

**PEFC Austria
Standard**

PEFC AT ST 1001:2017

2017-05-30

**PEFC-Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in
Austria**



PEFC™

PEFC/06-01-01

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Document name: PEFC-Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in Austria

Document title: PEFC AT ST 1001:2017

Approved by: PEFC Austria General Assembly

Date: 29.05.2017

Issue date: 30.05.2017

Date of entry into force: 29.04.2018

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Foreword

PEFC Austria (PEFC: Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) is a national organisation with the purpose of facilitating sustainable forest management through forest certification and labelling of wood products. Consumers can trust that products carrying the PEFC label are made of raw material from sustainably managed forests, from recycling and/or non-controversial sources. PEFC Austria is a work group responsible for the standard setting and the administration of the Austrian PEFC scheme.

PEFC Austria standards are developed within an open and transparent procedure based on consensus and supported by consultation of a variety of stakeholders. Since 1999, PEFC Austria is full member of PEFC International whose strict endorsement procedure guarantees international recognition.

To improve the readability, the male form is used for all denominations of persons. It refers to both, males and females.

Introduction

The basic principle of PEFC timber certification in Austria is to maintain the high standards of forest management in Austria, to document them, to recognize and implement potential areas of improvement. The goal is a continual improvement of forest management. This way, Austria's forests can fulfil their multiple ecological, economic and social functions.

Sustainable forest management has a long tradition in Austria. Since 1852, regulations have existed for sustainable management; at present the maintenance and sustainability of the forests are regulated by the Forest Law (currently valid version dated 1975), which is strict in international comparison. The Forest Law also generally complies with the protocol of the Alpine Convention with regard to "Mountain Forests". The need for legal adjustments can be seen, e.g. in Art. 2 a) Mountain Forest Protocol – reduction of airborne emissions that are harmful to forests. The PEFC Timber Certification Scheme is to be understood as a general measure in the sense of guideline Art. 2 e) Mountain Forest Protocol, which reads: "In view of the importance of sustainable forest management for the economy and the maintenance of the forests, the contracting parties support the increased utilization of timber from sustainably managed forests."

The work undertaken by PEFC Austria is seen as a contribution to the discussion on sustainable forest management, as was encouraged by the global community in the follow-up process of the World Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The central reference document is the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which was passed by the global community in 1992 and ratified by Austria in the year of 1994 (Federal Law Gazette 213/95). According to Article 6 of the CBD, each country has to develop national strategies, plans or programs for the maintenance and sustainable utilization of its biological diversity, or to adapt existing strategies. For the purpose of elaborating concrete national terms based on the biodiversity convention, the Austrian "Strategy on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity" was developed in 1998. In addition, supplementary instruments were developed as action plans for specific issues, such as the "Aktionsplan Neobiota" (Austrian action plan for non-indigenous species). The criteria and indicators of MCPFE form the basis of this standard.

1. Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles.
2. Maintenance of forest ecosystems health and vitality.
3. Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood).
4. Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems.

5. Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water).
6. Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions.

Sustainable forest management serves as basis for the protection of the multifunctional effects regarding utilization, protection, welfare, recreation as well as climate protection (see also Austrian Forest Act §1).

The requirements for sustainable forest management defined in this document complement Austria's high level of sustainability in forest management. In principle, sustainable management in an assessment unit is proved by the catalogue PEFC AT ST 1002 Criteria and Indicators for Assessing Sustainable Management in Austria". Some guidelines refer to indicators of the catalogue and are desired goals, others are management principles.

The present guidelines were authored in an open and transparent process through the working group of PEFC Austria. Suggestions and comments were considered and the results of the discussions were discussed with interested parties. The aim is to achieve a broad consensus amongst the participating organizations and individuals.

The term "shall" is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions that, reflecting the requirements that are mandatory. The term "should" is used to indicate guidance that, although not mandatory, is provided as a recognised means of meeting the requirements. The term "may" used throughout this standard indicates permission expressed by this standard whereas "can" refers to the ability of a user of this standard or to a possibility open to the user.

1 Scope

The document defines the requirements for sustainable forest management within the assessment unit (group organisations / individual holdings) for certification, which are applicable for the voluntary participation in PEFC-forest certification.

Note: In principle the requirements of this standard apply to the forest management unit level. Where a requirement applies to another level, e.g. a group organisation, the compliance at this level also ensures intended performance at the forest management level.

2 Normative References

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies:

- PEFC AT ST 1002 Criteria and indicators for the determination of Sustainable Forest Management in Austria

3 Definitions

Alpine Convention

The Alpine Convention is a binding contract according to international law, the stipulations of which have to be applied since its ratification in Austria on December 18th, 2002.

Biotope Protection Forest

According to the Forest Act, natural forest reserves based on private agreements, forestlands in national parks, forestlands in nature protection areas, or those which are subject to FFH guidelines or bird protection guidelines, are all deemed biotope protection forests. Upon application by the forest owner or an official body that deals with forest issues, the authorities can proclaim exemptions from certain regulations of the Forest Act with the owner's agreement, if this is not in contradiction to the public interest in preserving the forests. Exceptions are possible in the case of reforestation, forest destruction, treatment or utilization of protection forests, measures for pest control, or the protection of immature stands.

Forest Stands That Protect Objects

Forest stands that protect objects are forests, which serve a protective or welfare function with regard to human settlement and complexes, or cultivated fields, particularly by protecting them from natural hazards or dangerous environmental influences, and which require special care to ensure they can fulfill their protective or welfare function.

Forest Stands That Protect Sites

Forest stands that protect sites are forests, whose site is endangered by wind, water or gravity, and which thus require special care to ensure the protection of forest soil and forest growth, as well as to ensure reforestation.

Forester, graduated forester:

Forester: forestry college with A-level exams (5 years), practical experience (2 years' minimum) and state examination.

Graduated forester: graduate in forestry or in torrent and avalanche control, appropriate practical experience (2 years minimum) and state exam.

Forest warden: forestry college without A-level exam.

Note: Definitions and requirements regarding forest organs according the Forestry Law are relevant.

Genetic Pool Conservation

For the genetic pool conservation of forest stands, forest populations, or population segments, are maintained in their natural habitats (in situ) being permanently exposed to adaptation processes (dynamic conservation strategy). If natural regeneration is not sufficient, complementary seeding or planting is allowed using exclusively local propagation seeds and plants (preferably seed reserves of the same stand, wilding). For such treatments, forest owners can apply for financial support.

Hemerobia

Hemerobia designates the extent of human influence on ecosystems.

Immature stands:

Immature stands are uniform stands of non fast-growing tree species, if they are less than 60 years old, or non-uniform stands, if more than 50% of the trees are under 60 years old. Fast-growing tree species are immature if they have not yet reached following ages: Douglas fir, Weymouth pine, grand fir 40 years; ash 30 years; black alder and birch 20 years; poplar, willow and false acacia 10 years.

Improving forest accessibility

Improving the accessibility of forests serves to ensure the sustainable use of forest goods and products. This includes all existing roads as well as the ones, which are still to be built.

Natural forest reserves

Natural forest reserves are those forest areas that should ensure natural development of the forest ecosystem and that lack of any immediate influence. They contribute to maintain and

naturally develop biological diversity. They serve research, teaching and education. The “Austrian Programme on Natural Forest Reserves” aims at the systematic establishment of a representative network of natural forest reserves. The main forest communities in growth areas should be represented in at least one natural forest reserve.

Types of Forest Biotopes

The revised list of endangered forest biotopes in Austria describes 93 different forest biotopes that exist in terms of their ecology, sites and total area, and also indicates how they are endangered, as well as listing their degree of endangerment (F. Essl, G. Egger & T. Ellmauer et al.; "Rote Liste gefährdeter Biotoptypen Österreichs. Wälder, Forste, Vorwälder. Umweltbundesamt, Wien, 2002).

4 General requirements

Requirements for sustainable forest management for individual or group certifications include:

- a. Records that provide evidence on the compliance with this standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme shall be kept.
- b. Responsibilities for the sustainable forest management and compliance with this standard shall be defined

Note: In case of the group certification in natural growth regions PEFC AT ST 1003 defines responsibilities and functions of different actors.

- c. All operators on the defined forest areas shall comply with the relevant requirements of this standard. Forest owners shall only contract sub-contractors that are meeting PEFC Austria’s requirements for forest entrepreneurs. For forest operations when forest machinery is used (forwarder, harvester, machinery for cable log hauling (not ground-based)) only those service providers and forest contractors should be deployed, which have a valid document (certificate, confirmation of participation,...) of a control- or certification systems which is recognised by PEFC Austria. Self-employed forestry workers (Bauernakkordanten) can prove their qualification through other means, e.g. participation in PEFC-forest certification. Exempted from this regulation is the processing of damaged timber (effected by storms, natural disasters, beetles,... “Kalamitätsholz”).

Note: The requirement regarding certification for service providers and forest contractors becomes effective as of 1 January 2019.

5 Specific requirements for sustainable forest management

5.1 Criterion 1: Maintenance and Appropriate Enhancement of Forest Resources and their Contribution to Global Carbon Cycles

5.1.1 Land use and forest area

5.1.1.1 Forest management planning shall aim to maintain or increase forests and other wooded areas as well as the productive capacity, resilience and resistance and enhance the quality of the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of forest resources, including soil and water. Forest management plans or their equivalents shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area. This shall be done by making full use of related services and tools that support land-use planning and nature conservation.

5.1.1.2 Afforestation and reforestation activities shall be evaluated considering economic, ecological, social and/or cultural value aspects. In particular, the establishment and support of rare or endangered forest biotypes is viewed positively or afforestation and reforestation activities that contribute to the improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity. Afforestation must not be carried out on areas worth protecting from an environmental expert point of view. Conversion of abandoned agricultural and treeless land into forest land should be taken into consideration.

Note: Legal Provisions see Forestry Act §4.

5.1.1.3 Conversion of forests to other types of land use shall not occur unless in justified circumstances, for example, in the case of legitimate public interest (including special issues concerning nature protection) where the conversion:

- a. is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation relevant for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority including consultation with materially and directly interested persons and organisations; and
- b. entails a small proportion of forest type (this includes the consideration of prescribed compensation measures by the public authority); and
- c. does not have negative impacts on threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species or other protected areas; and
- d. makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.
- e. however not in the case of forest biotopes, which are directly threatened with extinction or highly endangered according to the "List of Endangered Species"

Note: Regarding any forest conversions the requirements included in the Forestry Act, including the registration are relevant (see Austrian Forestry Act §17-§19). The compensation measures prescribed by the Forestry Act provide sufficient mechanism for regulation of the maximum size of any conversion. Conversions into forest plantations are not eligible according Forestry Law.

5.1.2 Forest management – Planning and monitoring

5.1.2.1 Forest management shall comprise the cycle of inventory and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and shall include an appropriate assessment of the social, environmental and economic impacts of forest management operations. This shall form a basis for a cycle of continuous improvement to minimise or avoid negative impacts. Forest owners/managers shall have access to and make use of results of the national forest inventory while planning and performing forest management activities.

Note 1: The evaluation of impacts can be conducted on group level. The results can be also used for single-sites.

Note 2: The Forestry Law includes requirements to ensure a permanent forest inventory and sustainable use of forest resources. All forests are covered by the national forest inventory (ÖWI) (§130) and are subject to a forestry development plan (Waldentwicklungsplan) (§9), which is publicly available and considered to be an equivalent to forest management plans. Access to and use of the forestry development plan at the FMU level satisfies the requirement. In case of group certification in natural growth regions the inventory and mapping of forest resources are incorporated into the sustainability report that is based on the national forest inventory (ÖWI) (see PEFC AT ST 1003).

5.1.2.2 Inventory and mapping of forest resources shall be established and maintained, adequate to local and national conditions and in correspondence with the topics described in this document and the standards PEFC AT ST 1002.

Note: All forests are covered by a national forest inventory (ÖWI) (§130) and subject a forestry development plan (Waldentwicklungsplan) (§9). In case of group certification in natural growth regions

the inventory and mapping of forest resources are incorporated into the sustainability report that is based on the national forest inventory (ÖWI) (see PEFC AT ST 1003).

5.1.2.3 Management plans or their equivalents, appropriate to the size and use of the forest area, shall be elaborated and periodically updated. They shall be based on legislation as well as existing land-use plans, and adequately cover the forest resources.

Note: All forests are covered by a forestry development plan (Waldentwicklungsplan), which is publicly available and considered to be an equivalent to forest management plans. Access to and use of the forestry development plan at the FMU level satisfies the requirement. In case of group certification in natural growth regions the inventory and mapping of forest resources are incorporated into the sustainability report that is based on the national forest inventory (ÖWI) (see PEFC AT ST 1003).

5.1.2.4 A forest management plan shall contain:

- a. A description of the current state of the forest / forest management (acc. PEFC AT ST 1002)
- b. Interpretation of the current state of the forest / forest management
- c. Derivation of short-term and long-term operational targets for the corresponding assessment unit (group organisations / individual holdings). For at least 10 system-relevant indicators (target indicators) operational and measurable targets and suitable measures, or plans for measures, have to be defined.
- d. For individual certification the average annual allowable cut and, where applicable, the annually allowable exploitation of non-timber forest products

.Note 1: In order to ensure sustainability of forest production and a balance between the growth and harvest, forest owners/managers shall conform to requirements relating to the minimum age for a final harvest, obligations relating to reforestation and maximum size of clear cuts as defined in the Forest Act.

Note 2: The exploitation of berries and mushrooms (as main non-timber forest products) is regulated in the Austrian Forestry Law. Further requirements see 5.3.2.1.

5.1.2.5 A summary of the forest management plan or its equivalent appropriate to the scope and scale of forest management, which contains information about the forest management measures to be applied, is publicly available. The summary may exclude confidential business and personal information and other information made confidential by national legislation or for the protection of cultural sites or sensitive natural resource features.

Note: All forests are covered by the forestry development plan (Waldentwicklungsplan), which is publicly available and considered to be an equivalent to forest management plans. In case of the group certification in natural growth regions a summary of the sustainability report (Regionenmerkblatt), is publicly available.

5.1.2.6 Monitoring of forest resources and evaluation of their management shall be periodically performed, and results fed back into the planning process. The results shall be illustrated in a management report.

5.1.2.6.1 A management report shall contain:

- a. the implementation and the results of internal audits or an internal monitoring programme
- b. events and information, that concern the compliance with the requirements of the standard, other applicable requirements of PEFC Austria or the achievement of targets,
- c. the formulation and implementation of preventive and/or corrective actions
- d. the implemented activities and measures of the last year, especially the advancement regarding the achievement of targets which are formulated in the forest management.

- e. analysis and planning of measures: based on the results, if required, corrective and preventive measures in case of non-conformities, or potentials for improvement shall be identified and activities and measures for the following year shall be planned.

Note 1: Basis for the management report for the group certification in natural growth regions is the audit checklist RL 3003.

Note 2: In case of the group certification in natural growth regions the setting of targets and monitoring of forest resources are described in a sustainability report.(PEFC AT ST 1003).

5.1.2.7 Appropriate silvicultural measures shall be taken to reach and maintain a sustainable level of growing stock.

Note 1: Sustainable in consideration of economical, ecological and social aspects.

Note 2: Sustainable, multifunctional forest management is a basic requirement of the Austrian Forest Act. In order to ensure sustainability of forest production, a balance between the growth and harvest, and a sustainable growing stock, forest owners/managers shall conform to requirements relating to the minimum age for a final harvest, obligations relating to reforestation and maximum size of clear cuts as defined in the Forest Act.

5.1.2.8 The forest inventory shall be kept on a level which is favourable regarding the forest community and the targets of forest management considering a balanced proportion of development classes and a positive dynamic in regeneration.

5.2 Criterion 2: Maintenance of Forest Ecosystem Health and Vitality

5.2.1 Soil

5.2.1.1 Forest management shall be conducted in a way that the functionality of the forest-ecosystem and the productivity of the site are maintained. Afforestation, tending and harvesting operations shall be carried out in time, and in a way that does not reduce the productive capacity of the site. The allowable cut and the withdrawal of non-timber products shall not effect a decrease in productivity due to a reduction of the nutrient regime or other negative impacts.

5.2.1.2 Techniques should be preferred applied where possible that minimise direct or indirect damage to forest, soil or water resources. In case of risks of degradation these should be considered in forest management planning (forest management plans or their equivalents). Rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems, shall be considered if this is possible by silvicultural means and economically viable.

5.2.1.3 Assessing the possibility of tree components removal, which go beyond the ordinary in the cut-to-length or stem extraction operation used parts (branches, twigs, needles / leaves, roots) is carried out by a multifactorial process. The more factors apply listed below, the more likely it is a biomass limited:

- Shallow ground
- Soil with a high proportion of coarse (gravel, stones, blocks)
- Bedrock nutrient (e.g. granite, gneiss, quartzite, quartz phyllite, serpentine, very pure limestones and dolomites)
- Historical forest uses (litter removal, pollarding)
- Low precipitation climate
- Relief: crest, upper slope, back, hummock
- Soil compaction: serious and / or soils influenced by tailwater

Note: When residual biomass is left in the forest, requirements regarding biotic threats need to be considered (see 5.4.1.2.9)

5.2.1.4 In a risk assessment derived from the site concerning biomass utilization, suitable measures to maintain the productive capacity of the soil have to be taken, depending on the level of risk (in ascending order):

- branches with needles (leaves) left and / or
- treetop left and / or
- parts of the crown left and / or
- Full-tree harvesting not for every use (mainly thinning) and / or
- Full-tree harvesting not on the entire service area

5.2.1.5 In principle, fertilising for the only purpose of increasing timber increment is omitted. Permitted fertilisers or soil additives are exclusively used controlled and in consideration of environmental impacts to support natural forest development (e.g. initial fertilisation in connection with reforestation) or to ameliorate sites, in order to stabilise the ecosystem.

5.2.1.6 Wood ash is only disseminated in forests in strict compliance with the recommendations of the expert advisory committee for soil fertility.

Note: Requirements regarding quantity and intervals are given in the guideline: „Richtlinie für den sachgerechten Einsatz von Pflanzenaschen zur Verwertung auf land- und forstwirtschaftlich genutzten Flächen“

5.2.1.7 Air pollution affects the health of forests but can hardly be influenced by forest management (see amelioration of forest soil). The effects are documented and interpreted with regard to feasible measures (see 5.2.3.1.1).

Note: Legal Provisions see Forestry Act §52.

5.2.1.8 Passing with machinery over soil in forests has to be in principle omitted. In drivable terrain a permanent infrastructure of logging trails should be established, for ensuring that forest operations have a low impact on forest and soil. Leaving logging trails should be avoided even in clear-cuts and processing damaged wood. Especially for highly mechanized harvesting operations the distance between new created logging trails should be in principle 20 m. When using logging trails, it should be paid attention to keep them permanently useable (especially through the utilization of suitable machinery / tyres, considering weather effects, using layers of brush-wood,...).

Note 1: The distance between two logging trails is measured between their axes.

Note 2: The corresponding minimum distance pertains to actually used logging trails. Logging trails from old, logging trail infrastructure which is not in use should not be considered.

Note 3: Exceptions for driving outside logging trails could be, for example, tillage, mulching, planting, seeding. These measures need to be limited to the utmost necessary extent.

Note 4: In case of specific topographic and site-specific situations as well as necessities concerning the operational layout, deviations from the prescribed scheme are allowed.

Note 5: The requirement regarding distances is not applicable for operations using cable crane and existing logging trail infrastructure.

5.2.2 Foliage (see also 5.2.1 and 5.2.3)

5.2.3 Damage to forests

5.2.3.1 Abiotic factors

5.2.3.1.1 Abiotic factors shall be monitored. Forest management shall best possible counteract the negative impacts of the abiotic factors, e.g. storm, snow and fire, which affect the sustainability of forest goods and services.

Note: PEFC AT ST 1002 (Criteria and Indicators for Assessing Sustainable Forest Management in Austria) provides a framework for the monitoring of abiotic factors.

5.2.3.1.2 Lighting of fires shall be avoided and is except in dedicated areas, only allowed to the forest owner, forestry-, forest protection- and hunting-authorities or persons with a permission of the forest owner.

Note: Legal provisions see Forestry Act §40, § 41.

5.2.3.2 Biotic factors

5.2.3.2.1 Biotic factors shall be monitored.

Note: PEFC AT ST 1002 (Criteria and Indicators for Assessing Sustainable Forest Management in Austria) provides a framework for the monitoring of biotic factors.

5.2.3.2.2 Biotope and wildlife management as well as hunting have to be carried out in a way that does not threaten the maintenance of the forest and its functions, and that promotes natural biodiversity.

5.2.3.2.3 Game stock shall be kept on a level that facilitates regeneration within an appropriate period of time, and that does not threaten the mixture of tree species that is suited to the site conditions. The regeneration of tree species which are considered to be typical for the site conditions should in principle be able to happen following the natural potential. The game stock should be managed in a way that protection measures constitute an exception.

5.2.3.2.4 Grazing management is carried out respecting secured rights, socio-economic and ecologic functions as well as the objectives of sustainable forest management (see also 5.6.1).

Note: Legal provisions regarding grazing see Forestry Act § 37.

5.2.3.3 Anthropogenic factors

5.2.3.3.1 The proportion of stems damaged in the course of harvesting to the total number of stems is minimised.

5.2.3.3.2 Hauling is carried out, in principle, taking best care of the stand, soil, water resources and ecological conditions (notably threatened species). Only practices and systems are applied that correspond to modern forest technology. Appropriate careful planning and control are necessary.

5.2.3.3.3 For greasing chain saws, exclusively biodegradable lubricants are used.

5.2.3.3.4 Forestry machinery is principally operated with readily-biodegradable hydraulic oils. Evidence of biodegradation must be provided.

Note 1: Exempted is machinery with no separate hydraulic circle or machinery for which no allowance from the equipment producer exists.

Note 2: If machinery, which is operated with mineral hydraulic oils, increased safety measures need to be applied in order to avoid oil contaminations in case of defects (e.g. vacuum pumps, increased volume of oil binding agents).

Note 3: e.g. Biodegradable hydraulic fluids acc. ISO 15380 ready biodegradability acc. OECD 301 B, accepted Eco-Labels: e.g.. EU-Ecolabel, Blauer Engel

5.2.3.3.5 To minimize loss of fuel closed fueling systems have to be used where possible. In addition, an oil binding agent system for a loss of at least 10 liters at a forest machinery use needs to be kept.

5.2.3.3.6 Biological, mechanical and physical measures are to be preferred to chemical ones. Wherever possible, natural processes and structures should be considered especially preventive biological measures. Exclusively permitted pesticides and insecticides are used, with due consideration of proper application and complying with the health and safety regulations for workers.

Note: Legal provisions regarding forestry pests and use of pesticides see Forestry Act §43-46)

5.2.3.3.7 The WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides are prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available.

Note: In case exceptions are defined, they are published on PEFC Austria's website.

5.2.3.3.8 Pesticides, such as chlorinated hydrocarbons whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use, and any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited.

5.2.3.3.9 The use of pesticides shall follow the instructions given by the pesticide producer and be implemented with proper equipment and training.

5.2.3.3.10 For forests in protected areas (biotope protection forests according to the Forest Act), an application by the forest owner to be exempted from forest protection measures (§44 and 45 of the Forest Act) must be made according to §32a of the Forest Act.

5.2.3.3.11 Fertilisers: see 5.2.1.5

5.2.3.3.12 Forest devastation and the indiscriminate disposal of waste shall be pursued based on the legal provisions. In designated areas for recreational purposes (camping sites, barbecue sites, or the like) shall be taken care of an environmentally-responsible disposal of waste.

Note: Legal provisions see Forestry Act §16, § 172, § 174.

5.3 Criterion 3: Maintenance and Encouragement of Productive Functions of Forests (wood and non-wood)

5.3.1 Timber increment and felling

5.3.1.1 The average volume of harvested timber shall not exceed the average increment in the assessment unit with reference to a period of 10 years. Exceptions are made in the case of catastrophes and calamities as well as in other legitimate exceptional cases.

5.3.2 Non-wood products

5.3.2.1 It is permitted to collect 2 kg mushrooms and berries maximum each per day per person, provided that there are no other regulations on the protection of forest fruits or the maintenance of forest health.

Note: Legal provisions see Forestry Act § 174.

5.3.2.2 Harvesting resin is only permitted at black pines, white pines and larches, provided that the maintenance of the forest and its functions is not threatened. Other traditional utilisation of non-wood products is to be limited to an ecologically sound extent.

5.3.2.3 The marketing of non-wood products, such as water, etc., may only take place in keeping with ecological sustainability, any nature protection regulations in the area concerned, as well as the granting of all the required permits from the authorities. In case that for the commercial use of certain non-timber forest products, no legal provisions exist, the forest owner/manager should take care of establishing and controlling corresponding regulations.

5.3.3 Services

5.3.3.1 Marketable infrastructure services are only offered to an extent that sustainable forest management is not threatened in ecological, economic or socioeconomic terms.

5.3.4 Management practices

5.3.4.1 Regeneration (see also 5.4.1.1)

5.3.4.1.1 Natural regeneration should be preferred; if thereby the intended target of regeneration can be met.

5.3.4.1.2 In the case of tree planting and seeding, appropriate plants and seeds, in adherence with the recommendations of provenances that are suited to the site conditions, are used. Negative impacts regarding the genetic integrity of native species and local provenances shall be avoided. The provenance of plants and seeds has to be proved, when they are put into circulation.

5.3.4.1.3 In principle, reforestation is carried out within a period of 5 years in case of planting, natural regeneration takes place within 10 years, in protection forests reforestation/regeneration does not exceed a period of 15 years in justified exceptional cases.

Note: Legal provisions regarding regeneration see Forestry Act §13.

5.3.4.1.4 For the selection of tree species and provenances future changed climatic conditions need to be considered.

5.3.4.2 Tending

5.3.4.2.1 In young growth and thickets existing tending arrears are to be reduced promoting ecologically important mixed forest stands, if possible. In pole forests thinning remains are to be reduced applying appropriate methods (e.g. crown thinning), if possible. In mature stands appropriate utilisation methods are to be applied. Thereby, dead wood is left if no comprehensible danger is given.

5.3.4.3 Utilisation: Strip-, increment-, regeneration-, selected felling, etc.

5.3.4.3.1 The aim of silvicultural operations is to establish the best possible conditions for the forest as a sustainable economic factor. All such operations have to consider the natural conditions of the site. Those utilisation methods are chosen, which ensure the sustainability of forest goods and services.

5.3.4.3.2 Final cutting of mature trees without complete advance regeneration, e.g. in order to promote trees requiring light or the structuring of large, uniform forest stands, must not exceed the following dimensions:

- a) Clearing without complete reforestation: 0.5 hectares.
 - b) Clearing without complete reforestation at a width of 50 m: 2 hectares
 - c) Clearing without complete reforestation at a width up to 50 m: 600 m in length
- Cases of b) und c) are subject to approval by forest authorities. More extensive removals are also permitted if ecologically reasonable, but they have to be legitimate, documented and approved. Utilisation of non-mature stands is prohibited (see definition). For remaining mature trees see 5.4.1.2.9 and 5.4.2.1.

5.3.4.4 Roads

5.3.4.4.1 The density of access roads should be oriented to the type of silvicultural operations and the structure of the forest property. Planning and construction of infrastructure for forestry shall be conducted in a way that minimises impacts on forest ecosystems and takes into consideration following aspects: necessity of access, alternative transport methods (e.g. cables), low utilization of surface area, ecological aspects (sensible forest ecosystems, taking into account threatened, or key species, in particular their migration patterns), landscape compatibility and non-destructive construction methods.

Note: Improving forest accessibility by roads (definition) is a prerequisite for sustainable forest management and modern, humane working conditions. However, this does involve interventions in nature. In order to minimize the ecological disadvantages, the type of forest access road has to be chosen under careful consideration of the natural biotope.

5.3.4.4.2 Construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure shall be carried out in a manner that minimises bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained. Any damage shall be repaired after the road has been built. Seepage water from slopes is to be considered, marked trails are to be incorporated and slopes, in principle, are to be left to regain naturally their plant cover. If this is not the case after an appropriate period of time, the plant cover has to be re-established in a way as close-to-nature as possible.

Note: Legal provisions see Forestry Act chapt. V (Bringung).

5.3.4.5 Pressure of animal populations: see 5.2.3.2

5.4 Criterion 4: Maintenance, Conservation and Appropriate Enhancement of Biological Diversity in Forest Ecosystems

5.4.1 Structural diversity

5.4.1.1 Regeneration (see also 5.3.4.1)

5.4.1.1.1 For regeneration under consideration of 5.3.4.1.1 und 5.3.4.1.2, natural regeneration is to be preferred. If the natural forest community is not sufficiently represented in the old-growth forest, suitable plants shall be used for reforestation.

5.4.1.1.2 Structural diversity shall be encouraged and/or maintained to enhance the stability, vitality and resistance capacity of the forests to strengthen natural regulation mechanisms and the resilience against environmental factors.

5.4.1.1.3 For producing high value timber on ecologically stable sites it might be reasonable to choose propagation material which, due to their genetic characteristics, have better characteristics with regard to growth, form and timber; threats to ecological resources are to be avoided.

5.4.1.2 Tree species, forest structure, naturalness

5.4.1.2.1 Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance biodiversity of ecosystems, and particularly of species and genetic diversity.

5.4.1.2.2 Forest management practices shall, where appropriate, maintain and enhance a diversity of structures and species as well as diversity at landscape level.

5.4.1.2.3 When establishing and tending (thinning) forests it shall be aimed at mixed stands, orientated at the respective natural forest community, which fulfil the corresponding requirements and functions.

5.4.1.2.4 In principle, non-indigenous species should not be planted, especially not on ecologically valuable sites. If indigenous tree species are endangered, or have significantly lower yields that would be expected from non-indigenous "neophytes," then the latter may be used in exceptional cases based on an evaluation. In this case, mixed stands with indigenous species are desirable. Negative impacts shall be avoided.

Note: In course of the evaluation it shall be assessed, if the planting of the species is permitted according to the Forestry Act.

5.4.1.2.5 Invasive species shall be treated according to the legal provisions.

5.4.1.2.6 If the naturalness of an assessment unit is so low that sustainability is threatened, measures are intensified towards a higher degree of naturalness.

5.4.1.2.7 The percentage of forest areas, which are classified as natural or close-to-nature according to the respective natural study, is maintained or increased. The proportion of forests, which are classified as artificial or strongly altered, is reduced.

5.4.1.2.8 Traditional management systems that have created on appropriate sites rare forest ecosystems, such as coppice, shall be supported, when economically feasible.

5.4.1.2.9 Dead wood and small features, have to be maintained, if possible, and their emergence supported, in order to maintain and enhance biodiversity and diversity at landscape level taking into account the potential effect on the health and stability of forests and on surrounding ecosystems. This comprises, for example:

- a. Old individual trees and rare tree species are maintained, if possible, as are stands and groups of old-growth trees.
- b. Single dying trees or individual trees damaged by abiotic factors especially with bigger diameters are left in the forest. When harvesting dead (biotope) wood is left on site. Exceptions are made in cases of comprehensible reasons for not leaving them.
- c. Residual biomass is left in the forest, provided that it is permitted by the legally relevant conditions referring to biotic threats or the removal is not necessary for the maintenance of rare species or their habitats.
- d. Shrubs and rare tree species are to be maintained and promoted when regenerating, tending and thinning forests.
- e. Forest edges are to be maintained and enhanced with regard to their structural and biological diversity.
- f. Small features, like rocks or wet sites, have to be maintained, if possible.

5.4.2 Endangered species and biotopes

5.4.2.1 Forest management takes into consideration the maintenance of natural communities of species as well as a sustainable use with regard to hunting, notably sites of special significance for wildlife (shelters for the winter, nesting trees, groups of old trees, capercaillie biotopes).

5.4.2.2 Known populations of threatened or protected species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes and not further threatened in their survival by forest management operations. Thereby, also former indigenous predators should be considered.

5.4.2.3 Wherever possible, old or dead wood should be promoted, or as appropriate other measures taken, which are suitable to protect or to increase the population of protected and endangered plant and animal species.

5.4.3 Protection and utilization of genetic forest resources

5.4.3.1 Those genetic pools, which are defined by the Austrian Federal Research and Training Centre for Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscape (BFW), should be maintained and appropriately considered by forest management. Forest management in genetic pools (see definitions) aims to pass on or further develop genetic information of tree and shrub populations by the means of natural regeneration.

5.4.3.2 No genetically manipulated seeds and plants are used.

5.4.4 Protected forests

5.4.4.1 In natural forest reserves any kind of immediate influence shall be omitted.

Note: Defined natural forest reserves support the natural development of forest ecosystems and the maintenance of biological diversity. Natural forest reserves are established on the basis of private contracts between the forest owners, or entitled users, and the Republic of Austria. Natural forest reserves are documented.

5.4.4.2 Designated nature protection areas and all other legally protected zones, such as Natura 2000 reserves, national parks or nature reserves, as well as rare, sensible, protected forests,

- a. for example, riparian areas and wetland biotopes according to the "list of endangered areas" of forest biotopes in Austria

- b. containing endemic species and habitats of threatened species, according to the "list of endangered areas" or endangered or protected genetic in situ resources
- c. globally, nationally or regionally significant large landscape areas with natural distribution and abundance of naturally occurring species.

are to be documented and mapped. Forest management shall follow the legal stipulations. Existing regulations, agreements and conditions are complied with. The "good condition" of forest habitats included in the coherent European Nature 2000 network according to the Birds and Habitats Directives shall be maintained or enhanced. Remnants of virgin forests shall not be managed. Suitable protection and management measures for forests of the endangered classes I and II according to the "list of endangered types of forest biotopes," are viewed positively.

Note 1: Legal provisions see Forestry Act § 32a.

Note 2: Access to and use of a publicly available plans (e.g. forestry development plan, plans regarding NATURA-2000 areas, etc.) or similarly satisfies the requirement.

5.5 Criterion 5: Maintenance and Appropriate Enhancement of Protective Functions in Forest Management (notably soil and water)

5.5.1 General requirements

5.5.1.1 Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance protective functions of forests for society, such as protection of infrastructure, protection from soil erosion, protection of water resources and from adverse impacts of water such as floods or avalanches.

5.5.1.2 Areas that fulfil specific and recognised protective functions for society, especially for soil and water, shall be registered and mapped. Resulting measures shall be considered, especially in forest management planning.

Note: Protective forest stands for soil and erosion and for the protection of infrastructures are registered according the Austrian Forest Law. In forest management plans or their equivalents corresponding requirements be shall considered or referred to.

5.5.2 Soil protection

5.5.2.1 Maintenance, care and continuous stocking of protection forests are the precondition for efficient protection against soil erosion. The stability of protection forests is periodically controlled and enhancement of stability is aimed at, especially in forests with particular protective function. In this regard, respective promotion programs should be taken advantage of in the assessment unit.

5.5.2.2 Special care shall be given to silvicultural operations on sensitive soils and erosion-prone areas as well as in areas where operations might lead to excessive erosion of soil into watercourses. Inappropriate techniques such as deep soil tillage and use of unsuitable machinery shall be avoided in such areas. Appropriate measures shall be taken to minimise the impact on animal populations.

5.5.2.3 For use of machines on the forest floor: see also 5.2.1.8.

5.5.3 Environmental Function and Water Protection

5.5.3.1 Special management guidelines for forest stands, which are primarily managed for the purpose of water protection, as well as designated protective forest stands, have to be obeyed. The respective areas in the region are to be documented. Inappropriate use of

chemicals or other harmful substances or inappropriate silvicultural practices influencing water quality in a harmful way shall be avoided. Special care shall be given when using chemicals.

Note: Protective forest stands for soil and erosion and for the protection of infrastructures are registered according the Austrian Forest Law and subject to certain requirements regarding planning and management.

5.5.3.2 Road construction material, brushwood and residual biomass should not in come into water systems.

5.5.3.3 In the course of silvicultural operations, large-scale interventions in the forest soil have to be avoided.

5.5.3.4 New systems for draining larger sites should not be built, and existing ones should not be extended, except those that serve to prevent dangerous slides. The balance of seepage water on the slopes must be taken into consideration.

5.5.4 Infrastructure Protection and Protection against Natural Hazards

5.5.4.1 Forest stands, which have been designated for the protection of infrastructures or protection against natural hazards, or those which have been designated protective forests by the authorities, are to be managed according to the stipulations or forest management plans or their equivalents so that their protective function is maintained and improved.

Note: Protective forest stands for soil and erosion and for the protection of infrastructures are registered according the Austrian Forest Law. In forest management plans or their equivalents corresponding requirements be shall considered or referred to.

5.6 Criterion 6: Maintenance of other Socio-Economic Functions and Conditions

5.6.1 Characteristics and Significance of the Forest Sector

5.6.1.1 Forest management shall aim to respect the multiple functions of forests to society, give due regard to the role of forestry in rural development, and especially consider new opportunities for employment in connection with the socio-economic functions of forests.

Note: The stimulation of rural development could be achieved by training and employment of local people, a preference for the local processing of timber and non-wood forest products, etc.

5.6.1.2 Forest management practices shall maintain and improve the forest resources and encourage a diversified output of goods and services over the long term.

5.6.1.3 Forest management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the forest management area. Forestry, sawmilling and wood working industry should maintain and increase the social and economic welfare of owners and employees in the long term. With their know-how and skills, employees are an important success factor. Due consideration of their interests as well as integration and further development of their know-how and skills for operational procedures serve sustainable management.

5.6.1.4.. New opportunities for employment in connection with the socio-economic functions of forests shall be considered. Workforce should be employed the whole year.

Note: A social employment policy is an integral part of comprehensive sustainability in certified holdings of the forest industry. Sustainable forest management offers income possibilities for a lot of own employees in the forest, sawmill and woodworking industries. Certified enterprises in forestry industry consider the offer of regional employees and entrepreneurs.

5.6.1.5 Forest management shall aim to achieve sound economic performance through an optimum use of forest products. Therefore, studies and possibilities for new markets and economic activities in connection with all relevant goods and services of forests shall be considered.

Note 1: Relevant information are for instance provided through interest groups, cooperatives or group organisations.

5.6.1.6 Property rights and land tenure arrangements shall be clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. Utilization rights of third parties have to be respected.

5.6.1.7 In the case of imminent natural dangers, the forest owner is permitted to drive grazing stock into his forests for the duration of the danger and is obligated to let others' stock to be driven into his forest. In the latter case the forest owner is entitled to damages if his property has been affected (see also 5.2.3.2).

5.6.2 Recreational Services

5.6.2.1 Everybody has access to forests for recreational purposes, taking into account respect for ownership rights and the rights of others, the effects on forest resources and ecosystems. Thereof excepted are ecologically vulnerable areas, regeneration areas with trees lower than three metres as well as defined prohibited and protected areas. The compatibility with other functions of the forest needs to be maintained. Negative effects through recreational utilization shall be minimized.

Note: Legal provisions see Forestry Act §33, §34

5.6.2.2 Forest management operations shall take into account all socio-economic functions, Aesthetic values of forests which origin for instance in varied forest structures, attractive trees, flowers and fruits, shall be considered especially with regard to the recreational function.

5.6.3 Professional Education and Training, Research and Information

5.6.3.1 Forest organs are appropriately qualified and guarantee a professional implementation of the objectives of sustainable forest management according to PEFC.

Note: Legal provisions See Forestry Act § 104, §105

5.6.3.2 Forest holdings hire appropriately qualified people with special education and training in forestry (graduates in forestry, foresters, forest wardens) for forest management planning and controlling according to the Austrian Forest Law.

Note: Legal provisions see Forestry Act §104, §105, §106 and §113-§116.

5.6.3.3 Employees in forestry should attend training courses, which is supported by the employers.

5.6.3.4 For forest managers, contractors, employees and forest owners sufficient information shall be available and they shall be encouraged for a regular training regarding sustainable forest management as described in this standard.

5.6.3.5 Scientific research shall be considered in forest management. Adversely, forest management shall contribute to the work of scientific institutions in research activities, which are concerned with sustainable forest management, where this is possible and reasonable.

Note: Drafting or assigning of scientific articles or contribution to research activities is carried out through organisations as interest groups, not through companies, due to the personal and economic capacities.

5.6.4 Health and Safety at Work and Working Conditions

5.6.4.1 Forestry work shall be planned, organised and performed in a manner that enables health and accident risks to be identified. Workers shall be informed about the risks involved with their work and about preventive measures. Through applying reasonable measures workers shall be protected from work-related risks. Comprehensive health protection and accident prevention shall be ensured. The accident prevention regulations, especially by the workers protection law (ArbeitnehmerInnenschutzgesetzes), the Service Code (Dienstrechtsgesetz) and the farm labor regulations (Landarbeitsordnungen) are complied with. The recommendations of the AUVA regarding evaluation, training, accident prevention and health are met.

5.6.4.2 Working conditions shall be safe. Employees in forestry shall be obtain appropriate guidance and training regarding their task.

5.6.4.3 The client party makes sure that, within the regulations in force, co-ordination is set up.

5.6.4.4 Certified enterprises in forestry guarantee:

- a. The compliance with national and international labour rights, including especially the ILO-conventions.

- b. The legal right of employees to join trade unions and organisations and to elect workers' councils without being disadvantaged by the employer;
- c. Information for employees and workers councils on developments within the enterprise or incorporation according to the legal regulations (Austrian Labour Law, Law on Agricultural Labour, etc.);
- d. Compliance with regulations of the collective agreement.

5.6.4.5 The responsible voluntary or compulsory workers' syndicates are conceded access by certified enterprises in forestry employing workforce, within the regulations of the industrial law in force and after previous information of the holding owner or his representative.

5.6.4.6 Certified enterprises in forestry demand from hired commercial companies a confirmation of their appropriate qualifications as condition for being engaged. In addition, the hired companies confirm:

- a. Registration of employees at social insurance;
- b. Working permissions of foreign workers;
- c. Compliance with regulations of collective agreement.
- d. Use of appropriate protective clothing and personal protective equipment

5.6.5 Public Awareness

5.6.5.1 Forest management shall provide for effective communication and consultation with local people and other stakeholders and shall provide appropriate mechanism for dispute settlement.

Note 1: In case of group certification, the communication and dispute settlement functions are performed at the group level.

Note 2: Instruments on regional or national group level can be also used by other groups or certified companies with an individual certificate.

Note 3: Forestry is very committed to public relations, e.g. by means of forest education and information on forest and sustainable forest management.

5.6.5.2 In forest management local knowledge about forest management practices such as those of local communities, forest owners, NGOs and local people shall be considered.

Note 1: This standard has been developed in a multi-stakeholder process and reflects opinions and needs of various stakeholder groups.

Note 2: In case of group certification, the application of the local forest-related experience is studied and considered at the group level.

Note 3: Instruments on regional or national group level can be also used by other groups or certified companies with a single-site certificate.

5.6.6 Cultural Values

5.6.6.1 Management does not influence sites or individual trees, which are protected for cultural, historical or spiritual reasons.

5.6.6.2 Sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance shall be particularly considered and managed or administered in a way that takes due regard of the significance of the site.

5.7 Compliance with legal requirements

5.7.1 Forest management shall comply with legislation applicable to forest management issues including forest management practices; nature and environmental protection; protected and endangered species; property, tenure and land-use rights for third parties; health, labour and safety issues; and the payment of royalties and taxes.

Note: Surveillance regarding the payment of taxes is subject to financial authorities.

5.7.2 Forest management shall provide for adequate protection of the forest from unauthorised activities such as illegal logging, illegal land use, illegally initiated fires, and other illegal activities.

Note: Corresponding provisions in the Austrian Forest Act (forest protection, forest protection, treatment of the boundaries of the property, forest devastation, forest conversion, etc.) and official forest protection authorities provide for the protection against illegal activities. Forest owners and managers are obliged to inform the respective authority where illegal activities of a third party are known.

Appendix 1 – Requirements for the use of forest machinery

Nr.	Criterion	Compliance	Note
1	Appropriate qualification of the employees including information about sustainable forest management according PEFC-criteria.		
2	Usage of protective clothing and personal protective equipment (Persönliche Schutzausrüstung PSA)		
3	Having First-Aid material on sight		
4	Usage of suitable equipment and machinery with functional safety equipment.		
5	For the lubrication of chain saws exclusively readily biodegradable oils are used.		
6	Usage of readily biodegradable hydraulic oil oils. Note: For existing machinery, which is run with mineralic hydraulic oils, additional arrangements need to be taken to avoid oil contaminations in case of incidents (vacuum pumps, increased amount of oil binding agents).		
7	Having oil binding agents on site.		
8	Driving is principally only permitted on logging trails, according 5.2.1.8		
9	Consideration of limitations through weather conditions for driving		
10	Damages through harvesting should be avoided as possible. Wood hauling should be principally carried out sparing the forest stand, the water stand and ecological conditions as far as possible. Only those methods and machinery shall be used, according to the acknowledged rule of technology in forestry which are suitable for the application in forests.		
11	Before starting work the forest entrepreneur should ask the forest owner concerning possible constraints for forest operations.		
12	Harvesting of the assigned trees is done under consideration of the law (forest law, nature protection law) and considering measures to maintain and appropriately improve the biological diversity (relevance of dead wood (standing on ground), preserving old trees with ecological relevance (Veteranenbäume)).		
13	Pesticides should not be applied principally. Prevention shall be preferred. Biological, mechanical and physical measures are to be preferred to chemical ones.		
14	Compliance with working safety regulations, regulations of the collective agreement (business registration, confirmation of insurance (social insurance, liability protection))		