Sustainable Forest Management - Requirements
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Sustainable Forest management – Requirements

1. Introduction

These requirements have been developed by the PEFC Poland Council in an open, transparent, consultative and consensus-based process, involving a wide range of stakeholders.

These requirements form the basis for assessing the condition of forest management for all forms of forest ownership in the certification process by an independent certification body under the PEFC scheme and include defined certification criteria for both individual forest areas and the regional level. In particular, they serve to define the subject and scope of audits and to determine the conformity of the condition and management of forests with the requirements of the certification scheme.

The main objectives of the current revision of the PEFC system standards and documents in Poland were:

- adjustment to the revised requirements of PEFC International;
- taking into account comments arising from the national review;
- improving the clarity and consistency of documents to make them easier to use in practice.

This document defines, at the level of the certified organisation, forest management requirements derived from the Forest Europe process and regulations of PEFC International and PEFC Poland.

2. Basic documents

The following requirements comply with the following acts in force in Poland:

1. Act of 10 April 2003 on special principles of preparation and implementation of investments in the field of public roads (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1474 as amended),
3. Act of 10 October 2002 on minimum remuneration for work (Dz. U. of 2020, item 2207)
4. Act of 11 August 2021 on alien species (Journal of Laws 2021, item 1718)


48. Instruction on occupational safety and health in carrying out basic forest management work (Annex to Executive Order No. 36 of the Director General of the State Forests of 20 April 2012.


52. Instruction for carrying out the Large Scale Forest Inventory. Forest Research Institute. Sękocin Stary, 2014


54. Principles of forest use (Annex 1 to the Order of the Director General of State Forests No. 66 of 7 November 2019).

The list includes only addresses of publication (announcements) of legal acts from the Internet System of Legal Acts of the Chancellery of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland. Addresses of later amendments can be found in the same system.

Forest management shall take into account all applicable laws in Poland as well as international treaties and agreements to which Poland is a signatory and meet all requirements set by PEFC Poland.

The forest owner or manager shall comply with all national and local laws related to forest management. It shall also pay all applicable and legally defined contributions, taxes and other fees in this regard.

Acts of particular importance are the Forest Act, the Nature Conservation Act and the Environmental Protection Act (see chapter 2 Basic normative documents) with implementing acts.

The forest owner or manager undertakes to manage the forest in accordance with these requirements.

The forest owner or manager shall also make reasonable efforts to ensure that they are respected in all contractual obligations to which it is a signatory and which relate to its forest management in the certified area.

3. Scope, terms and definitions

Scope:


These requirements (criteria) for sustainable forest management apply to forests of all ownership forms. They apply to all forest management tasks performed on areas submitted for certification.

There is no minimum level or limitation set in this document for determining compliance of forest management with the criteria for sustainable forest management. Determination of such compliance is within the competence of the certification body after consideration of comments of the certified entity, in matters requiring additional clarification after taking into account the interpretation of PEFC Poland. Additional indicators marked with letters: A, B, C, etc. are a possibility to specify forest management objectives within a specific area under assessment, based on knowledge of experts (certification bodies and certified bodies).
Terms and definitions:

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2 have been adopted, among others.

3.1 Stakeholder
A person, group, community or organisation with an interest in the subject matter of the standard’s requirements.

3.2 Stakeholder affected by the standard
A stakeholder who may experience a direct change in living or working conditions because of the implementation of the standard, or a stakeholder who may be a user of the standard and therefore may be subject to its requirements.

Note 1: Stakeholders influenced by the standard include local communities, workers, etc. However, being a stakeholder in the subject of the standard (e.g. NGOs, scientific community and civil society) does not equal being influenced by the standard.

Note 2: A stakeholder who may be a user of the standard is likely to be a certified entity, e.g. a forest owner in the case of a forest management standard or a wood processing company in the case of a forest product chain of custody standard.

3.3 Afforestation
The process of introducing forest vegetation by tree planting, sowing or natural seeding on land that was previously used in another way

3.4 Certified area
Forest area covered by a sustainable forest management assessment scheme in accordance with the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management standard (PEFC ST 1003).

3.5 Degraded forest
Land with a long-term significant reduction in the total potential to provide benefits from the forest, which includes carbon storage, timber, biodiversity and other goods and services (definition based on FAO 2003).

3.6 Ecologically important forest areas
Forest areas
a) containing protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems;

b) containing significant concentrations of endemic species and habitats of endangered species as defined in the recognised reference lists;

c) containing genetic resources conserved in situ;

b) contributing to maintaining globally, nationally or regionally significant landscapes compatible with their natural distribution and high diversity of naturally occurring species.

3.7 Ecosystem services
Benefits derived from ecosystems. These include: services that provide food, water, wood and fibre; ancillary services that address climate, flooding, disease, waste and water quality; cultural services that provide recreational, aesthetic and spiritual benefits; and support services such as soil formation, CO₂ fixation, photosynthesis and nutrient cycling (based on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).

3.8 Forest
Forest is land with a compact area of at least 0.10 ha, covered with forest vegetation (forest crops) - trees and bushes and undergrowth - or temporarily deprived of it, as well as land related to forest management.
Note: The definition is based on the definition of forest in Article 3 of the Forest Act of 28 September 1991.

3.9 Conversion of forest
Human conversion of forest to another land use or plantation

3.10 Plantation
Area on which seedlings or seeds of fast-growing introduced or indigenous species have been planted, established for the purpose of producing as much timber or non-timber goods and services as possible within a shorter time cycle than in forest management

3.11 Fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)
Eight ILO conventions (Nos. 29, 87, 98, 100, 105, 111, 138 and 182) identified by the ILO Governing Body as "fundamental" in terms of labour principles and workers' rights concerning: freedom of association and collective bargaining, abolition of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, effective abolition of child labour and elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

3.12 Genetically modified trees
Trees whose genetic material has been modified in a way that is not naturally occurring by mating or natural recombination, taking into account legislation giving a detailed definition of genetically modified organisms.

Note 1: The following techniques are considered as genetic modification resulting in genetically modified trees (EU Directive 2001/18/EC):

(1) recombinant nucleic acid techniques involving the formation of new combinations of genetic material by the addition of nucleic acid molecules, synthesised by any means outside the organism, to a virus, bacterial plasmid or other vector and their incorporation into a target organism in which they do not naturally occur but in which they are capable of continued replication;

(2) techniques involving the direct introduction into the body of hereditary material prepared outside the body, such as microinjection, macroinjection and microencapsulation;

(3) cell fusion (including protoplast fusion) or hybridisation techniques in which living cells with new combinations of genetic material are resulting from the fusion of two or more cells carried out in a way that does not occur naturally.

Note 2: The following techniques are not considered as genetic modification resulting in genetically modified trees (EU Directive 2001/18/EC):

(1) in vitro fertilisation;

(2) natural processes such as conjugation, transduction and transformation;

(3) causing polyploidy.

3.13 Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
Careful consideration of all available methods of plant protection, followed by appropriate measures to inhibit the development of populations of harmful organisms and to keep the use of plant protection products and other forms of intervention to levels which are economically and ecologically justified and to reduce or minimise risks to human health and the environment. (Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009.).

3.14 Landscape
An area perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors (European Landscape Convention).

3.15 Management plan (with particular reference to the forest management plan or its equivalent)
Documented information setting out the objectives, activities and control arrangements for the management of resources and ecosystem services over an agreed period of time.

*Note 1:* Under Polish conditions the basic plan for sustainable forest management is the Forest Management Plan (FMP) or its statutory equivalent, e.g. simplified management plan (SMP).

*Note 2:* The elements of the management plan also include annual management plans and other documents drawn up depending on the scale and scope of the needs to implement forest management.

3.16 Management system
A set of interrelated or interacting elements of an organisation designed to establish policies, objectives and processes to achieve those objectives.

3.17 Non-forest ecosystem
An ecosystem that does not meet the definition of a forest.

3.18 Non-wood forest products
Products consisting of goods of biological origin other than wood, from forests and trees outside forests (*Trees outside Forests*, TOF) (source: after FAO 2017).

3.19 Organisation
A person or group of persons with their own functions, responsibilities, authorities and links to achieve their objectives.

*Note 1:* The organisation applying for PEFC certification is responsible for compliance with PEFC requirements for sustainable forest management, including multiple forest management units.

*Note 2:* The role of the organisation may also be played by the manager or owner.

3.20 Renewal
Restoration of a forest stand by tree planting and/or seeding/self-sowing/replanting on land classified as forest (source: FAO 2018). Regeneration aims to initiate and shape the young generation of trees.

3.21 Standardisation body
A body with recognised activities in the field of standardisation.

*Note:* The standardisation body for the forest management standard/certification scheme is the body responsible for developing and maintaining standards for the forest management certification scheme. The standards body can be a PEFC national management unit or a separate entity not subject to the forest certification scheme.

3.22 Trees outside Forests (TOF)
Trees growing outside forested areas that conform to the accepted definition of forest.

3.23 Forestry resources
The total quantifiable components of a forest, including the elements of the biocenosis, especially stand, undergrowth and game, and the biotope components soil and water.

3.24 Employee
A person employed on the basis of an employment contract, appointment, selection, appointment or cooperative employment contract (in accordance with the Labour Code) and self-employed persons performing forest management work on areas submitted for certification.

3.25 Procedure
An established procedure and way of carrying out an activity or process, involving more or less well-defined next steps. Procedures may or may not be documented. (Encyclopedia of Management)

3.26 Audit evidence
Records, statements of fact or other information that are relevant to the audit criteria and verifiable (ISO 19011)

Note 1: During the audit, information related to the objectives, scope and criteria of the audit (including information related to the interaction between functions, activities and processes) shall be obtained through appropriate sampling and verified to provide audit evidence.

Note 2: Methods of obtaining information shall include, but not be limited to: interviews, observation of processes and activities, review of documentation and records.

3.27 Audit criteria
A set of policies, procedures or requirements used as a reference against which audit evidence is compared.

4. Criteria for sustainable forest management

4.1 Criterion 1: Maintenance or enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle

Forest management shall aim to maintain or enhance forests and their ecosystem services and to maintain or enhance the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of forest resources.

The quantity and quality of forest resources and the forest's capacity to capture and store carbon shall be safeguarded in the medium to long term by sustainable harvesting and tree growth rates and by favouring techniques that minimise the adverse impacts of human activities on forest resources.

Management actions shall promote climate-friendly practices, resulting in reduced greenhouse gas emissions and efficient use of resources.

4.1.1. Forest management planning shall aim to maintain forest resources and enhance their quality in terms of the dominant forest functions.

A. Forest area (excluding land related to forest management) as of 1 January of the audit year and 3 years back [ha], by year (the certified entity shall provide justification in case of reduction).

B. Forest area (excluding land related to forest management) by age classes as at 1 January of the audit year and 3 years back (ha), by year.
C. Are the different functions/uses of the forest areas indicated in the management plans (or their equivalents)? Yes/No (the certifying unit shall provide relevant records).

D. Are the management of the forest adapted to its functions in the management plan (or equivalent) or in the management plans? Yes/No (the certifying entity shall provide relevant records).

4.1.2. Forest management shall encompass a cycle of forest resource inventory and management action planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and include assessment of their social, environmental and economic impact. This mechanism shall form the basis for continual improvement of the management process, which makes it possible to reduce or avoid the negative effects of the activities carried out. An inventory of forest resources shall be carried out and its results mapped according to local or national conditions.

4.1.3. Management plans shall be developed and, where necessary, updated according to national legal requirements and taking into account available scientific research results.

A. Does the certified entity have a current management plan? Yes/No

4.1.4. Management plans shall include at least: a description of the state of the forest at the date of the plan, long-term and mid-term objectives, allowable harvest and/or management areas for the duration of the plan.

4.1.5. If forest management includes the commercial use of non-timber forest products, their annual use shall be included in the management plan. The stock of commercially utilized products shall be periodically reviewed.

A. Are such activities documented? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this)

4.1.6. Management plans (or their equivalents) shall be publicly available excluding sensitive data and data likely to disturb the environment (e.g. stands of protected species).

Note: Publicly available forest management plan data or its equivalent shall not include confidential business and personal information and other information that has been given confidential status under applicable laws or to protect cultural sites or sensitive natural resource elements.

A. Does the certified entity provide a forest management plan or equivalent (excluding sensitive data and data likely to affect the environment, e.g. sites of protected species)? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

4.1.7. Forest resources shall be periodically monitored and forest management evaluated, including its ecological, social and economic effects. Based on data and analysis, actions shall be planned for the next project period.

A. Do forest management plans (FMP, UPUL) include such analysis? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide documentation)

4.1.8. The tasks associated with sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined.

4.1.9. Forest management shall ensure the maintenance of the sustainability, quality and quantity of forest resources in the medium and long term by balancing the rate of harvesting and restoration and by choosing methods that limit direct or indirect damage to forest resources.
Forest management activities shall be aimed at maintaining the level or achieving an increase in resources desirable for economic, ecological and social reasons.

A. Proportion of total planned timber (coarse) harvesting in relation to the expected volume increment defined in the applicable management plan or proportion of planned timber (coarse) harvesting in relation to the inventoried volume (equivalent to the management plan) (%).

B. Does the harvesting of timber (coarse wood) not exceed the expected volume increment over the duration of the management plan or its equivalent? If so, is it justified? FMU shall provide calculations and analysis.

C. Forest area (excluding land associated with forest management and land designated for succession in accordance with applicable regulations) that has not been restored within five years after stand removal, as of 1 January in the year of audit (the certified body shall provide justification if this situation occurred).

D. Are the above activities carried out also for resources other than timber that are commercially exploited? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence thereof)

4.1.10. Conversion of forests shall not take place unless there are reasonable circumstances in which conversion:

- is consistent with national or regional policies and laws on land use and forest management, and is the result of a national or regional land use plan developed by the government or other authorities, taking into account consultations with stakeholders affected by the standard (persons and organizations involved materially or directly); and
- covers a small portion (no more than 5%) of the forest type in question in the certified area; and
- has no significant negative impact on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially important areas or other protected areas; and
- does not damage areas with high forest carbon stocks; and
- is a source of long-term environmental, economic and social benefits.

A. Forest land area converted at the end of the year preceding the audit and each 3 years back (ha).

B. Have the legally prescribed procedures for changing land use categories been followed? Yes/No (The certified body shall provide evidence of this.

4.1.11. Afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not take place.

A. Was afforestation of non-forest ecosystems preceded by an analysis? Yes/No (the certifying body shall provide evidence thereof)

4.1.12. When qualifying land for afforestation, consideration shall be given to increasing the ecological, social or economic value of the area.

A. Afforestation area in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

B. Has the afforestation been carried out in accordance with the local zoning plan or zoning decision? Yes/No/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).
4.1.13. If conversion of degraded forests to plantations is considered, such conversion shall have added value from an economic, ecological, social and/or cultural perspective. A prerequisite for such added value is the circumstances under which the conversion:

- is consistent with national or regional policies and laws on land use and forest management and is the result of a national or regional land use plan developed by the government or other authorities; and
- is based on a decision-making process in which stakeholders affected by the standard have had the opportunity to participate through transparent consultation; and
- has a positive impact on the long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and
- it has no significant adverse impacts on forest ecosystems with special requirements, on culturally and socially important areas or on protected areas; and
- safeguards the protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and
- safeguards the socio-economic functions of forests, including their recreational function and the aesthetic values of forests and other cultural services; and
- is based on evidence that degradation is not a consequence of deliberate action; and
- is based on reliable information demonstrating that the area has not been, or is not being, restored.

A. Area of degraded forests converted to plantations in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

B. Have the legally prescribed procedures been followed in converting degraded forests into plantations? Yes/No/No (evidence to be provided by certified body)

4.2 Criterion 2: Maintenance of the health and vitality of the forest ecosystem

4.2.1. Forest management planning shall aim at a forest structure that ensures the long-term maintenance of its regenerative potential, vitality, health and ability to perform all important protective, economic and social functions without detriment to other ecosystems, and the restoration and management of degrading forests, as far as this is possible within the framework of available forestry techniques and legislation.

A. Have the requirements of applicable laws been met in the preparation of the forest management plan (or equivalent)? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide relevant records).

B. Does the certified entity follow the principle of adapting crop species compositions to habitats/microhabitats or changes in natural conditions? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).

C. Forest area disturbed/degraded, rehabilitated in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

4.2.2. Forest health and vitality shall be monitored periodically, especially as regards the main biotic, abiotic and anthropogenic factors that may adversely affect them.

A. Does the certified body conduct monitoring of the above mentioned hazards? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

B. Area of stands damaged by game in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.
C. Area of stands damaged by insects in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

D. Area of stands damaged by fungi in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

E. Area of stands affected by fires in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

F. Area of stands damaged by wind and other abiotic factors in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

4.2.3. Maintenance of forest ecosystem health shall take into account the impact of biotic and abiotic factors, especially insect infestations and other naturally occurring disturbances, as long as they do not disturb the sustainability of forest resources.

A. Are thresholds established, if possible, above which the certified entity undertakes actions to stabilize the sustainability of the forest? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence thereof).

4.2.4. Forest management plans shall identify ways and techniques of reducing the risk of degradation and damage to forest ecosystems. Forest management planning shall take into account available tools developed for this specific purpose.

A. Are ways and techniques for mitigating damage to forest ecosystems recorded in the management plans of the certified entity? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide relevant records)

B. Area of stands under game protection in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

C. Area of stands controlled for harmful insects in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

D. Area of stands controlled for pathogenic fungi in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

E. Average area of a single fire in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

4.2.5. Forest management shall be based on the optimal use of natural forest-forming processes and make use of preventive biological methods insofar as they are economically feasible. Efforts shall be made to achieve and maintain genetic, species and structural diversity that enhance the stability, vitality and resilience of forests in the face of adverse environmental factors and reinforce natural regulatory mechanisms.

A. Does the certified entity use natural forestry processes? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

B. Does the certified entity use preventive biological methods, such as natural regeneration, biocenotic trees, stand conversion, re-meshes? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

4.2.6. Fire lighting in the forest shall be restricted to areas where fire is an essential management tool for regeneration, forest protection, forest fire protection, proper health and safety conditions, habitat management and recreational functions in permitted areas. Management and control measures shall be taken in such cases.
A. Does the certified unit have policies in place consistent with the content of the criterion related to the use of fire in the forest? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

4.2.7. Good forest management practices, such as afforestation and reforestation with tree species adapted to natural conditions and the use of care, use and transport techniques that limit tree and/or soil damage shall be applied.

Fuel and oil spills during forest management activities and uncontrolled dumping of waste on forest land shall be strictly avoided.

When carrying out work where there is a risk of oil spillage, use oil that does not pollute the environment (biodegradable oil).

If the certified organisation carries out this type of work itself, then it shall have procedures in place in case such events occur. If the work is outsourced to a contractor, then the contracts for the work shall include requirements to have such procedures in place.

Waste must be collected and disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner.

A. Indicator identical to 4.2.1. B.

B. Does the certified body reserve and control such conduct in contracts with companies carrying out the tasks listed? Yes/No (the certification body shall provide records of the relevant contracts).

C. Does the certified entity have documentary evidence that forest waste has been handed over to the appropriate collection agents? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

4.2.8. Integrated pest management shall be applied first and foremost to minimise the use of pesticides. Any use of pesticides shall be documented.

A. Does the certified body have procedures in place by which the appropriateness of pesticide use is assessed? Yes/No (the certified body shall submit such procedures).

B. Area of stands treated with pesticides in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

C. Does the certified entity use alternative forest protection methods? If yes, which ones? (The certified entity shall provide evidence).

D. Does the certified body document pesticide use? Yes/No (The unit shall provide records of pesticide use).

4.2.9. The use of pesticides containing active substances classified by the World Health Organisation in classes 1A and 1B and other highly toxic pesticides shall not be allowed except where no other viable alternative is available. Their use shall only be permitted where the sustainability of the forest is threatened.

A. Does the certified entity use pesticides containing active substances classified by the World Health Organization in classes 1A and 1B and other highly toxic pesticides? Yes/No (the certified body justifies their use).
4.2.10. The use of pesticides, such as chlorinated hydrocarbons, whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain above permitted levels, as well as pesticides prohibited under international agreements, shall be prohibited.

*Note:* "pesticides prohibited under international agreements" as defined by the in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, 2009 (as amended).

A. Does the certified body use the above groups of measures? Yes/No.

4.2.11. When using pesticides, follow the directions for use (product label) and use training and safe and suitable equipment.

A. Does the certified body supervise that workers performing pesticide treatments undergo related training and testing? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).

B. Does the certified body ensure that workers are equipped with safe and suitable equipment for pesticide application? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).

C. Does the certified body stipulate compliance with the above principles in contracts with companies carrying out contracted tasks using pesticides? Yes/No (the body shall provide records of the contracts).

4.2.12. Fertilisers shall be used in a controlled and environmentally sensitive way. The use of fertilisers is not an alternative to soil nutrient management.

A. Does the certified body have procedures in place to assess the appropriateness of fertiliser use? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide such procedures).

B. Forest area (excluding land related to forest management) on which fertilisers and liming were applied in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

C. List of fertilisers and their annual consumption in the last three years (kg).

4.3 Criterion 3: Preserving and enhancing the productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood products)

4.3.1. Forest management planning shall aim to maintain the continuity and balanced use of all forest functions.

A. Indicator identical to 4.2.1.A.

4.3.2. Forest management planning shall aim to achieve optimum economic results, using available market research and opportunities to expand into new markets with forest products and services.

A. Are the needs and opportunities for expansion of the certified entity's forest products and services being analyzed during the preparation of the assumptions for developing the management plan? Yes/No (Information to be provided by certified body).

4.3.3. Management plans shall take into account the different uses and functions of the forest area.
A. Indicator identical to 4.1.1 C

B. Indicator identical to 4.1.1 D

4.3.4. Forest management shall preserve and, where possible, increase forest resources and aim to diversify the production of goods and services in the long term.

A. Share of the value of non-wood products and services sold in the total sales revenue of the certified entity in the last 3 years before the audit year (%), by year.

B. Does the certified entity have signed agreements to harvest non-timber forest products for industrial purposes? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide copies of the agreements).

C. Does the certified entity carry out activities to diversify its products and services beyond wood raw material? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence)

4.3.5. Forest management activities shall take place at times and in ways that and in a manner that does not limit the productive capacity of the forest. In particular, damage to standing trees and degradation of forest soils shall be limited.

Note 1: The stand shall be made accessible by a system of operating routes that allows the use of forest machinery in a way that reduces the impact on the soil (applies to planned composite felling and thinning cuts).

Note 2: The ground pressure of the machine during passage can be minimised by the use of a branch mat on the operating route, the use of wide, low-pressure tyres, machines with more wheels, half-tracking and planning of harvesting operations taking into account the availability of the stand.

A. Does the certified body stipulate this treatment in its contracts with companies carrying out outsourced tasks? Yes/No (certified body to provide contractual provisions).

B. Does the certified entity have procedures in place to assess the impact of planned forestry work on ecosystems? Yes/No (the certified body shall submit such procedures).

C. Does the certified entity design, delineate and use operational trails for logging and skidding? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

D. Does the certified unit consider damage to trees remaining after treatment during acceptance of forestry work? Yes/No (the certifying unit shall provide evidence thereof)

4.3.6. The level of planned use of forest timber and non-timber resources shall guarantee the long-term sustainable development of the area, and the harvested forest products shall be used optimally, ensuring the renewability of forest resources.

The whole tree method (removal of all parts of the tree above and below the surface) shall not be used.

The use of wood residues for energy purposes shall depend on the abundance of the habitat and its conservation needs.

A. Does the certified entity adopt procedures by which the level of commercial use of timber and non-timber resources is determined? Yes/No (the certified entity shall submit such procedures).
B. Does the certified unit exceed the harvesting targets of the management plan (or equivalent)? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this and provide explanation if assumptions are exceeded).

C. Is the harvested timber graded so that an optimum price can be obtained for it? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).

D. Does the local community have the opportunity to benefit from forest resources? Yes/No (certified body provides evidence of this).

4.3.7. Where the management responsibilities of the forest owner/manager include the use of non-timber forest resources, including hunting, they shall monitor and control these activities.

A. Does the certified body take part in the hunting planning work on the managed area and does it control the implementation of these plans? Yes/No (the certified body shall demonstrate how).

B. Does the certified entity control the commercial use of non-timber forest resources? Yes/No (evidence to be provided by certified body)

4.3.8 Transport infrastructure, i.e. roads, operational routes and bridges, shall be planned, established and maintained to ensure an efficient system for the provision of products and services, while limiting negative impacts on the environment.

A. Does the certified unit have a transport infrastructure analysis? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).

B. Is the transport infrastructure in the area of the certified body maintained in a planned manner? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

C. Does the certified entity have procedures in place to assess the impact of planned road infrastructure creation investments on ecosystems? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).

D. Indicator identical to 4.3.5.C.

F. Does the certified entity stipulate in its contracts with the companies implementing and maintaining the above mentioned infrastructure the reduction of negative environmental impacts? Yes/No (the certified entity shall present the provisions of the agreements).

4.4 Criterion 4: Preservation, protection and enhancement of biodiversity of forest ecosystems

4.4.1. Forest management planning shall aim to conserve, protect and enhance natural biodiversity at the genetic, species, ecosystem and landscape levels.

A. Does the certified entity implement programs to conserve forest genetic resources in Poland? Yes/No (the certifying entity shall provide a list of FMU's and actions taken).

B. Indicator identical to 4.2.1.B.
C. Does the certified entity introduce biocenotic species indigenous to the region? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).

D. Does the certified entity take into account the principles of natural/forest regionalisation? Yes/No (evidence shall be provided by the certified body).

E. Does the certified entity address the specific management needs of conservation forests? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

F. Are natural water retention facilities located on forest land (swamps, bogs, aquatic ecosystems) inventoried and taken into account in forest management planning? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).

G. Does the certified entity introduce and maintain landscape-forming forest structural elements (old forest clumps, ecotones, clearcuts, etc.) and to what extent? Yes/No (evidence shall be provided by certified entity)

H. Do the forest management activities undertaken have a significantly negative impact on the status of protected and endangered species? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).

4.4.2. Forest inventory and management shall identify, protect and conserve ecologically important forest areas.

Note: Forest management activities that do not destroy the essential ecological values of these biotopes are not prohibited.

A. Does the certified entity maintain and update an inventory of ecologically important forest areas? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

B. Do the above mentioned areas have any indications related to their protection? (protection plans/tasks, economic indications)? Yes/No (if not, what is the reason for this - lack of such needs, competence outside the certified unit, etc.).

C. Forested area of Natura 2000 sites on 1 January in the year of audit and 3 years back (ha).

D. Forested area of nature reserves (including strictly protected areas) as at 1 January in the audit year and 3 years back (ha).

E. Forested area of protected landscape areas as of 1 January in the audit year and 3 years back (ha).

F. Forested area of landscape parks as at 1 January in the audit year and 3 years back (ha).

G. Forested area of natural and landscape complexes as of 1 January in the audit year and 3 years back (ha).

H. Area of grassland as at 1 January in the year of audit and 3 years back (ha).

I. Natural monuments (list as at 1 January in the year of audit and 3 years back).
J. Forest area of inanimate nature documentation sites as of 1 January in the audit year and 3 years back (ha).

4.4.3 Protected and endangered plant, animal and fungi species shall not be used in an unlawful manner. Where necessary, measures shall be implemented to protect them and, where appropriate, to increase their population.

A. Is the possible use of protected and endangered species legal? Yes/No (certified body provides permits).

B. Number of protection zones for plant, animal or fungi species requiring it - as of 1 January in the year of audit and 3 years back.

4.4.4. Forest management shall ensure the regeneration of forest resources by favouring natural processes where possible and justified.

A. Share of natural regeneration in the total regeneration structure in the last 3 years before the audit year (%), by year.

B. Does the certified entity take action to promote natural regeneration? Yes/No (the certification body provides evidence of this).

4.4.5. In the case of reforestation and afforestation, native species and local ecotypes adapted to the habitat conditions of the site shall be used. Only those alien species that are not legally sanctioned in Poland as threatening to native species and habitats may be introduced into the environment.

Note: The Convention on Biological Diversity's Basic Principles on Preventing, Introducing and Mitigating the Impacts of Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species are considered valid guidelines for avoiding invasive species.

A. Proportion of indigenous and local reproductive material in relation to total forest reproductive material used for regeneration and afforestation in the last 3 years before the audit year (ha), by year.

B. Does the certified entity intentionally introduce alien species into the environment? Yes/No (The certified entity shall provide a list of these species and the changes in their area/recreation/reforestation share in the last 3 years before the year of the audit (ha), by year.

C. Is the introduction of alien species into the environment in accordance with applicable law? Yes/No (the certifier shall provide evidence thereof).

4.4.6. Afforestation contributing to the improvement and restoration of the continuity of ecological corridors shall be promoted.

A. Does the afforestation work carried out within the certified unit take into account arrangements related to the shaping of the ecological corridor network in the country/region? Yes/No/No (the certified entity shall present these programmes/agreements and how they are implemented, e.g. based on maps).

4.4.7. Genetically modified trees shall not be introduced into the environment.
**Note:** The ban on the introduction of genetically modified trees into the environment was adopted by the PEFC General Assembly on a precautionary basis. Genetically modified trees will not be introduced until sufficient scientific data on them have demonstrated that their impact on human and animal health and the environment is equivalent or more beneficial than that offered by trees genetically improved by conventional methods.

A. Does the certified body introduce genetically modified trees into the environment? Yes/No (the certified body shall describe the characteristics of the reproductive material used in this respect).

4.4.8. Forest management shall, where appropriate, promote the structural diversity of forests, e.g. mixed, multi-aged and multi-storey stands, which at the same time serves to maintain or restore landscape diversity.

**Note:** In the forest environment there are single species stands, which are valuable elements of the native nature (e.g. mountain and lowland beech forests, alder forests, hornbeam forests).

A. Change in the proportion of undifferentiated, single-storey and single-species stands (the dominant species constitutes more than 70% of the stand species composition) in the audit year and 3 years back.

B. Change in proportion of diversified stands (two-storey, multi-storey, in KO, in KDO, BP and those single-storey stands where the dominant species constitutes 70% and less than 70% of the stand species composition) in the audit year and 3 years back.

C. Are forest microhabitats included in the certified unit? (Indicator identical to 4.2.1 B).

D. Does the certified entity carry out actions to diversify vertical structure of stands, e.g. initiation of natural regeneration, maintenance of undergrowth, introduction of understory or stand conversion? (The certified entity shall provide reports on the performance of these activities in the last 3 years before the year of the audit (ha).

E. Indicator identical to 4.4.1.G.

F. Area share of clear cuts in the total area cut in the last 3 years before the audit year (%).

4.4.9. **In the case** of valuable ecosystems, the traditional management practices that led to their creation shall be supported, as far as is reasonable and legally possible.

**Note:** Traditional forest management practices include, but are not limited to: regrowth management, grazing, burning.

A. Have the above areas been identified within the certified body and, if so, has appropriate treatment been implemented? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

4.4.10. Maintenance and use of forest areas shall be carried out in a way that does not cause permanent damage to ecosystems.

A. Does the certified body stipulate this in its contracts with companies carrying out the listed activities? Yes/No (the certification body shall provide the contractual provisions).

B. Does the certified body have procedures in place to control the performance of contracts with firms performing the listed activities? Yes/No (the certified body shall submit such procedures).
**4.4.11.** Infrastructure shall be designed and built in a way that minimises damage to the ecosystem, especially to rare, vulnerable or representative ecosystems and genetic reserves, taking into account migration routes.

A. Are there any planned or ongoing infrastructure investments in the certified unit within the boundaries of the abovementioned ecosystems? Yes/No (the certified entity provides material to verify the answer, e.g. maps).

B. If such investments are planned or implemented, does the certified body have procedures in place to assess their impact on the above ecosystems and their components? Yes/No/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

C. Does the certified body reserve this treatment in its contracts with companies carrying out the tasks listed? Yes/No/No (the certification body provides evidence of this).

**4.4.12.** Taking into account forest management objectives and legal requirements, measures shall be taken to reduce excessive pressure from game populations that threaten the regeneration and development of the forest and the maintenance of biodiversity.

A. Indicator identical to 4.2.2.B.

B. Indicator identical to 4.2.4.B.

C. List of game damage mitigation measures applied in the certified unit during the last 3 years.

**4.4.13.** Dead wood, hollow trees and groups of old trees and very rare native tree and shrub species shall be left to maintain biodiversity, taking into account potential impacts on the health of forest stands, the stability of surrounding ecosystems and the safety of people in highly frequented areas.

A. Do the applied management principles in the stands of the certified unit take into account the above mentioned resources? Yes/No (evidence to be provided by certified entity)

**4.5 Criterion 5: Preservation and enhancement of the protective functions of forest management (in particular soil and water protection)**

**4.5.1.** Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance the protective and regulatory functions of forests, such as soil erosion control, flood control, water purification, climate regulation, carbon sequestration and other regulatory and support services of the ecosystem.

A. Do management plans address the above issues? Yes/No (evidence to be provided by certified body).

**4.5.2.** Management plans or their equivalents shall take into account the presence of protective forests.

A. Area share of protection forests in total forest area (%) as of 1 January in the audit year.

B. Area of each category of shelterwoods (ha).

C. Indicator identical to indicator 4.4.1.E
4.5.3. Special care shall be taken during forestry operations on land and in areas prone to soil erosion as well as in areas where operations could lead to excessive soil erosion within watercourses. Soil preparation methods and machinery shall not lead to soil erosion.

A. Are areas at risk of soil erosion identified? Yes/No (certified body provides evidence of this).

B. Does the certified entity have and apply rules for forestry work on these lands? Yes/No/not applicable (the certified entity shall produce these rules).

4.5.4. Special care shall be taken during forestry operations carried out in forest areas that have a protective function for water resources to avoid adverse effects on the quantity and quality of these resources. The use of chemicals or other harmful substances and forestry techniques that adversely affect the quality of water resources shall be avoided.

A. Does the certified unit have and apply rules for forestry work in spring areas and in the immediate vicinity of water bodies and watercourses? Yes/No/ (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

B. Does the certified unit follow the rules for the use of chemicals in their labels, with particular attention to the protection of aquatic organisms? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

4.5.5 The construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure as part of own developments shall be carried out in such a way as to limit destructive soil exposure and excessive inputs to watercourses and water bodies while maintaining their natural level and function. Where necessary, drainage facilities for unit-owned roads shall be installed and maintained.

A. Is there technical documentation of infrastructure construction in the certified unit? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this)

B. Does it include an environmental impact assessment as required by law? Yes/No/No (certified body provides evidence of this).

C. Is the condition of the infrastructure monitored in the certified body and is necessary maintenance carried out? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).

4.6 Criterion 6: Preservation of other socio-economic functions and conditions

4.6.1. Forest management planning shall respect the multiple functions of forests, take into account the role of forestry in rural development and take account of the labour market situation.

A. In the process of preparing the management plan (or its equivalent), has the public been given the opportunity to present their comments and needs in relation to the functions and benefits of the forests? Yes/No (the certifying entity shall provide evidence of this).

B. Does the certified body cooperate in the spatial planning process with local government units? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).
4.6.2. Forest management shall support the long-term sustainability and quality of life of local communities.

A. Number of persons employed by the certified body on 1 January of the audit year and in the last 3 years before the audit year. (the certified entity shall provide a breakdown).

B. Number of operators providing forest management services to the certified entity in the last 3 years prior to the year of audit (the certified entity shall provide a breakdown).

C. Does the certified entity meet local levy obligations in a timely manner? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).

D. Does the certified entity market timber to local communities? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this)

4.6.3. Ownership and tenure of forest land shall be clearly defined, established and documented. Customs and traditions of forest use shall be respected to the extent consistent with applicable law.

A. Does the certified entity have the legal situation of the land it owns or manages regularised? Yes/No/Certified entity takes steps to regularise it (certified entity provides evidence of this).

B. Share of unsettled areas by year as of 1 January in the audit year and 3 years back (%).

4.6.4. Universal access to forests shall be ensured, respecting property rights and restrictions on access to forests under existing law, taking into account impacts on forest resources and ecosystems, and linkages with other forest functions.

A. Has the certified entity imposed restrictions on public access to the forest in the last 3 years? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide a list of such situations with reasons).

4.6.5 Places of historical, cultural or spiritual significance shall be protected and managed in a way that recognises their special significance.

A. List of the aforementioned facilities in the certified entity as of January 1 in the audit year.

B. Does the management of the above-mentioned facilities take into account their special importance? Yes/No (evidence to be provided by certified body)

4.6.6. Forest management measures shall take into account socio-economic functions, especially the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests, inter alia by maintaining a diverse forest structure. However, such activities shall be conducted in a manner and to the extent that they do not adversely affect forest resources.

A. List of tourism, recreation and education infrastructure in the certified unit as of January 1 in the audit year and 3 years back.

B. Does the certified unit develop a diverse forest structure (vertical, horizontal, species, age, etc.)? Yes/No (evidence shall be provided by the certified entity).

4.6.7. Forest owners and managers, forest administration staff and forest contractors shall have the knowledge and be motivated to continuously improve their knowledge through
participation in training on sustainable forest management. This is a prerequisite for the proper planning and implementation of forest management activities described in this document.

A. When hiring employees and contracting forestry work, does the certified entity pay attention to the appropriate qualifications of those hired for the job? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this - its recruitment and forestry contracting procedures).

B. Does the certified entity periodically organize training on sustainable forest management and related issues to increase knowledge and competence of staff at all levels? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence of this).

4.6.8. Forest management activities shall also draw on the local experience and knowledge of forest owners, local communities and NGOs.

Note: These actions shall be in accordance with current legislation and, above all, with the principles of continuity and sustainability of the forest.

A. In the process of preparing the management plan (or its equivalent), have forest owners, local communities, local authorities and NGOs been given the opportunity to provide comments and proposals related to forest management? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide evidence thereof).

4.6.9. FMU shall provide for education, communication and consultation with local communities and other stakeholders on sustainable forest management. Mechanisms shall be in place to respond to complaints and to resolve forest management related disputes between forest managers and the local population. Special consideration shall be given to new opportunities for training and employment of local people.

A. Does the certified entity provide forestry education to the public? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide a summary of the number of people educated and list the forms of education over the past 3 years).

B. Does the certified entity allow interested parties to register complaints and requests relating to its forest management? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

C. Are there procedures in place in the certified body related to responding to the above-mentioned requests and complaints? Yes/No (the certified body provides such procedures).

4.6.10. Certified organisation shall determine:

a) the affected stakeholders that are relevant to the sustainable forest management;

b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders.

4.6.11. Forest operations shall be planned, organized and carried out in such a way that health risks and accident hazards are identified and all necessary measures can be taken to protect workers from risks related to their work. Workers shall be informed of the risks associated with their work and the possible preventive actions.

A. Is health and safety training provided in the certified entity? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).
B. Does the certified entity have procedures in place related to the occupational safety of persons permanently or periodically employed to work in the forest? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide such procedures).

4.6.12. Working conditions shall be safe and all persons carrying out forestry work have been trained in health and safety.

*Note*: Guidance on setting national standards for health and safety can be found in ILO Code of Good Practice and "Occupational health and safety manual for basic forest management work".

A. Do persons carrying out forestry work have health and safety training? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide information on this).

B. Do persons carrying out forestry work comply with the safety rules applicable to forestry work? Yes/No (evidence shall be provided by the certifying body).

C. Does the certified body carry out occupational risk assessment of workstations? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

D. Number of forest occupational accidents in the last 3 years before the year of the audit, by year, and the causes of the accidents (the certified body shall provide a list).

E. Is monitoring and prevention of occupational diseases carried out? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide a breakdown of the number of occupational diseases in the last 3 years prior to the audit year, by year).

4.6.13. Forest management shall comply with the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation.

A. Are there violations of labour law? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide a list of violations of labour law).

B. Are there instances of discrimination in employment and professional development? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide a list of instances of the aforementioned discrimination).


A. Are there any proceedings against the certified body for breach of this declaration? Yes/No (the certified body provides a list of these proceedings)

4.6.15. Forest management shall also be based on the results of scientific research.

A. Is forest management planning/implementation based on sectoral instructions/rules/codes into which the results of scientific research have been implemented? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).

4.6.16. Employees carrying out forestry work must have the necessary qualifications for their work. Requirements for logging and skidding work are given in Annex 2.

A. Does the certified body, at the stage of selection of contractors, verify the qualifications of persons who will carry out work in the following areas: coordination of work, harvesting and
skidding, application of plant protection products, etc.? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).

B. Does the certified body verify the qualifications of the persons carrying out forestry work at the stage of implementation? Yes/No (the certified body shall provide evidence of this).

4.6.17. The award of forestry contracts is organised as a transparent process based on clear criteria. Award conditions shall take into account ecologically, economically and socially sound logging techniques. Reasons are given for decisions taken.

4.6.18. Wages of employees performing forest management work in PEFC certified areas shall meet minimum legal and industry standards or, where applicable, collective bargaining agreements.

Note: Where wages do not meet the minimum wage standard, measures shall be taken to achieve wage increases relative to the minimum wage over time, in addition to increases due to inflation.

4.6.19. The certified organisation shall ensure equality of opportunity, non-discrimination and a safe working environment. Gender equality must be promoted.

A. Does the certified organisation systematically train its employees in the prevention of bullying, discrimination and harassment? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

B. Does the certified organisation provide a safe and confidential means of reporting discrimination, bullying and harassment and a system of response and support for those affected? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

C. Does the certified organization monitor employees’ feelings of safety in the context of the occurrence of discrimination, bullying and harassment and take corrective action on an ongoing basis? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

D. Does the certified organisation monitor the gender share of individual positions and the salaries of similar positions by gender? Are corrective actions taken in situations of significant discrepancies? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

E. Does the certified organisation take measures to promote gender equality and support existing employee initiatives in this regard? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).

4.6.20. The implementation of forest management shall allow for research activities and data collection necessary for improving sustainable forest management, or support dedicated research activities by other organisations.

A. Does the certified body cooperate with scientific centres for research? Yes/No (the certified body provides evidence of this).

B. Does the certified body declare the possibility to make forest area or data available for scientific research? (Yes/No)
4.7 Criterion 7: Compliance with legal requirements

4.7.1. Forest management must comply with local, national and international legislation, in particular on: forest management rules; protection of nature and the environment; ownership, tenure and use rights of land by local people; health and safety at work; payment of dues and taxes.

A. Does the certified entity have any final convictions for violations of the aforementioned law? Yes/No (the certified entity shall provide information on this within the last 3 years).

B. Does the certified entity meet its legal financial obligations in a timely manner? Yes/No (entity provides evidence of this).

4.7.2. The certified entity shall prevent theft of timber, poaching, illegal harvesting of timber and non-timber raw materials, illegal land use, arson and other illegal activities.

A. Does the certified entity have a unit dedicated to the prevention, detection and suppression of forest damage offences? Yes/No (the certified entity provides evidence of this).

B. Number of identified cases of forest damage in the last 3 years before the audit year, by year.
### Annex 1: Guidelines for interpretation of criteria for plantations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Interpretation for plantations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1. Forest management planning shall aim to maintain forest resources and enhance their quality in terms of the dominant forest functions.</td>
<td>In the case of plantations, requirements 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.5, 4.3.3, 4.4.1 and 4.6.6 cannot be applied to individual stands and shall be considered at a higher (regional) level in terms of the whole management/administrative unit, where fast-growing stands are complemented by buffer zones and set-aside areas with their environmental, ecological, cultural and social functions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2.1. Forest management planning shall aim at a forest structure that ensures the permanent preservation of its biological richness, regeneration potential, vitality, health and ability to perform all important protective, economic and social functions without detriment to other ecosystems as well as the restoration and management of degrading forest ecosystems, as far as this is possible within the framework of available forestry techniques and legislation.</td>
<td>In order to enhance landscape value and biodiversity, water and soil conservation rules, the size and distribution of buffer strips and protected set-aside areas shall be defined at the preparatory stage of plantation establishment. Decisions shall be taken on the basis of social, environmental and ecological assessments, and these shall be reviewed in subsequent production cycles.</td>
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<td>4.2.5. Forest management shall be based on maximizing the use of natural forest-forming processes and using preventive biological methods whenever economically feasible. Adequate genetic, species and structural diversity shall be achieved and maintained to enhance the stability, vitality and resilience of forests to adverse environmental factors and to strengthen natural regulatory mechanisms.</td>
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<td>4.3.3. Forest management plans (or their equivalents) shall take into account the different uses and functions of the forest area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4.1. Forest management planning shall aim to conserve, protect and enhance natural biodiversity at the genetic, species, ecosystem level. and landscape.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.6.6. Forest management measures shall take into account socio-economic functions, especially the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests, inter alia by maintaining a diverse forest structure. However, such activities shall be conducted in a manner and to an extent that does not adversely affect forest resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1.10. Conversion of forests shall not take place unless there are reasonable circumstances under which the conversion: [...]</td>
<td>The requirement on &quot;Conversion of forests&quot; means that plantations created by conversion after 31 December 2010 in circumstances other than &quot;justified&quot; do not meet this requirement and cannot be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.13. If conversion of severely degraded forests into forest plantations is considered, such conversion shall have added value from an economic, ecological, social and/or cultural perspective. A prerequisite for such added value is the circumstances under which the conversion:

Certified.

The interpretation of para. 4.1.10 in this Annex shall not apply to paragraph 4.1.13.

4.3.6. The level of utilisation of the forest wood and non-wood resources shall guarantee the long-term sustainable development of the area, and the harvested forest products shall be used in an optimal way, ensuring the renewability of the forest resources.

In the case of plantations, nutrient decline must be taken into account. This is of particular importance and shall be an important part of the planning and management stage of the production cycle.

4.4.2. Inventory, mapping and management of forest resources shall identify, protect, conserve or exclude ecologically important forest areas.

The requirement set out in 4.4.2 shall be addressed primarily at the stage of establishment of plantations. The areas referred to in the requirement shall form part of buffer strips and set-aside areas, which have specific environmental, ecological, cultural and social functions.

Note: This does not prohibit forest management activities that do not destroy the important ecological values of these biotopes.

In the case of reforestation and afforestation, native species and local ecotypes adapted to the habitat conditions of the site shall be selected. Only those alien species that are not legally sanctioned in Poland as threatening to native species and habitats may be introduced.

Requirements 4.4.5, 4.4.8, 4.4.9 and 4.4.13 are generally not applicable to plantations. They shall be considered primarily applicable to buffer zones and set-aside areas with specific environmental, ecological, cultural and social functions.

4.4.8. Forest management practices shall, where appropriate, promote the structural diversity of forests, e.g. mixed stands of different ages. Where appropriate, these practices shall also aim to maintain and restore landscape diversity.

4.4.9. Insofar as is reasonable and in accordance with applicable law, traditional management practices that have led to the formation of valuable ecosystems shall be supported in the relevant areas.

4.4.13. Dead wood, hollow trees and clumps of old trees and very rare native tree and shrub species shall be left to maintain biodiversity, taking into account potential impacts on the health of stands, the stability of surrounding ecosystems and the safety of people in heavily frequented areas.

In the case of reforestation and afforestation, native species and local ecotypes adapted to

The assessment of the impact of 'introduced alien species' shall be understood to be
the habitat conditions of the site shall be selected. Only those alien species that are not legally sanctioned in Poland as threatening to native species and habitats may be introduced.

particularly important for plantations. Such assessment shall be an important part of the planning and management phase of the production cycle.
Annex 2: Requirements for logging and skidding.

1. Possession of qualified personnel - trained saws and forestry machinery operators - confirmed by relevant certificates and attestations.

2. Complying with regulations on accident prevention, in particular:
   a) correct chain handling,
   b) wearing approved personal protective equipment (helmet with ear and eye protection, safety footwear, safety trousers, gloves),
   c) not allowing workers to work alone with a chain saw or winch,
   d) ensuring that there are no bystanders or animals in the danger zone,
   e) having first aid kits.

3. Ensuring that forestry machinery travels only on designated operating routes in planned composite felling and thinning operations where possible.

4. Preventing damage to remaining trees.

5. Possession of fully operational machinery and equipment.

6. Use of biodegradable oils (for chainsaws) and hydraulic fluids.

7. Having an emergency kit in case of an oil spill.

8. Compliance with health and safety regulations.
Annex 3: Individual forest certification

1. Context of the national standard and the organisations applying a PEFC endorsed standard

1.1 General

The requirements for sustainable forest management defined by national forest management standards shall:

a) require record-keeping that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the forest management standards;

b) specify “100% PEFC certified”, or another system specific claim, as claim to be used to communicate the origin of products in an area covered by the standard to customers with a PEFC chain of custody;

Note: System specific claims of PEFC endorsed standards and PEFC Council approved abbreviations of such claims and the claim “100% PEFC certified”, and their translations into languages other than English, are published online on the PEFC website www.pefc.org.

c) require that where owners/managers of forests are selling products from areas other than covered by the standard, only products from areas covered by the standard are sold with the claim “100% PEFC-certified” or a system specific claim;

d) require that claims on the origin of products in an area covered by the standard are only made by forest owners/managers covered by a PEFC recognised certificate issued against the standard;

e) specify requirements concerning the information which need to be provided to a PEFC chain of custody certified customer described in the standard PEFC ST 2002:2020 Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products – Requirements; according to the requirements of this standard, the organization shall provide the customer with documentation providing the following information for each delivery:

a. PEFC customer\(^1\) identification
b. the organisation’s name as the supplier of the material
c. product identification
d. quantity of product(s)
e. date of delivery / delivery period / accounting period
f. the applicable PEFC claim specifically for each claimed product covered by the documentation
g. the certificate number of the organisation’s PEFC recognised certificate.

1.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of affected stakeholders

The organisation shall determine:

a) the affected stakeholders that are relevant to the sustainable forest management;

b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders.

1.3 Determining the scope of the management system

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\(^1\) PEFC customer - Entity receiving from an organisation a PEFC claim for products, of which it obtains legal ownership and/or physical possession. (3.29, PEFC ST 2002:2020)
The organisation shall determine the boundaries and applicability of the management system to establish its scope.

2. **Leadership**

2.1 The organisation shall provide a commitment:

a) to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system;

b) to continuously improve the sustainable forest management system.

2.2 This commitment shall be publicly available.

2.3 Responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.

3. **Planning**

The organisation shall consider risks and opportunities concerning compliance with the requirements for sustainable forest management. Size and scale of the operations of the organisation shall be considered.

4. **Resources**

The organisation shall determine and provide the resources needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the sustainable forest management system.

5. **Internal audit**

5.1 Objectives

An internal audit programme at planned intervals shall provide information on whether the management system:

a) conforms to

- the organisation’s requirements for its management system;
- the requirements of the national sustainable forest management standard

b) is effectively implemented and maintained.

5.2 Organisation

The organisation shall:

a) plan, establish, implement and maintain an audit programme(s) including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting, which shall take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous audits;

b) define the audit criteria and scope for each audit;
c) select the auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;
d) ensure that the results of the audits are reported to relevant management;
e) retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.

5.3 Management review

5.3.1 An annual management review shall at least include
a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;
b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system;
c) information on the organisation’s performance, including trends in:
   - nonconformities and corrective actions;
   - monitoring and measurement results;
   - audit results;
d) opportunities for continual improvement

5.3.2 The outputs of the management review shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the management system.

5.3.3 The documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews shall be retained.

6. Improvement

6.1 Nonconformity and corrective action

6.1.1 When a nonconformity occurs, the organisation shall:
a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable:
   - take action to control and correct it;
   - deal with the consequences;
b) evaluate the need for action to eliminate the causes of the nonconformity, in order that it does not recur or occur elsewhere, by:
   - reviewing the nonconformity;
   - determining the causes of the nonconformity;
   - determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur;
c) implement any action needed;
d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;
e) make changes to the management system, if necessary.

6.1.2 Corrective actions shall be appropriate to the effects of the nonconformities encountered.

6.1.3 The organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of:
a) the nature of the nonconformities and any subsequent actions taken;
b) the results of any corrective action.

6.2 Continual improvement

The suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the sustainable forest management system and the sustainable management of the forest shall be continuously improved.
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