/intensity of changes, natural disturbances are classified as small-area or large-area disturbances. Given the specific dynamics of the forest ecosystems in Bulgaria for the purposes of the national standard it is assumed that large-area are natural disturbances, in which the damage to the forest cover caused by abiotic factors (wind throw, snow falls, heavy snow, fire, avalanches and others) and/or pests are concentrated (over 70% of the trees are affected) on an area greater than 1 hectare. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Natural Hazards:** disturbances that can present risks to social and environmental values in the Management Unit but that may also comprise important ecosystem functions; examples include drought, flood, fire, landslide, storm, avalanche, etc. (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Natural open fields:** Natural and semi-natural habitats in forest areas where the coverage with trees and shrubs is not higher than 20% and that can be defined as coastal sand dunes or inland dunes; shrub communities; natural and semi-natural grasslands (meadows, fields, pastures, steppes, barren lands and non-timber-producing areas, which are habitats of conservation importance and habitats of protected species, etc.); raised bogs, mires and bogs; rocky habitats and caves.

Note: To distinguish these groups of ecosystems the EUNIS habitat classification is used. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Non-forest land-use:** Land-use system, where the land is not dominated by trees.

**Non-native species:** See Alien species.

**Non-timber forest products (NTFP):** All products other than timber derived from the Management Unit (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Objective:** The basic purpose laid down by The Organization for the forest enterprise, including the decision of policy and the choice of means for attaining the purpose (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on F.C. Osmaston. 1968. The Management of Forests. Hafner, New York; and D.R. Johnston, A.J. Grayson and R.T. Bradley. 1967. Forest Planning. Faber & Faber, London).

**Obligatory code of practice:** A manual or handbook or other source of technical instruction which The Organization must implement by law. Example of such a document is the Ethics Code of the state forest units in Bulgaria (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0; the term is complemented by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Occupational accident:** An occurrence arising out of, or in the course of, work which results in fatal or non-fatal injury (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on International Labour Organization (ILO). Bureau of Library and Information Services. ILO Thesaurus as provided on ILO website).

**Occupational disease:** Any disease contracted as a result of an exposure to risk factors arising from work activity (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on International Labour Organization (ILO). Bureau of Library and Information Services. ILO Thesaurus as provided on ILO website).

**Occupational injuries:** Any personal injury, disease or death resulting from an occupational accident (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on International Labour Organization (ILO). Bureau of Library and Information Services. ILO Thesaurus as provided on ILO website).

**Old-Growth Forests (OGF):** Forests in the final phase of their development whose stands have reached a significant age and are not significantly influenced by large-area natural and anthropogenic disturbances. These are characterized by uneven spatial and age structure; presence of old living trees with diameters close to the maximum for the tree species and habitat; standing and fallen large dead trees in various stages of decomposition. In the absence of forests that have the characteristics of old growth forests within the Management Unit, The Organization shall identify forests with potential to become old-growth forests. These forests shall be managed in a way that leads to their transformation into old-growth forests. The transformation to old growth forests is gradual and to a great extent depends on the tree species, conditions of environment and initial structure of the stands. In order to reach the characteristics of old-growth forests the identified forests with potential shall be left to their natural dynamics. In those stands management activities are not allowed including extraction of wood, except in the cases of large-scale

natural disturbances that cover over 30% of the area of the relevant old-growth forest. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Old-Growth Islands:** Parts of the managed stands that are left without silvicultural intervention in order to maintain biodiversity, conservation of specific habitats (micro-habitats) and provide structural diversity on the stand level. (Source: Definition developed by the NSDG)

**The Organization:** The person or entity holding or applying for certification and therefore responsible for demonstrating compliance with the requirements upon which FSC certification is based (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Peatland:** Is constituted by flooded and soggy areas, with large accumulations of organic material, covered by a layer of poor vegetation associated with a certain degree of acidity, and which presents a characteristic amber color (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on Aguilar, L. 2001. About Fishermen, Fisherwomen, Oceans and tides. IUCN. San Jose (Costa Rica)).

**Permanent watercourse:** A surface water stream with a constant flow that does not dry out, except during exceptional periods of drought. (Source: Developed by the National SDG)

**Pest:** Any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants and plant products, materials or environments and includes vectors of parasites or pathogens of human and animal disease and animals causing public health nuisance. (Source: FAO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management & <http://www.fao.org/pesticide-registration-toolkit/information-sources/terms-and-definitions/terms-and-definitions-s>).

**Pesticide:** Any substance or preparation prepared or used in protecting plants or wood or other plant products from pests; in controlling pests; or in rendering such pests harmless. This definition includes insecticides, rodenticides, acaricides, molluscicides, larvaecides, fungicides and herbicides (Source: FAO international code of conduct on Pesticide Management, as well as the FSC Pesticides Policy).

**Planning documentation:** see Management plan

**Plantations:** Forested areas created through afforestation and/or planting of fast-growing domestic and exotic tree species. The main objective of management is intensive production of wood and/or wood products. In these forests short/fast rotations (young age of logging of the trees) are implemented. In the Bulgarian context the main difference between plantations and forest cultures is that in plantations short term rotations are planned and applied. Thus, they do not have and cannot gain the characteristics of a natural forest ecosystem. (Note: The original FSC term for Plantations is divided in two separate terms in the Bulgarian standard – Plantations and Forest cultures. In the text of Criteria 6.9 and 6.10 is kept only the word “Plantations”. Still, additional indicators are developed to include the term “forest culture” in the context of the Criteria) (Source: Definition developed by the NSDG)

**Positive selection:** Removing the direct competitors of desirable trees in the stand by applying a top method of thinnings with elements of the combined method. (Source: Definition developed by the NSDG)

**Practical Guide for Identifying, Managing, and Monitoring High Conservation Value Forests in Bulgaria:** The document, also known as National HCVF toolkit was developed in 2004 by Bulgarian experts with the active assistance of ProForest and updated in the period 2014-2016. The concept of forests with high conservation value (HCVF), which was established by FSC and integrated into the FSC standard for forest management to determine the key environmental and social values of forests and ensure their preservation or improvement through the application of rational management decisions and measures is used as a basis for the Toolkit (Source: Definition developed by the NSDG)

**Precautionary approach:** An approach requiring that when the available information indicates that management activities pose a threat of severe or irreversible damage to the environment or a threat to human welfare, The Organization will take explicit and effective measures to prevent the damage and avoid the risks to welfare, even when the scientific information is incomplete or inconclusive, and when the vulnerability and sensitivity of environmental values are uncertain (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on Principle 15 of Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992, and Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle of the Wingspread Conference, 23–25 January 1998).

**Pre-harvest [condition]:** The diversity, composition, and structure of the forest or culture/plantation prior to felling timber and appurtenant activities such as road building (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Principle:** An essential rule or element; in FSC's case, of forest stewardship (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Procedure:** Specific way to perform an activity or process. Procedures can be documented or not. (Source: Definition developed by the NSDG)

**Promptly:** See definition for Timely manner.

**Proportionate:** A 1:1 ratio: The area to be restored or conserved is the same as the area of natural forest and/or High Conservation Value destroyed (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).

**Protected species:** Species under Annex 3 of the Biological Diversity Act (Source: Definition developed by the NSDG)

**Protection:** See definition of Conservation (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Protection Area:** See definition of Conservation Zone (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Publicly available:** Information is easily and freely accessible to everyone. The way to provide access is consistent with the cultural characteristics and technical capabilities of the stakeholders. (Source: Definition developed by the NSDG)

**Publicized:** Information is made public in a manner ensuring continuous and free access by interested parties. For the needs of national FSC standard it is assumed that information is published if placed on a publicly accessible location (i.e. info board and/or the website of The Organization) (Source: Definition developed by the NSDG)

**Rare species:** Species that are uncommon or scarce, but not classified as threatened. These species are located in geographically restricted areas or specific habitats, or are scantily scattered on a large-scale. They are approximately equivalent to the IUCN (2001) category of Near Threatened (NT), including species that are close to qualifying for, or are likely to qualify for, a threatened category in the near future. They are also approximately equivalent to imperiled species (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). 2001. IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria: Version 3.1. IUCN Species Survival Commission. IUCN. Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK).

**Ratified:** The process by which an international law, convention or agreement (including multilateral environmental agreement) is legally approved by a national legislature or equivalent legal mechanism, such that the international law, convention or agreement becomes automatically part of national law or sets in motion the development of national law to give the same legal effect (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Reasonable (effort, measure, opportunities, etc.):** Fair or appropriate to the circumstances or purposes, based on general experience (Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; Shorter Oxford English Dictionary).

**Refugia:** An isolated area where extensive changes, typically due to changing climate or by disturbances such as those caused by humans, have not occurred and where plants and animals typical of a region may survive (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on Glen Canyon Dam, Adaptive Management Program Glossary as provided on website of Glen Canyon Dam website).

**Remedy:** To correct or return something as near as possible to its original state or condition (Source: Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. UN. 2011).

- For environmental harms this includes actions taken to remedy deforestation, conversion degradation, or other harms to natural forest and High Conservation Value areas. Environmental remedy actions may include but are not limited to: conservation of standing forests, habitats, ecosystems and species; restoration and protection of degraded ecosystems.
- For social harms this includes providing redress for identified social harms through agreements made during an FPIC-based process with the affected rights holders, and facilitating a transition to the position before such harms occurred; or developing alternative measures to ameliorate harms by providing gains recognized by the affected stakeholders as equivalent to the harms, through consultation and agreement. Remedy may be achieved through a combination of apologies, restitution, rehabilitation, financial or non-financial compensation, satisfaction, punitive sanctions, injunctions, and guarantees of non-repetition.

(Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).

**Remuneration:** includes the ordinary, basic or minimum wage or salary and any additional emoluments whatsoever payable directly or indirectly, whether in cash or in kind, by the employer to the worker and arising out of the workers employment (ILO Convention 100, Article1a).

**Representative Sample Areas (of native ecosystems):** Portions of the Management Unit delineated for the purpose of conserving or restoring viable examples of an ecosystem that would naturally occur in that geographical region. (Source: International Common Indicators FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0 2-0)

**Resilience:** The ability of a system to maintain key functions and processes in the face of stresses or pressures by either resisting or adapting to change. Resilience can be applied to both ecological systems and social systems (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN-WCPA). 2008. Establishing Marine Protected Area Networks – Making it Happen. Washington D.C.: IUCN-WCPA National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and The Nature Conservancy.).

**Restitution:** Measures agreed with affected stakeholders to restore lands, properties or damaged natural resources to their original owners in their original condition. Where such lands, properties or natural resources cannot be returned or restored, measures are agreed on to provide alternatives of equivalent quality and extent. Restitution to affected rights holders is agreed on through an FPIC-based process.

(Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).

**Restore/Restoration:** These words are used in different senses according to the context and in everyday speech. In some cases 'restore' means to repair the damage done to environmental values that resulted from management activities or other causes. In other cases 'restore' means the formation of more natural conditions in sites which have been heavily degraded or converted to other land uses. In the Principles

and Criteria, the word 'restore' is not used to imply the recreation of any particular previous, pre-historic, pre-industrial or other pre-existing ecosystem (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

The Organization is not necessarily obliged to restore those environmental values that have been affected by factors beyond the control of The Organization, for example by natural disasters, by climate change, or by the legally authorized activities of third parties, such as public infrastructure, mining, hunting or settlement. FSC-POL-20-003 The Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification describes the processes by which such areas may be excised from the area certified, when appropriate (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

The Organization is also not obliged to restore environmental values that may have existed at some time in the historic or pre-historic past, or that have been negatively affected by previous owners or organizations. However, The Organization is expected to take reasonable measures to mitigate, control and prevent environmental degradation which is continuing in the Management Unit as a result of such previous impacts (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Restoration activities:** The eligible activities for representative samples of native ecosystems include:

- supporting the regeneration of tree, shrub and grass species characteristic of the respective ecosystem;
- through 1) planting and sowing; 2) elimination of competitive grass and bush vegetation by non-chemical methods;
- transformation of plantations and forest cultures of non-native tree species, through the application of silvicultural systems, ensuring the regeneration of the basic tree species, characteristic for the respective ecosystem;
- removal of non-native for the respective ecosystem tree species through cutting, uprooting, ringing and other appropriate non-chemical methods;
- measures to control and combat the soil erosion;
- restoration of damaged and degraded watercourses and natural water bodies;
- restoration of the humid regime in wetlands;
- mowing and grazing livestock to restore grassland ecosystems.
- It is allowed to carry out forestry activities in the case of restoration of damages from large-scale natural disturbances, affecting over 30% of the area of the respective sub compartment, defined as a representative sample of native ecosystem.

Note: For the representative samples of native ecosystems as identified in Indicator 6.5.2, the conversion of coppice stands of native tree species into seed ones is not considered as restoration activity.

(Source: International Generic Indicators FSC-STD-60-004 V 2-0; the definition has been supplemented/adapted for the context of Bulgaria by the national working group)

**Restoration areas:** Areas in which The Organization has planned to restore ecosystems identified in accordance with the requirements of Indicator 6.5.1., of which no representative sample areas are available in the MU territory, or existing sample areas do not sufficiently represent these ecosystems. (Source: Developed by the National SDG).

**Riparian zone:** Interface between land and a water body, and the vegetation associated with it (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Riverbed:** Riverbed is an element of relief on which temporary or permanent surface water flow is formed. It includes the streambed (lands that are flooded in the average water level) and flood plains (which are flooded at high water). (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG; derived from Bulgarian Water Act)



**Risk:** The probability of an unacceptable negative impact arising from any activity in the Management Unit combined with its seriousness in terms of consequences (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Scale:** A measure of the extent to which a management activity or event affects an environmental value or a Management Unit, in time or space. An activity with a small or low spatial scale affects only a small proportion of the forest each year, an activity with a small or low temporal scale occurs only at long intervals (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Scale, intensity and risk:** See individual definitions of the terms 'scale', 'intensity', and 'risk' (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Semi-natural habitats:** Habitats, resulting from human activity in the past or maintained with specific activities that have characteristics of natural habitats in terms of biodiversity and interactions between species. This interaction between human activities (mainly traditional agriculture and livestock) and natural processes in ecosystems led to the creation of communities of flora and fauna with high biodiversity and conservation interest. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Significant:** For the purposes of Principle 9, HCVs 1, 2 and 6 there are three main forms of recognizing significance.

- A designation, classification or recognized conservation status, assigned by an international agency such as IUCN or Birdlife International;
- A designation by national or regional authorities, or by a responsible national conservation organization, on the basis of its concentration of biodiversity;
- A voluntary recognition by the manager, owner or The Organization, on the basis of available information, or of the known or suspected presence of a significant biodiversity concentration, even when not officially designated by other agencies.

Any one of these forms will justify designation as HCVs 1, 2 and 6. Many regions of the world have received recognition for their biodiversity importance, measured in many different ways. Existing maps and classifications of priority areas for biodiversity conservation play an essential role in identifying the potential presence of HCVs 1, 2 and 6 (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Silviculture:** The art and science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health and quality of forests and woodlands to meet the targeted diverse needs and values of landowners and society on a sustainable basis (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on Nieuwenhuis, M. 2000. Terminology of Forest Management. IUFRO World Series Vol. 9. IUFRO 4.04.07 SilvaPlan and SilvaVoc).

**SLIMF** MUs are those that comply with at least one of the following requirements:

- MUs with an area of up to 1000 ha;
- The rate of harvesting is less than 20% of the mean annual increment (MAI)<sup>2</sup> within the total production forest area of the unit and the annual harvest (for any one year) from the total production forest area is less than 5000 cubic meters;
- The rate of harvesting is less than 20% of the mean annual increment (MAI)<sup>2</sup> within the total production forest area of the unit and the average annual harvest from the total production forest is less than 5000 m<sup>3</sup> / year during the period of validity of the certificate.

(Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG based on FSC-STD-01-003 V1-0 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria)

**Small-scale smallholder:** Any person that is depending on the land for most of their livelihood; and/or employs labour mostly from family or neighboring communities and has land-use rights on a Management

Unit of less than 50 hectares. Standard developers may define this to less than 50 hectares (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).

**Social harms:** Negative impacts on persons or communities, perpetrated by individuals, corporations or states, which include, but may go beyond, criminal acts by legal persons. Such harms include negative impacts on persons' or groups' rights, livelihoods and well-being, such as property (including forests, lands, waters), health, food security, healthy environment, cultural repertoire and happiness, as well as physical injury, detention, dispossession and expulsion (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).

- **Ongoing social harms:** social harms which have not been remedied.
- **Priority social harms:** social harms prioritized by an FPIC-based process with affected rights-holders or identified in consultation with affected stakeholders (Source: FSC-PRO-01-007 V1-0. Shortened version - refer to the FSC Remedy Framework for full definition).

**Stakeholder:** See definitions for 'affected stakeholder' and 'interested stakeholder' (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Statutory law or statute law:** The body of law contained in Acts of Parliament (national legislature) (Source: FSC IGIs Glossary FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0; based on Oxford Dictionary of Law).

**Streambed:** Lands that are flooded in the average water level of a river. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG; derived from Bulgarian Water Act)

**Sustainable use / Sustainable yield:** Levels and frequency of use/yield, which will not lead to ex-haustion and degradation of resources in the long term and will ensure the maintenance or enhancement of related ecosystem services. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Tenure:** Socially defined agreements held by individuals or groups, recognized by legal statutes or customary practice, regarding the "bundle of rights and duties" of ownership, holding, access and/or usage of a particular land unit or the associated resources there within (such as individual trees, plant species, water, minerals, etc). In the Bulgarian context tenure includes also the right of ownership according to the Ownership Act. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2, based on International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Glossary definitions provided on IUCN website. The definition is adapted by the NSDG).

**Threat:** An indication or warning of impending or likely damage or negative impacts (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on Oxford English Dictionary).

**Threatened species:** Species that meet the IUCN (2001) criteria for Vulnerable (VU), Endangered (EN) or Critically Endangered (CR) and are facing a high, very high or extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. In the context of Bulgaria in this definition include species listed in the Red Book of Bulgaria. (Source: Based on IUCN (2001). IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria: Version 3.1. IUCN Species Survival Commission. IUCN. Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.; this definition is completed by the Bulgarian NSDG to better meet national specifics).

**Timber harvesting level:** The actual harvest quantity executed on the Management Unit, tracked by either volume (e.g. cubic meters) or area (e.g. decares) metrics for the purpose of comparison with calculated (maximum) allowable harvest levels (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Timely manner:** As promptly as circumstances reasonably allow; not intentionally postponed by The Organization; in compliance with applicable laws, contracts, licenses or invoices (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Tranquility zones:** Forest areas in which forestry activities are not conducted at all or if conducted they follows a predetermined time frame in order to provide conditions for breeding of certain species (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Trees of the future:** Vital trees of desirable tree species with high quality stems and crowns. They are expected to present high-quality assortments with certain parameters when they reach maturity. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Traditional Knowledge:** Information, know-how, skills and practices that are developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on the definition by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Glossary definition as provided under Policy/Traditional Knowledge on the WIPO website).

**Traditional peoples:** Traditional peoples are social groups or peoples who do not self-identify as indigenous and who affirm rights to their lands, forests and other resources based on long established custom or traditional occupation and use (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, Forest Peoples Programme (Marcus Colchester, 7 October 2009).

**Transaction verification:** Verification by certification bodies and/or Accreditation Services International (ASI) that FSC output claims made by certificate holders are accurate and match with the FSC input claims of their trading partners (Source: FSC-STD-40-004 V3-0).

**Uphold:** To acknowledge, respect, sustain and support (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Use rights:** Rights for the use of resources of the Management Unit 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 (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Verifiable targets:** Specific goals, such as desired future forest conditions, established to measure progress towards the achievement of each of the management objectives. These goals are expressed as clear outcomes, such that their attainment can be verified and it is possible to determine whether they have been accomplished or not (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Verifier:** Potential source of information or evidence that allows an auditor to evaluate compliance with an indicator (Source: FSC).

**Very Limited portion:** The area affected shall not exceed 5% of the area of the Management Unit irrespective of whether the conversion activities have taken place prior to or after The Organization is awarded with FSC Forest Management certification (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).

**Waste materials:** unusable or unwanted substances or by-products, such as:

- Hazardous waste, including chemical waste and batteries;
- Containers;
- Motor and other fuels and oils;
- Rubbish including metals, plastics and paper; and
- Abandoned buildings, machinery and equipment (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Water bodies** (including water courses): Seasonal, temporary, and permanent brooks, creeks, streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes. Water bodies include riparian or wetland systems, lakes, swamps, bogs and springs (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).

**Wetlands:** Transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems in which the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on Cowardin, L.M., Carter, V., Golet, F.C., Laroe, E.T. 1979. Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States. DC US Department: Washington).

Under the Ramsar Convention, wetlands can include tidal mudflats, natural ponds, marshes, potholes, wet meadows, bogs, peatlands, freshwater swamps, mangroves, lakes, rivers and even some coral reefs (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on international Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), No Date, IUCN Definitions – English).

**Workers:** (meaning also the words: employee/s, personnel, staff, etc.) Any person who is employed by an employer as well as any person who works for himself, including trainees or practitioners during the training, probation and practice. (Source: Definition developed by the Bulgarian NSDG)

**Workers' organization:** any organization of workers for furthering and defending the interest of workers (adapted from ILO Convention 87, Article 10).

**Worst forms of child labour:** comprises a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performance; c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, based on International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 182, Article 3).



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