

PROJECT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONALISATION OF A PAFC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR THE CONGO BASIN



Sustainable forest management - Requirements

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Contents

1. Scope	6
2. Normative references.....	7
3. Terms and definitions.....	8
4. The organisation establishes, implements, maintains and improves a sustainable forest management system.	17
5. The organisation carries out its activities in compliance with the applicable national laws and regulations and ratified international conventions	19
6. The organisation conducts its forestry activities in a sustainable manner within the FMU.	21
7. The organisation conducts its activities in such a way as to minimise its impacts on biodiversity and on the protective functions of the forest.....	24
8. The organisation contributes to the improvement of the living conditions of affected local communities and indigenous peoples.....	28
9. The organisation shall ensure decent working and living conditions for workers and their beneficiaries.	30
10. Bibliography.....	32

Annex 1 – Directives relating to the sustainable forest management system

Annex 2 – PAFC Congo Basin operational guidelines

Annex 3 – Overview of the applicable legislation

Acronyms

AAC	Annual allowable cut
ATIBT	Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux
CBD	Convention on biological diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
DMA	Minimum exploitable diameter under sustainable management
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
EIFA	Ecologically important forest areas
EMP	Environmental management plan
ESIA	Environmental and Social impact assessment
EU	European union
FAO	Food and agriculture organisation of the United Nations
FMU	Forest management unit
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GMO	Genetically modified organism
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPM	Integrated pest management
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NTFP	Non timber forest product
SEIA	Socio-economic impact assessment
SEP	Stakeholder engagement plan
SFM	Sustainable forest management
SFMS	Sustainable forest management system
SMP	Social management plans
VPA	Voluntary partnership agreement
WHO	World Health Organization

Foreword

PEFC, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes, is an international organisation that promotes sustainable forest management through forest certification and the labelling of timber-based products. Products that are PEFC-certified or that bear the PEFC label provide a guarantee that the raw material used comes from sustainably managed forests as well as from recycled and controlled sources.

PEFC Council is based on a mechanism for the recognition of national and regional forest certification systems that meet the PEFC Council's requirements. These systems are subject to ongoing assessments.

International requirements for forest management (PEFC ST 1003:2018) were revised in 2018 through an open, transparent, consultative and consensus-based process involving a wide range of **stakeholders**.

This PAFC Congo Basin **standard** has been developed taking into account the conditions of the sub-region while adhering to PEFC requirements. Some requirements did not seem applicable in the Congo Basin, so the justification for their non-inclusion is also presented in this **standard** (annex 3).

Overall, the PAFC Congo Basin **standards** are structured around the following requirements:

- Sustainable forest management system requirements;
- Legality requirements;
- Requirements for the sustainable production of forest products and tree based products and services;
- Environmental and biodiversity requirements;
- Requirements regarding the living conditions of **local communities** and **indigenous peoples**;
- Requirements regarding the living and **working conditions** of workers and their beneficiaries.

More specific additional requirements are also presented in annexes 1 and 2.

Annex 3 presents the international requirements that haven't been incorporated into the PAFC standards for the Congo Basin.

1. Scope

This document contains the PAFC Congo Basin sustainable forest management system (SFMS) requirements for forest management activities in long-term sustainable forest titles. They cover all their forest and tree-based products and services.

This **standard** applies to those forest titles that are part of the State's permanent forest estate and consist of unplanted **natural forests**. One or more titles form a forest management unit (**FMU**) intended for production and conceded by the State to an operator for a fixed duration. Natural forest in this document is in line with the requirement of the definition of primary forest in the PEFC ST 1003:2024.

The **standard** requirements apply to **managers**, as well as contractors and other operators operating in Congo Basin countries with a national PAFC organisation. They cover all the necessary processes of a **management system** aimed at sustainable forest management.

The sustainable forest management **standards** set out in this document are intended to:

- maintain or enhance forests and their **ecosystem services** and to maintain or enhance the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of forest resources;
- maintain or enhance the health and vitality of forest ecosystems and to rehabilitate **degraded forest** ecosystems wherever possible, taking into account economic capabilities and making the best use of available structures and processes and using biological preventive measures;
- maintain the capacity of forests to produce a range of timber and **non-timber forest products** and services on a sustainable basis;
- maintain, preserve and enhance biodiversity at the **landscape**, ecosystem and species levels;
- maintain and enhance the **ecosystem services** of forests for society, such as their potential role in erosion control, flood prevention, water purification, climate regulation and carbon sequestration;
- respect all the socio-economic functions of forests, in particular by taking into account the formal and customary land rights of affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities** and by maintaining their livelihoods.

The set of requirements is further elaborated in sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 by the third-level numbered indicators: X.X.X.

Some of these requirements are complemented by normative guidelines in annex 1 for the **SFMS** and in annex 2 for operational requirements. A reference is made to each indicator.

Annex 3 provides guidance on the national legislative framework on which this **standard** is based. National interpretation guides are also provided for each country and provide additional guidance.

2. Normative references

This **standard** refers to a number of standard-setting texts. They are listed below.

ILO no. 87, Freedom of association and protection of the right to organise convention, 1948

ILO no. 29, Forced labour convention, 1930

ILO no. 98, Right to organise and collective bargaining convention, 1949

ILO no. 100, Equal remuneration convention, 1951

ILO no. 105, Abolition of forced labour convention, 1957

ILO no. 111, Discrimination (employment and occupation) convention, 1958

ILO no. 138, Minimum age convention, 1973

ILO no. 169, Indigenous and tribal peoples convention, 1989

ILO no. 182, Worst forms of child labour convention, 1999

United Nations, United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, 2007

United Nations, Universal declaration of human rights, 1948

Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants, 1998

ISO/IEC Guide 2 Standardisation and related activities — General vocabulary

ISO/TR 14069 - Greenhouse gases — Quantification and report on greenhouse gas emissions for organisations - Guidance on the application of ISO 14064-1

3. Terms and definitions

The terms and definitions in ISO/IEC Guide 2 apply to the purposes of this document, as well as the following definitions.

Afforestation	Establishment of forests through deliberate planting and/or seeding on lands formerly used for other purposes, involving the conversion of non-forest lands to forest lands (source: FAO 2018).
Agricultural plantation	Tree stands in agricultural production system, such as fruit tree plantations, oil palm plantation, olive orchards and agroforestry systems Note : Agricultural plantations are excluded from definition of “forest”
Agricultural use	Use of land for the purpose of agriculture, including for agricultural plantations, and includes livestock and set-aside agricultural areas
Appeal	A complaint about a decision that has been made.
Applicable national laws and regulations	All the legal and regulatory texts governing an organisation's activities. If the country has signed a Voluntary Partnership Agreement, the applicable national regulations are those defined by the VPA.
Beneficiary within the meaning of the standard (of workers)	Definition in accordance with the applicable national regulations. It includes - at least - the spouse(s) - companion(s) and their dependent children living in the same household as the worker declared to the company within the scope of the SFMS .
Certified area	Forest area covered by a sustainable management system in accordance with the PAFC sustainable forest management standard (NORM-001-2019).
Complaint	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction for which a response is expected.
Corruption	Illegal practices such as bribery, facilitated payments, extortion, collusion, offering or receiving gifts, loans, fees, rewards or other benefits as an incentive to do something dishonest, illegal or that represents a breach of trust. This may also include practices such as embezzlement, influence peddling, abuse of office, illicit enrichment, concealment and obstruction of justice.
Conflict	Dispute between two or more parties that may require arbitration.
Degraded forest	In the absence of a national definition, a damaged forest is a secondary forest that has lost - as a result of human activities - the structure, function, composition or productivity of species normally associated with a natural forest . As a result, a damaged forest offers a reduced supply of goods and services and offers limited biological diversity. (CBD definition) Source: https://www.cbd.int/forest/definitions.shtml
Ecologically important forest areas	Forest areas: a) Containing protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Containing significant concentrations of endemic species and habitats of threatened species, as defined in recognised reference lists; c) Containing endangered or protected in situ genetic resources, where known; d) Contributing to major landscapes of global, regional and national importance with a natural distribution and an abundance of natural species.
Ecologically important non-forest areas	<p>Non forest areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Containing protected, rare, sensitive or representative non-forest ecosystems; b) Containing significant concentrations of endemic species and habitats of threatened species, as defined in recognised reference lists; c) Containing endangered or protected genetic in situ resources; d) Contributing to globally, regionally and nationally significant large landscapes with natural and abundance of naturally occurring species.
Ecosystem services	<p>Ecosystem benefits. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provisioning services such as food, water, timber and fibre; - regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, waste and water quality; - cultural services that provide recreational, aesthetic and spiritual benefits; and - support services such as soil formation, photosynthesis and nutrient element cycling. <p>(based on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).</p>
Five-years management document	<p>A medium-term management document that defines the framework for the operation over an operational unit of more or less 5 years.</p> <p>The 5-year management document is based on the results of the monitoring of the exploitation of the previous years to refine and update the rules of the management plan (species exploited, felling diameters, silvicultural operations), while respecting at least the thresholds set in the management plan.</p>
Forest	<p>In the absence of a national definition, land occupying an area of over 0.5 hectares with trees reaching a height of over 5 metres and a canopy cover of over 10%, or with trees capable of reaching these thresholds in situ. Land for predominantly agricultural or urban use is excluded.</p>
Forest conversion to agricultural use	<p>Direct or indirect human-induced or not change of a forest to agricultural use</p> <p>Note: the regeneration by direct planting or seeding and/or human promotion of natural seed sources, from the same dominant species as those harvested or other species present in the historical mix of species is not considered a conversion to agricultural use.</p>

Forest conversion to other land use	Direct human-induced change of forest to non-forest and non agricultural uses
Forest degradation	<p>Structural changes to forest cover, taking the form of the conversion of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) natural forest or naturally regenerating forest into plantation forest or into other wooded land; or b) natural forest into planted forest <p>Note 1: Plantation forests established by converting primary forest or naturally or regenerating forests after 31 December 2010 are not eligible for certification.</p> <p>Note 2: Planted forests established by converting primary forest after 31 December 2010 are not eligible for certification</p> <p>Note 3: This requirement is not applicable for plantations forests established for protection or ecosystem restoration, as well as forests established through planting or seeding which at stand maturity resemble or will resemble to naturally regenerating forests.</p> <p>Note 4 : The national interpretation guide precise this aspect according to the law applicable in the country</p>
Forest management documents	<p>Forest management documents are all technical documents describing and planning forest management, including the official planning documents of the forest administration. They determine the objectives and limits of forest management and exploitation in a perspective of sustainability of activities beyond the duration of their concession and in order to limit their impacts.</p> <p>The terminology used in management documents varies according to the national legal and regulatory framework. They include planning documents at different time scales.</p> <p>These documents cover the entire forest resource of the appropriate geographical unit and describe the relevant management unit, taking into account other possible land uses.</p>
Forest management unit	One or several forest titles covering an area of natural forest belonging to the permanent forest estate of the State. The FMU is the basic division unit for forest management.
Plantation forest	<p>Planted forest that is intensively managed and meets, at planting and stand maturity, all the following criteria:</p> <p>One or two species, even age class, and regular spacing. It includes short rotation plantations for wood fibre and energy, and excludes forest planted for protection or ecosystem restoration, as well as forests established through planting or seeding which at stand maturity resemble or will resemble naturally regenerating forests.</p> <p>Note : in case of absence of national definition, interpretation guide should precise this aspect.</p>
Free, Prior and Informed Consent	In the absence of a national definition, consent obtained in a free and informed manner and prior to the activities through a permanent relationship of discussion, based on mutual trust, subject to revision and

FPIC	renegotiation, and whose validity is based on the mutual satisfaction of the parties. (inspired by Lewis J. et al, 2008)
Genetically modified trees	<p>In the absence of a national definition: trees whose genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by coupling and/or natural recombination.</p> <p>Note 1: the following techniques are considered as genetic modifications resulting in genetically modified trees (EU Directive 2001/18/EC):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid techniques involving the formation of new combinations of genetic material via the insertion of nucleic acid molecules produced by any means available outside an organism, into any virus, bacterial plasmid or other vector system and incorporating them into a host organism in which they do not occur naturally, but in which they are capable of continuous propagation; 2) Techniques involving the direct introduction into an organism of hereditary material prepared outside the organism, including micro-injection, macro-injection and micro-encapsulation; 3) Cell fusion (including protoplast fusion) or hybridisation techniques in which living cells with new combinations of hereditary genetic material are formed through the fusion of two or more cells using methods that do not occur naturally. <p>Note 2: The following techniques are not considered to be genetic modifications resulting in genetically modified trees (EU Directive 2001/18/EC):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. in vitro fertilisation; 2. natural processes such as: conjugation, transduction, transformation; 3. polyploidy induction.
Geolocation	Geographical location of a plot of land described by means of latitude and longitude coordinates corresponding to at least one latitude and one longitude point and using at least six decimal digits; for plots of more than 4 ha used for the production of forest and tree-based products, this shall be provided using polygons with sufficient latitude and longitude points to describe the perimeter of each plot of land
Grievance	Request
ILO core conventions	Eight conventions (ILO 29, 87, 98, 100, 105, 111, 138 and 182) identified by the ILO Governing Body as "fundamental" in terms of principles and rights at work: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
Indigenous peoples	<p>In the absence of a national definition: persons and groups of persons who can be identified or characterised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key characteristic or criterion is self-identification as an indigenous population at the individual level and acceptance by the community and its members.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-pioneer societies • Close ties with surrounding territories and natural resources • Distinct social, economic and political systems • Distinct language, culture and beliefs • The formation of non-dominant groups within society • A willingness to preserve and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as specific populations and communities.
Integrated Pest Management (IPM)	Careful consideration of all available pest management techniques and the subsequent integration of appropriate measures that discourage the development of pest populations and maintain pesticides and other interventions at economically justified levels while reducing or minimising risks to both human health and the environment (source: FAO 2018).
Landscape	A socio-ecological system consisting of a mosaic of natural and/or human-modified ecosystems having a characteristic pattern of topography, vegetation, land use and human settlements influenced by the region's ecological, historical, economic and cultural processes and activities (source: Scherr et al. 2013).
Living base	Forest camp set up to accommodate workers and, where applicable, their beneficiaries in the medium or long term.
Local community	In the absence of a national definition: communities of all sizes, located in or adjacent to the FMU , affected by the organisation's management activities within the FMU .
Logging operation	All activities and means necessary for the felling of trees in the strict sense of the term: felling, skidding, construction and maintenance of road infrastructures (roads, tracks, log parks, engineering structures) and timber transport.
Managed species	Species for which a minimum harvesting diameter (DMA - <i>Diamètre Minimum d'exploitabilité sous Aménagement</i>) has been defined in order to meet legal and regulatory requirements at a minimum.
Management plan	<p>Long-term forest management document based on multi-resource inventories aimed at sustainable forest production and which takes into account local issues (economic, social and environmental) and other possible land uses.</p> <p>The management plan describes, within a FMU, the long-term sustainable management objectives, as well as the various management allocations (management series), and it determines and justifies the annual harvesting potential of the managed species or groups of species in order not to compromise the sustainability of the production beyond the period it covers.</p> <p>To ensure the sustainability of production, the management plan sets the duration of a rotation (the time between two phases of exploitation in the same area) and a minimum diameter, for each species, below which</p>

	<p>exploitation is not possible. These parameters are determined on the basis of inventory data and the specific recovery rates for each species.</p> <p>It defines the sequential order and any species that are prohibited from harvesting.</p>
Management series	Spatial division of the FMU defining zones with different vocations. Three main types of series can be distinguished: series dedicated to forest exploitation (production vocation), to the protection of ecosystems (conservation vocation) and to the activities and needs of populations (development vocation).
Management system	<p>A set of interdependent or interacting elements of an organisation that aim to establish policies, goals and processes to achieve its objectives.</p> <p>Within the framework of PEFC and PAFC Congo Basin, it is a sustainable forest management system (SFMS).</p>
Manager	A person who heads and controls an organisation.
Natural forest	<p>In the context of this standard, the natural forests are tropical, non-planted forests with intrinsic diversity in terms of horizontal and vertical structures, biodiversity, and genetic variability at the scale of the whole ecosystem. Natural forest are naturally regenerating forest of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities, and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed</p> <p>Note : the definition of "primary forest" as per PEFC ST1003:2024 is calibrated as "natural forest" for the Congo Basin Region</p>
Natural regenerative forest	<p>Forest predominantly composed of trees established through natural regeneration; it includes any of following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Forests for which it is not possible to distinguish whether planted or naturally regenerated b) Forests with a mix of naturally regenerated native tree species and planted or seeded trees, and where the naturally regenerated trees are expected to constitute the major part of the growing stock at stand maturity; c) Coppice from trees originally established through natural regeneration. d) Naturally regenerated trees of introduced species <p>Note : The national interpretation guide will precise this aspect according to the law applicable in the country</p>
Non-forest ecosystem	Land that does not meet the definition of a forest.
Non-timber forest products	Non-timber forest products of biological origin other than wood, derived from forest.
Non-timber products from TOF areas	Non-timber products from TOF areas - Products consisting of goods of biological origin other than wood, derived from trees

Normative document	<p>A normative document provides rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their outcomes.</p> <p>In the case of the Congo Basin PAFC certification scheme, there are 2 normative documents: the forest management standard and the chain of custody standard.</p> <p>Technical specifications, codes of practice and regulations may complement these 2 basic documents.</p>
Operational plan	<p>Annual management document dedicated to the exploitation of a sub-part of the five-year management unit. Elaborated based on a systematic forest resources inventory within the limits of the annual allowable cut, the operational plan adjusts on a yearly basis the interventions according to the data collected on the ground. It presents the volume that is actually harvestable per species as well as the projected route of the road network and the projected locations of engineering structures.</p>
Organisation	<p>A person or group of persons having its own functions, responsibilities, powers and relationships required to achieve its objectives.</p> <p>Note 1: an organisation applying for PAFC certification is responsible for compliance with PAFC sustainable forest management requirements and may hold responsibility for more than one forest management unit.</p> <p>Note 2: a manager may take on the role of an organisation.</p>
Other wooded land	<p>Land not classified as forest spanning more than 0,5 hectares, with trees higher than five metres and a canopy cover of 5% to 10%, or trees able to reach those thresholds in situ, or with a combined cover of shrubs, bushes, and trees above 10%, excluding land that is predominantly under agricultural use or urban land use.</p> <p>Note: The national interpretation guide will precise this aspect according to the law applicable in the country</p>
Peatlands	<p>In the absence of a national peatland definition: a wetland ecosystem with a natural accumulation of peat layers on the surface (soft, porous or compressed sedimentary deposit of plant origin, with a high-water content in its natural state). In peatlands, the production rate of organic materials is higher than their decomposition rate, which leads to a natural accumulation of peat.</p>
Planning documents	<p>Documented information guiding harvesting activities that seek to comply with sustainable forest management. It includes forest management documents.</p>
Planted forest	<p>Forest predominantly composed of trees established through planting and/or deliberate seeding, provided that the planted or seeded trees are expected to constitute more than 50% of the growing stock at maturity; it includes coppice from trees that were originally planted or seeded.</p> <p>Note: Application of the definition requires consideration of national forestry terminology and legal requirements.</p> <p>Only native species can be use.</p>

Reforestation	The restoration of a forest through deliberate planting and/or seeding on forest lands (source: FAO 2018).
Stakeholder	<p>A stakeholder is an individual, group, community or organisation with an interest in the purpose of standards. In the context of PAFC Congo Basin, it is an interest in sustainable forest management within the Congo Basin.</p> <p>Affected stakeholders are those whose living or working conditions could be directly changed as a result of the implementation of the standards, and stakeholders who use the standards, i.e. who are subject to the standards' requirements.</p> <p>Key affected stakeholders in the context of the Congo Basin include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations applying for certification or that are already certified. • indigenous peoples and local communities bordering the FMU. • workers and their beneficiaries. • any other stakeholders whose living and/or working conditions are directly impacted by the implementation of this standard. <p>Stakeholders that are not affected but that have a link with the organisation are considered involved stakeholders.</p>
Standard	<p>A standard is a document that is established by consensus and approved by a recognised body, which provides - for common and repeated use - rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their outcomes, while ensuring an optimal level of order in a given context.</p> <p>Within the framework of PAFC Congo Basin, the consolidated results of science, technology and experience will be taken into account in order to promote maximum benefits (ISO/IEC Guide 2).</p>
Standards body	<p>A standards body has recognised standardisation activities (ISO Guide 2).</p> <p>Under PAFC Congo Basin, it is the body responsible for developing and maintaining standards for the forest certification scheme.</p> <p>PEFC provides that the standards body can be a PEFC National Organisation. It can also be separate from the governance of the forest certification scheme. It was decided - within the framework of PAFC Congo Basin - that ATIBT would be the standards body.</p>
Subcontracted workers	Salaried employees of a company subcontracted by the organisation and its pieceworkers.
Temporary forest camps	Temporary forest camps established to accommodate, for a short period of time, workers only, for the performance of a specific task. Inventory camps fall into this category.
Traditional knowledge and techniques (source: CBD)	In the absence of a national definition, the definition is as follows: in the context of access and benefit sharing, traditional knowledge refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities in relation to genetic resources. This traditional knowledge is the result of

	centuries of experience obtained by populations and adapted to local needs, cultures and environments, and passed on over generations.
Working conditions	Working conditions include remuneration, working hours, time worked, holidays, minimum age, travel and transport, contractual arrangements, etc.

4. The organisation establishes, implements, maintains and improves a sustainable forest management system.

Note: specific requirements for the **SFMS** are specified in annex 1.

4.1. The organisation establishes and implements a SFMS sustainable forest management system

4.1.1 The organisation must identify and justify the boundaries and applicability of its **management system** for establishing the scope of its **SFMS**, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.1.2 The organisation must make public its commitment to comply with the PAFC sustainable forest management **standard** and other applicable requirements of the certification system, in particular the ongoing improvement of its **sustainable forest management system** and respect for human rights as set out in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

4.1.3 The organisation must assess the risks and opportunities of complying with the requirements of this **standard** and propose measures to mitigate the identified risks.

4.1.4 Responsibilities for implementing the requirements of the sustainable management **standard** must be clearly defined and assigned within the organisation.

4.1.5 The organisation must identify and provide the material, human and budgetary resources required to establish, implement, maintain and continually improve the **sustainable forest management system**.

4.1.6 The organisation must establish and adhere to a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) that is adapted to the size and activities of the company, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.1.7 The organisation must establish and adhere to a communication plan that is adapted to the size and activities of the company, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.1.8 The organisation must implement **grievance, complaint** and **conflict** management processes developed with the **stakeholders**, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.1.9 The organisation must implement a documentation **management system** appropriate to its **SFMS** and in line with the scale, intensity and risk of its activities, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.1.10 The organisation must develop a procedures manual containing all the procedures referred to in this **standard** and any other procedures it deems relevant to meet these requirements.

4.2. The organisation shall plan its actions on a five-year and annual basis, adapted to its challenges, its objectives and its resources.

4.2.1 The organisation must establish and implement a concrete environmental action programme, consisting of a five-year programme and an annual programme, adapted to its issues, objectives and means, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.2.2 The organisation must establish and implement a concrete external social action programme, consisting of a five-year programme and an annual programme, adapted to its issues, objectives and means, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.2.3 The organisation must establish and implement a concrete internal social action programme, consisting of a five-year programme and an annual programme, adapted to its issues, objectives and means, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.3. The organisation establishes and implements an ongoing improvement system based on the monitoring of its SFMS and an internal audit programme.

4.3.1 The organisation must establish and implement a mechanism for the internal monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation of the **sustainable forest management system** that is adapted to the scale, intensity and risks of the activities, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.3.2 The organisation must plan, establish, implement and maintain an internal audit programme that is adapted to its **SFMS**, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.3.3 The organisation must conduct at least one management review annually, leading to decisions on opportunities for ongoing improvement and the need to modify the **management system**, as appropriate, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

4.3.4 In the case of nonconformities resulting from an internal audit or a certification audit, the organisation must implement appropriate corrective actions, review the effectiveness of any corrective actions taken and make changes to the **management system**, if necessary, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 1.

5. The organisation carries out its activities in compliance with the applicable national laws and regulations and ratified international conventions

5.1. Applicable national laws and regulations and ratified international conventions and those required by the PEFC Council are identified and known.

5.1.1 The main texts of the applicable national regulations¹ as well as the international conventions ratified by the country and those required by the PEFC Council, relating to the organisation's activities must be available on the organisation's main sites, and maintained up to date via a regulatory watch procedure.

5.1.2 The applicability of the legal and regulatory requirements must be analysed and translated into operational terms for the organization's activities. The translation of the requirements is disseminated to the **managers**, according to their area of competence for their implementation.

5.1.3 The organisation must identify and document the land ownership situation within the **FMU**, taking into account possible titles of ownership as well as the customary rights of **indigenous peoples** and **local communities** within the **FMU** recognised by **applicable national laws and regulations**.

5.1.4 Mechanisms must be implemented to inform workers and/or **subcontracted workers** of the legal and regulatory obligations related to the activities they carry out for the organisation.

5.1.5 Anti-corruption measures must be defined and implemented by the organisation. These measures must be appropriate to the risk of **corruption** and comply with **applicable national laws and regulations** where they exist.

5.2. The Organisation carries out its activities in compliance with applicable national laws and regulations.

5.2.1 The organisation must have - in appropriate places - all necessary documented proof of its legal existence, its right to operate, as well as its authorisations, approvals and registrations with the competent administrations, including for its transport and trade and custom activities.

5.2.2 The organisation must have - in appropriate places - all necessary documented proof of compliance with its environmental obligations in accordance with **applicable national laws and regulations**.

5.2.3 The organisation must have - in appropriate places - all necessary documented proof of compliance with its employer obligations to all its workers and **subcontracted workers** in accordance with **applicable national laws and regulations**.

5.2.4 The organisation must have - in appropriate places - all necessary documented proof of compliance with its obligations to **indigenous peoples** and **local communities** in accordance with **applicable national laws and regulations**.

¹For a country which has signed a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the European Union and the producing country, the "legislation applicable to forest management" is defined by the VPA agreement. These texts are presented in the national interpretation guides that are made available alongside the PAFC Congo Basin certification scheme.



5.2.5 Taxes, fees and charges, including fines, must be paid in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and in a timely manner. Proof of payment and/or moratoria must be documented where appropriate.

6. The organisation conducts its forestry activities in a sustainable manner within the FMU.

6.1. Logging operations are planned in a sustainable manner in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

6.1.1 Management documents (**management plans, five-year management documents and operational plans**) must be prepared in accordance with legal and regulatory provisions and validated by the competent authorities.

6.1.2 If the applicable national legislation and regulations allow it and if the organisation makes or contributes to a commercial use of **NTFPs** (including fishing and hunting products), the organisation shall establish and adhere to provisions regarding their harvest, ensuring the long-term maintenance of production, established in consultation with affected **indigenous peoples and local communities**.

6.1.3 The organisation must ensure that its forest management maintains or increase a harvestable volume of lumber and a species distribution that will sustain economic activity beyond the rotation in accordance with the **management plan**.

6.1.4 A public summary of the long-term management document including objectives, forest management principles and outlining the major management measures planned must be developed. Confidential information (which is commercial, personal or legally confidential in nature, or aimed at the protection of sensitive cultural sites or natural sites) may be excluded from this summary.

6.1.5 In the event of a revision of the long-term management document, it must be made in accordance with the legal and regulatory provisions and validated by the competent authorities. Changes must be clearly identified, justified and documented, in particular changes in the **series** boundaries, changes in the cutting sequence and changes in the minimum diameter cutting limits. Where appropriate, the revision shall take into account the results of research and/or the results of experimental systems implemented within the **FMU**.

6.2. The organisation shall set up a system to track the geographical origin of its timber from the forest to the point of sale or processing and to identify certified products.

6.2.1 A procedure must describe all the provisions enabling the organisation to know and control the geographical origin of the timber from an initial point in the forest to a final destination (a point of sale and/or processing).

6.2.2 All legal and regulatory PAFC obligations and specific provisions described in the procedure regarding the marking of timber from the forest must be followed.

6.2.3 All official documents (arising from legal and regulatory provisions) and internal documents specific to the control of the traceability of timber must be kept up to date and be available.

6.2.4 The Organisation that holds a sustainable forest management certificate must indicate the claim "100% PEFC certified" or "100% PAFC certified" (designation specific to the PAFC system used) to communicate the origin of the products to clients having a PEFC or PAFC chain of custody on the sales invoice or other document pertaining to the products' transfer/transport. Only products from **FMUs** included in the scope of the organisation's PAFC-certified **SFMS** can be sold with the claim "100% PEFC certified" or "100% PAFC certified".

6.2.5 The Organisation must provide to its clients whose chain of custody is PEFC or PAFC certified with the following information (at minimum) on the sales invoice or other product transfer/transport document:

- a) the name of the organisation,
- b) the identification of the product(s),
- c) the quantity delivered for each product covered by the documentation,
- d) the date of invoicing (in the case of sale to a third party) or the date of transfer to a processing site (in the case of a transfer within the same organisation)
- e) the official declaration on the category of material (100% PEFC certified or 100% PAFC certified) specifically for each product bearing the PEFC or PAFC claim covered by the document,
- f) the number of the forest management certificate, or other document attesting to the certified status of the organisation.

6.2.6 The organisation shall maintain an inventory of geolocation data related to the certified area where forest product and tree-based products are harvested.

Note: Geolocation data may be limited to the organization's active operational sites

Note: this applies to the annual operating area

6.3. Note: the geolocation data can be limited to active operational sites of the organisation. The logging activities ensure of the sustainable production of the forest products that are harvested.

6.3.1 The provisions of the management documents relating to the production **series** enabling the long-term preservation of exploitable forest resources must be complied with, in particular the list of **managed species**, minimum diameter cutting limits and the cutting sequence.

6.3.2 The organisation must optimise the use of the products it harvests within the limits set in the management documents (**Management Plan** and **Operational Plan** in particular).

6.3.3 In the event of a proven lack of natural regeneration or a very low rate of the harvested species' reconstitution, as a precautionary and preventive principle, additional measures must be prescribed and implemented for the relevant species, such as rehabilitation.

Note: This is a requirement of means, not of performance.

6.3.4 Specific measures must be prescribed and implemented to minimise damage to the tree population so as not to negatively affect the **FMU's** production capacity.

6.3.5 The construction of roads, logyards and engineering structures (bridges) must adhere to the planned route, while taking into account any applicable legal and regulatory provisions. Any major modification must be justified.

6.3.6 The organisation must demonstrate adequate road construction progress to ensure the proper evacuation of harvested products under acceptable technical and economic conditions.

6.3.7 The organisation must demonstrate that it seeks to improve its economic performance by taking into account the potential for new markets and new economic activities in relation to all relevant forest goods and services.



6.3.8 The organisation must contribute to the research and data gathering activities that are necessary for sustainable forest management or to support relevant research activities carried out by other organisations, where appropriate.

7. The organisation conducts its activities in such a way as to minimise its impacts on biodiversity and on the protective functions of the forest.

7.1. Logging operations take into account the forest's protective functions and biodiversity.

7.1.1 The organization's forest management and harvesting practices shall contribute to the maintenance, conservation or enhancement of the natural character of **FMU's** forests² and the existing biodiversity on **landscape**, ecosystem, species and genetics levels³.

Note : Human-induced degradation shall not occur.

7.1.2 In order to preserve the biodiversity present in the **FMU**, **ecologically important forest areas** must be identified, described and mapped, at least at the scale of the **FMU** and according to the intensity of harvesting. Appropriate measures to maintain the criteria for which they have been identified must be prescribed, adhered to and evaluated, in particular measures to maintain or enhance the natural connectivity of **ecologically important forest areas** with other important areas within and surrounding the **FMU**.

7.1.3 Forest areas with significant soil and water protection functions must be identified, described and mapped, at least at the scale of the five-year management unit and according to the intensity of harvesting. Specific and appropriate measures to maintain or enhance the **ecosystem services** associated with these areas must be prescribed, adhered to and evaluated.

7.1.4 The planning and implementation of infrastructure must be carried out in such a way as to minimise damage to ecosystems, especially to rare, sensitive or representative ecosystems and genetic reserves², and to take threatened or other key species – in particular their migration patterns – into consideration.

7.1.5 The requirements of **forest management documents** in the **series** dedicated to the preservation of biodiversity and/or **ecosystem services** must be complied with.

7.1.6 Specific measures must be established and implemented in order to minimise damage to soil and watercourses within the **FMU**, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 2.

7.1.7 In the event that animal pressure hinders the regeneration and growth of forests and biodiversity in the **FMU**, the organization will put in place measures to limit this pressure, in accordance with the **management plan**.

7.1.8 Species protected by national laws and regulations, species prohibited by **forest management documents** and species considered critically endangered of extinction on the "red list" of the IUCN⁴ (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) must be excluded from harvesting. Species listed in the CITES annexes must be harvested in compliance with the specific associated rules. In the event that the organisation harvests a species that is not protected but is considered rare, threatened or endangered, it must justify and implement measures to avoid aggravating the situation.

² This includes the diversity of vegetation structures, the presence of old wood, dead or decaying wood

³ To the extent that current scientific knowledge of the genetic diversity of the tropical forests of the Congo Basin allows, which remains partial given the very great diversity of this ecosystem

⁴ The IUCN's CR category

7.1.9 When planting trees, the organisation must comply with the national laws that are in effect and favour local species that are adapted to the conditions of the site. If introduced species, provenances or varieties are used, only those whose impacts on the ecosystem and genetic integrity⁵ of the forest have been scientifically assessed may be used, if these negative impacts can be avoided or minimised. IMP and any silviculture actions on these areas must minimize the use of pesticides by all possible means.

7.1.10 When planting trees, the organisation must not use GMOs.

7.1.11 To the extent that the connectivity of forest ecosystems within a **FMU** is degraded, **afforestation** or **reforestation** measures should be promoted by the organization.

7.1.12 The organisation must establish a system to monitor scientific knowledge on tropical forests in terms of best practices in forest management and their impacts on biodiversity, on **ecosystem services**, and on the capacity of tropical forests to store and isolate carbon.

7.2. The organisation implements specific measures to reduce the direct and indirect impacts of its activities on the environment.

7.2.1 EIAs (Environmental Impact Assessments) produced in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements, together with **management plans**, and submitted to the administration for validation, and Environmental Management Plans, present a set of implemented measures to mitigate, prevent and compensate for impacts.

7.2.2 Activities with a particularly significant impact must be identified and subjected to an in situ operational assessment of their impacts. The organisation is to apply mitigating, preventive or compensation measures appropriate to the scale, the intensity and the risk.

7.2.3 The organisation must establish and adhere to a policy on the use of chemicals, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 2.

7.2.4 The organisation shall establish a system for the gathering, treatment and disposal of waste generated within the scope of its **SFMS**, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 2.

7.2.5 Chemicals and other products hazardous to the environment and health must be handled by trained personnel wearing appropriate safety gear. The instructions of the manufacturers and/or those of national or international bodies recognised in the prevention of environmental, health and occupational hazards must be followed.

7.2.6 Preventive and corrective measures to limit accidental spills and the risk of pollution from oils, hydrocarbons and other chemicals must be established and implemented. An emergency procedure for accidental spills is available and implemented.

7.2.7 The organisation must develop and implement a wildlife and hunting management plan aimed at reducing the direct and indirect impacts of the organisation's activities on the animal populations

⁵ To the extent that current scientific knowledge of the genetic diversity of the tropical forests of the Congo Basin allows, which remains partial given the very great diversity of this ecosystem

present in the **FMU**, in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations, and according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 2.

7.2.8 The provisions regarding hunting and transport of game and protected species must be known and complied with, within the scope of the **SFMS**, by workers and their beneficiaries and **subcontracted workers**.

7.2.9 The organisation must ensure an adequate supply of alternative proteins to bushmeat for workers and their beneficiaries and **subcontracted workers**, with a view towards minimising pressure on wildlife.

7.2.10 The organisation must monitor its **FMU**, and both document and map illegal activities observed within the **FMU** and inform the relevant authorities.

7.2.11 The organisation must participate in the protection of its **FMU** against illegal activities.

7.2.12 Where permitted by national laws and regulations, the use of fire shall be restricted to areas where it is an essential forest management tool for regeneration, wildfire protection, habitat management or a recognised practice of **local communities** and **indigenous peoples**. In these cases, and when organised by the organisation, management and control measures must be implemented, in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements, in particular to preserve **ecologically important forest areas**.

7.2.13 If the **applicable national laws and regulations** allows it and the organization contributes to the development of the recreational functions of forests, public access to forests should be organized taking into account the effects on the ecosystem and resources, as well as safety rules and respect for existing uses.

7.3. The organisation minimises negative impacts on forest carbon stocks and GHG emissions in order to maintain the capacity of forests to store and isolate carbon over the medium to long term.

7.3.1 The organisation must perform a GHG emissions audit of all its activities included in the scope of the **SFMS** and identify and implement appropriate measures to mitigate its GHG emissions, according to the relevant guidelines listed in annex 2.

7.3.2 The organisation must produce mapping of the **FMU**'s estimated carbon stocks that includes - at a minimum - the aerial carbon stocks, and it must identify the significantly high carbon stocks. The guidelines for this mapping are provided in annex 2.

7.3.3 The forest's ability to store and isolate carbon in the medium to long term must be safeguarded by balancing harvest rates with growth, using appropriate management measures and reduced impact logging measures.

7.3.4 The organisation must make optimal use of its resources within the scope of its **SFMS** to reduce GHG emissions.

7.3.5 The organisation must identify and produce a map of the **peatland** areas present in the **FMU** and implement the measures necessary to minimise the impact of **logging**.

7.3.6 In the event of a **forest conversion to other land use** within the **FMU**, it must be justified and:

- Complies with national land use and forest management policies and regulations and comply with the **management plan**;
- does not destroy forests with a significantly high carbon stock;
- cannot exceed 5% of the production **series** area;
- Cannot be located in conservation **series**.
- Does not have negative impact on EIFA, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas
- Contributes to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits
- Includes consultation with **affected stakeholders**.

7.3.7 Forest conversion for agricultural use shall not occur

7.3.8 In the case of **forest plantations** established on **non-forest ecosystems**, they must not result in the destruction of areas with significantly high carbon stocks, in particular **peatlands**, and must not be established on more than 5% of the **non-forest ecosystems** considered ecologically important within the **FMU**. Such plantations must:

- Comply with national land use and forest management policies and legislation and regulations and comply with the **management plan**;
- Have been subject to a participatory and transparent decision-making process with **stakeholders affected** by the conversion;
- Have no negative impact on threatened (vulnerable, rare, endangered) **non-forest ecosystems**, areas of important social and cultural interest, significant habitats of threatened species or other protected areas;
- Contribute to the preservation of economic and social benefits over the long term.

Note: **forest plantations** are not eligible for certification.

7.3.9 The conversion of proven non-regenerable forests into forest plantations by the organisation can only take place if the conversion:

- Complies with national land use and forest management policies, laws and regulations and adheres to the forest **management plan**;
- Has been subject to a participatory and transparent decision-making process with **stakeholders affected** by the conversion;
- Has a positive impact on the forest's ability to store carbon over the long term;
- Has no negative impacts on ecologically, culturally or socially important forest areas and/or other protected areas;
- Preserves these forests' protective functions, including **ecosystem services**;
- Preserves these forests' socio-economic functions, including recreational functions, aesthetic values and other cultural services;
- Enhances the economic, ecological, social and/or cultural values of the relevant area.

Plantations resulting from the conversion of damaged forests, whose state of damage is the result of deliberately poor management, for the purpose of conversion, are not eligible for certification.

8. The organisation contributes to the improvement of the living conditions of affected local communities and indigenous peoples.

8.1. The forest's management respects the economic and cultural uses and sites that are important to the affected indigenous peoples and local communities.

8.1.1 The organisation must identify the indigenous peoples and **local communities** affected within their **FMU** and their needs and expectations in relation to the **FMU**'s management.

8.1.2 Areas of interest for meeting the basic needs of affected **local communities** and **indigenous peoples** should be identified and mapped in a participatory manner.

8.1.3 The provisions of the **forest management documents** relating to the exercise of usage rights and/or the **series** dedicated to the activities of **indigenous peoples** and **local communities** must be complied with.

8.1.4 The organisation must develop a procedure and implement an ongoing **FPIC** process to ensure that it conducts the full activities for which it is responsible (related operations and works, road openings, installations of **living bases** and industrial sites, etc.) in accordance with the customary rights of the affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**, including those defined in legal and regulatory texts, in **ILO** convention 169 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This procedure can include a collective compensatory system.

Note: Guidelines for the implementation of **FPIC** are detailed in annex 2.

8.1.5 The main provisions set out in the long-term forest management document and the environmental and social impact assessment must be communicated in an appropriate manner to the affected **local communities** and **indigenous peoples**.

8.1.6 Places of historical, cultural or religious significance to be protected from the organisation's activities must be identified, mapped and materialised, with the consent of the impacted **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**, prior to any activities.

8.1.7 Trees whose harvest would compete with the use made by **indigenous peoples** and **local communities** for a product other than lumber must be identified, mapped and materialised at the appropriate scale in cooperation with them, and prior to any harvesting activity. They may only be harvested with the consent of the affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities** prior to harvesting.

8.1.8 The organisation must develop and implement a procedure for the inadvertent discovery of a historical, cultural or religious site or asset within the **FMU**, in order to ensure its protection from the organisation's activities.

8.1.9 Traditional management practices that create valuable ecosystems on appropriate sites should be supported where appropriate.

8.2. The organisation shall establish and comply with specific measures for the improvement of the economic and social well-being of the affected indigenous peoples and local communities.

8.2.1 The SEIAs (socio-economic impact assessment - *études d'impact socio-économique*) and the SMPs (social management plans - *plans de gestion sociale*) produced in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements, together with the **management plans**, are available and present a set of measures to mitigate, prevent or compensate for impacts on the affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**.

8.2.2 At a minimum, the organisation must contribute to local development in accordance with the applicable legal and regulatory provisions and according to its formal internal support policy in this area. Within this framework, it must inform **indigenous peoples** and local populations and, where appropriate, support local development initiatives and/or income-generating micro-projects in cooperation with them.

8.2.3 Depending on the needs of the organisation, a system that provides priority hiring (all skill being considered equal) or training for affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities** must be established by the organisation.

8.2.4 If the organisation uses **traditional knowledge and techniques** or innovations, it must be subject to the free, prior and informed consent of the affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**. An equitable sharing of the profits arising from such use shall be established in consultation with the involved parties, in accordance with best international practices.

9. The organisation shall ensure decent working and living conditions for workers and their beneficiaries.

9.1. The working conditions of workers and subcontracted workers comply with the applicable laws and regulations and the requirements of the ILO's basic conventions.

9.1.1 The organisation must comply with legal and regulatory recruitment requirements.

9.1.2 The organisation must - at the very least - comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including those of collective agreements where applicable and the ILO's fundamental conventions on **working conditions** including minimum wage requirements.

Note: All the requirements of paragraph 9.3 contribute to ensuring decent living conditions for the organization's workers and subcontractors, complementing this requirement.

9.1.3 The organisation must develop and implement systems favouring equal opportunity, non-discrimination and anti-harassment in the workplace.

9.1.4 Gender equality in recruitment and **working conditions** (all skills being held equal) must be promoted.

9.1.5 Workers must be free to organise themselves and negotiate with management, in particular:

- through employee delegates, elected in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements;
- and through trade union organisations (ILO Conventions 87 and 98).

9.1.6 A multi-stakeholder Occupational Health and Safety Committee must be established and must function in accordance with the terms and conditions provided for by applicable laws and regulations.

9.1.7 A system must exist within the organisation to ensure that the employment conditions of **subcontracted workers** comply with applicable laws and regulations and the requirements of the ILO's fundamental conventions. Consequences must be provided in the event of non-compliance.

9.1.8 The organisation must establish and implement a training plan for its staff and ensure that its contractors receive regular training in their areas of expertise, with a view to the proper performance of their duties and compliance with the requirements of this **standard**.

9.2. The organisation will promote adequate occupational health, hygiene and safety measures.

9.2.1 The organisation must identify its workers' health and safety needs and expectations.

9.2.2 The risks of occupational illnesses and accidents, as well as the best occupational health and safety practices and equipment that minimise these risks, must be identified for all workstations.

9.2.3 The organisation's workers and **subcontracted workers** must be informed and regularly kept up to date on the sustainable management measures referred to in this **standard** that are directly relevant to them in their activity(ies), in particular the risks related to the performance of their task(s) and on the appropriate preventive measures in terms of Occupational Health and Safety.

9.2.4 The organisation must establish and implement emergency and medical evacuation procedures. The provisions of these procedures must be known to both workers and **subcontracted workers**.

9.2.5 Personnel must be trained to provide first aid in the various locations where the organisation operates.

9.2.6 Sufficient first aid equipment adapted to the workstations must be accessible.

9.2.7 In accordance with the occupational risk analysis in 9.2.2, personal protective equipment appropriate to the task being performed must be available and actually worn by both workers and **subcontracted workers**. The organisation must have a minimum and permanent stock of PPE that allows for the regular renewal, whenever necessary.

9.2.8 The organisation must comply with procedures for reporting occupational accidents and diseases to the social protection bodies. The organisation must monitor the coverage provided by the social welfare organisations.

9.3. The organisation shall provide decent living conditions for workers and their beneficiaries in the living bases.

9.3.1 The organisation must identify and document its workers' needs and expectations in terms of living conditions in the **living bases**.

9.3.2 In the event of accommodations on the **living base**, the organisation must provide housing conditions in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements and those of the **ILO**, for both its workers and their beneficiaries.

9.3.3 On **living bases**, basic necessities and basic food products must be available to both workers and their beneficiaries and to **subcontracted workers**. The prices of these products must be comparable to those of the same products being sold in the nearest urban centre.

9.3.4 The organisation must ensure that its workers (and their beneficiaries) and **subcontracted workers** have access to clean drinking water in the **temporary forest camps** and **living bases**.

9.3.5 The organisation must - at the very least - provide access to pre-school and primary schooling for the children present in the **living bases**.

9.3.6 Access to basic health care must be provided to both workers (and their beneficiaries) and **subcontracted workers** on the **living bases** and at an appropriate distance from temporary camps.

9.3.7 Access to electricity on the **living bases** must be provided. The terms and periods of access must be adapted to the priorities and needs of workers, sub-contracted workers and the beneficiaries. These terms and periods of access shall be communicated to the inhabitants or their **living base** representatives.

9.3.8 Health and Safety measures must be implemented and complied with in order to provide adequate sanitary conditions in both the **living bases** and temporary camps.

9.3.9 However, in the case of workers and their beneficiaries living in neighbouring towns and villages, the organisation is to comply with legal and regulatory requirements as well as the development plan's commitments regarding living conditions.

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Annexe 1: SFMS (Sustainable forest management system) guidelines

The guidelines presented in this annex are prescriptive and specify what is expected in section 4 of the **standard's** requirements.

Field of application (requirement 4.1.1)

The definition of the field of application must include:

- The territory in which the organisation conducts its activities;
- The set of activities for which it is responsible with respect to the law and this **standard**;
- The forest products generated from its activities that are certifiable.

The field of application of the **SFMS** must include, at a minimum: an **FMU** or a coherent set of **FMUs**, industrial sites close to and within the **FMU(s)**, mechanical workshops, any temporary forest **living bases** and camps, the affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**, and the road and forest infrastructures (except if public) close to and within the **FMU(s)**.

With a view towards ongoing improvement, the **management system** should cover all of the following forest management aspects: planning – including inventories and mapping of forest resources – implementation, monitoring and evaluations.

The field of application will be the scope of forest management certification.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (requirement 4.1.6)

The objective of the stakeholder engagement plan is to determine the terms of dialogue with the various **stakeholders** according to the requirements of the applicable national regulations as well as those of this **standard**.

The first steps in setting up the PEPP are to establish the list of **affected stakeholders** within the **FMU** and to determine, through dialogue, their needs and expectations.

The SEP–must determine and formalise the practical terms of the dialogue with the **stakeholders**, including its scope, its frequency and its level of participation (see arrow below), depending on the category of **stakeholders** that are involved (affected, involved, or otherwise).

The various levels of participation and influence are, in increasing order:



Note: This arrow is inspired by the various scales of participation⁶ and adapted to the Congo Basin's forest management sector.

The ascending order indicates that the more you move along the scale, the higher the relevant **stakeholders'** level of participation and influence. It should be noted that the different levels of participation/influence are not exclusive of each other: for example, information phases are necessary to successfully obtain the **FPIC**.

This engagement plan must comply with applicable national regulations.

Communication plan (requirement 4.1.7)

The communication plan must explicitly describe the organisation's formal internal and external information and communication systems.

It determines the topics the company will communicate on, how often and the means of communication according to the target audience.

Grievance, complaint and conflict management process (requirement 4.1.8)

These processes must cover **grievances**, **complaints** and **conflicts** relating to forest management, legal usage rights and **working conditions**, and take into account any applicable national legal and regulatory requirements.

The processes for managing **grievances**, **complaints** and **conflicts** must be translated and implemented through one (or more) simple, explicit procedures adapted to the various stakeholder groups: **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**, employees and their beneficiaries, contractors and other relevant **stakeholders**.

Affected stakeholders must be informed of the processes that are thereby implemented.

In the case of damage to the legal rights, property, resources and livelihoods of local people, a just and fair resolution must be found - according to the applicable regulations - and in the meantime, interim solutions must be worked out with the **affected stakeholders**.

Document management system (requirement 4.1.9)

The documentation **management system** must enable the organisation to provide relevant and up-to-date documented information based on the organisation's activities, including, but not limited to:

- the documentation required by this **standard**, including the procedures manual;
- documented proof of compliance with the requirements of this **standard** that the organisation deems necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the **sustainable forest management system**;
- documents resulting from legal and scientific monitoring;
- proof of training;
- sales records of certified forest products;
- a record of chemical product usage;
- documented proof of interactions with affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**;
- the results of the monitoring system (see section below);
- internal audit reports to identify nonconformities, corrective actions taken and their effects;

⁶Source: <https://infogram.com/les-echelles-de-la-participation-1gew2v80nln1mnj>

- annual management review reports.

Five-year and annual environmental action programmes (requirement 4.2.1)

The five-year and annual environmental action programmes aim to define, in concrete terms and over a period of five years and one year, respectively, all of the activities that the organisation decides to implement in accordance with its objectives, priorities and technical, human and budgetary resources.

These action programmes are based on existing best practices, EIAs, and if they exist, environmental management plans.

They must determine the objectives to be achieved, describe the concrete measures under consideration and the timetable for implementation as well as the monitoring system under consideration (quantitative and qualitative implementation and outcome indicators) and propose a realistic adapted provisional budget.

They must be updated according to the monitoring and evaluation results.

These programmes are provisional programmes intended for internal use with a view towards certification.

Five-year and annual external social action programmes (requirement 4.2.2)

Five-year and annual external social action programmes are operational and pragmatic measures that are consistent with legal and regulatory obligations (development plan, ESIA report, etc.) and those of this **standard** (stakeholder engagement plan, communication plan, **FPIC**, etc.).

Their purpose is to define in concrete terms, over a period of five years and one year, respectively, all of the activities that the organisation decides to implement in accordance with its objectives, priorities and technical, human and budgetary resources.

They must determine the objectives to be achieved, describe the concrete measures under consideration and the timetable for implementation as well as the monitoring system under consideration (quantitative and qualitative implementation and outcome indicators) and propose a realistic adapted provisional budget.

They must be updated according to the monitoring and evaluation results.

Note: The use of funds paid to the Public Treasury or decentralised authorities is in no way within the organisation's mandate.

These programmes are forecasting programmes for internal use with a view towards certification.

Five-year and annual internal social action programmes (requirement 4.2.3)

The five-year and annual internal social action programmes provide an operational and pragmatic implementation of the legal and regulatory requirements, as well as those of this **standard**, with regards to the working and living conditions of workers (and their beneficiaries) and **subcontracted workers**.

Their purpose is to define in concrete terms, over a period of five years and one year, respectively, all of the activities that the organisation decides to implement in accordance with its objectives, priorities and technical, human and budgetary resources.

They must determine the objectives to be achieved, describe the concrete measures under consideration and the timetable for implementation as well as the monitoring system under consideration (quantitative and qualitative implementation and outcome indicators) and propose a realistic adapted provisional budget.

They must be updated according to the monitoring and evaluation results.

These programmes are provisional programmes for internal use with a view towards certification.

The monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation system (requirement 4.3.1)

The objective of the **SFMS's** monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation system is to provide information on the company's performance in terms of sustainable management. That is, to be able at all times to be certain that *"we do what we said we would do, and we say what we did"*, and to ensure that what is defined and implemented meets the requirements of the regulations and this **standard**.

The **SFMS's** monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation system must be subject to one or more procedures that determine what is to be monitored and measured, the methods of monitoring, measuring, analysing and evaluating, and, where applicable, the frequency and responsibilities.

The **SFMS** monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation system must include, at a minimum:

- quantitative and qualitative monitoring of forest resources to ensure compliance with these **standards**;
- monitoring of the volumes harvested in accordance with the management documents;
- an evaluation of the management practised based on the results of operational monitoring, the objective of which is to control the quality of the practices referred to in this **standard**;
- monitoring of the activities' impact according to the magnitude and intensity of the previously identified environmental and social impacts, adapted to the scale, intensity and risk of the operations;
- monitoring of factors that potentially affect health and vitality of forest, such as damage caused by fire and climatic factors;
- monitoring of the living conditions of **local communities** and **indigenous peoples**, based in particular on a register of **grievances**, **complaints** and **conflicts** (and their resolution), and monitoring of social achievements and the effectiveness of contributions to local development;
- monitoring of the quality of life and work of workers and their beneficiaries, in particular based on a register of work accidents and evacuations carried out, making it possible to adapt **working conditions** if necessary;
- monitoring of the wildlife and hunting management plan;
- monitoring of **NTFP** collections if the activity is carried out under the conditions of 6.1.2.

The internal audit programme (requirement 4.3.2)

The purpose of the internal audit mechanism is twofold:

- to verify that the forest **management system** complies with the requirements of this **standard** as well as the organisation's procedures;
- to verify the implementation and continuation of the **sustainable forest management system**.

The frequency of internal audits, audit methods, responsibilities, and requirements in terms of audit planning and reporting must be defined.

The audit system must take into account the magnitude of the involved processes and the results of previous audits.

The scope and criteria of audits must be defined for each audit.

The organisation selects auditors while ensuring of the objectivity and impartiality of the audit process.

Audit results are communicated to management prior to the management review.

Management reviews (requirement 4.3.3)

Management reviews must address, at a minimum:

- a) the progress status of actions provided for in previous management reviews;
- b) the potential changes to internal or external issues linked to the **management system**;
- c) information on the organisation's performance, including trends:
 - in terms of nonconformities and corrective actions;
 - in terms of monitoring and measurement results;
 - in terms of audit results;
- d) opportunities for ongoing improvement.

Corrective actions (requirement 4.3.4)

Corrective actions are implemented following a nonconformity identified in an internal audit or a certification audit. It is "the organisation's reaction to the nonconformity".

Where appropriate, the organisation must take action to control and correct the nonconformity and deal with its consequences.

The organisation must also assess its need to act to eliminate the causes of the nonconformity, so that it does not reoccur - there or elsewhere - by:

- examining the nonconformity;
- determining the causes of the nonconformity;
- determining whether similar nonconformities exist or are likely to occur.

Annex 2: PAFC Congo Basin operational guidelines

The guidelines presented in this annex are normative and specify what is expected in terms of the requirements of sections 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the **standard**.

Measures to minimise damage to soil and watercourses within the FMU (requirement 7.1.6)

The measures referred to here are reduced impact logging measures that minimise bare soil exposure, negative impacts on erosion-prone areas, sensitive soils, and preserve the quality and quantity of water resources so as to not significantly affect the water balance and downstream water quality.

The measures referred to in indicator 7.1.5 include, at a minimum:

- the construction and maintenance of infrastructures (e.g. installation and regular maintenance of drainage systems),
- operating rules on the banks of watercourses and on steep slopes,
- the use of adapted logging techniques and equipment (use of appropriate heavy equipment, "high shovel" skidding, etc.).

Balance must be sought between the implementation of these techniques and the efficient conduct of **logging operations**.

Use of chemical products (requirement 7.2.3)

The organization must minimize the use of pesticides by all possible means such as **IPM**, alternative silviculture actions or biological control. In all cases, the organisation must prohibit the use of pesticides containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) listed by the Stockholm Convention.

The organisation must prohibit the use of Type 1A and 1B (WHO classification) pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides identified in legal and regulatory texts, unless no viable alternatives are available. In the event of force majeure, and in the absence of any other technical alternative and on the basis of a detailed justification, these products may be used after the Certification Body has been informed.

A procedure in accordance with these requirements must be developed and followed.

Monitoring of the quantities used and the sites where the products have been used must be implemented.

Fertilizers are not to be used as an alternative to appropriate soil management and must be applied in a controlled manner so as to minimise environmental impacts.

Waste management (requirement 7.2.4)

The organisation must not leave any non-organic waste in the forest.

The organisation must provide for the appropriate storage and transportation of waste (depending on its nature).

Disposal of all waste must be sought in accordance with economically viable possibilities at both the national and international levels. The organisation must demonstrate that it has researched and

implemented all possible solutions to recycle and minimise on-site waste storage or remove it in an environmentally-responsible manner.

The wildlife and hunting management plan (requirement 7.2.7)

The purpose of the wildlife and hunting management plan is to oversee, monitor and control hunting activities within the organization's **FMU**.

The wildlife and hunting management plan must identify and map the usage and customary rights of **local communities** and **indigenous peoples** as well as areas where hunting activity is subject to regulatory restrictions (hunting reserves, national park buffer zones, etc.). Where legislation and/or regulations permit, areas where hunting is permitted to workers and/or their beneficiaries must be defined.

The wildlife and hunting management plan must establish the organisation's rules that comply with the legal and regulatory requirements governing hunting activities by workers and their beneficiaries within the scope defined by the organisation (gun permits, hunting licenses, rules for the transport of weapons, authorised hunting times and places, etc.) as well as the rules relating to the transport and marketing of game meat, while very clearly presenting the responsibilities and means that are implemented. It may also include awareness-raising activities for workers, **subcontracted workers**, their beneficiaries and the **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**.

The wildlife and hunting management plan must include anti-poaching measures within the scope of its **SFMS** and within the limits of its legitimacy under the law and regulations. In particular, the organisation may consider collaborating with competent administrative departments for activities that fall within the scope of its sovereign missions.

Systems for wildlife monitoring and for monitoring the hunting schedule of the activities supervised by the organisation must be provided for in order to evaluate the evolution of game populations within the concession.

Sanctions are provided for and imposed in the event of a failure to comply with the organisation's rules by workers, their beneficiaries, or **subcontracted workers**. In the event of an observed breach of the applicable legislation or regulations, the organisation must inform the competent administrative authority.

It must be updated according to the results of monitoring.

The GHG emissions assessment (requirement 7.3.1)

The GHG emissions assessment is an internal tool used to evaluate an organisation's greenhouse gas emissions with a view towards improving its practices.

The organisational scope to be taken into account is the field of application of the **SFMS** that the organisation has defined for its **SFMS**.

The operational scope is left to the organisation's choice for its internal needs. At a minimum, it must include the following emission items:

- Direct emissions from stationary combustion sources;
- Direct emissions from mobile combustion engine sources;
- Emissions from biomass.

The organisation is free to supplement its assessment with other emission items.

The methods used by companies to meet this requirement can be based on the methodological guides that will be developed as part of the technical assistance dedicated to the development of the PAFC Congo Basin certification scheme.

Carbon stock mapping (requirement 7.3.2)

The purpose of estimated carbon stock mapping is to:

- Differentiate between carbon stock levels within the **FMU**,
- Identify the areas where carbon stocks are significantly high within the **FMU's** territory.

In the absence of a specific national requirement for the estimation of carbon stocks, the organisation can rely on the best available and existing information. It is free to choose the appropriate methodology for its **FMU** but it must be able to explain and justify it.

The organisation must update this information at least every five years.

In the absence of a national threshold for defining significant carbon stock levels, the organisation is free to define it. Its choice must be justified.

Possible methodological approaches:

- Valuation of the stratification work carried out to draw up a map of the forest **management plan**, combined with estimates of the quantity of carbon according to the vegetation (available in the literature)⁷
- Use of biomass maps produced by the scientific community in inter-tropical areas⁸

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (requirements 8.1.4 and 8.2.5)

FPIC must be obtained:

- through a participatory and inclusive process (all affected groups are represented, including vulnerable groups);
- prior to the implementation of activities;
- without coercion or intimidation;
- through institutions and/or representatives chosen by the affected **indigenous peoples** and **local communities**;
- after the company has provided full information regarding the scope of the activities and their potential impacts on usage rights, livelihoods and the environment.

The **indigenous peoples** and **local communities'** decision of whether or not to give their consent must be respected.

⁷ For example:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232660166_Un_apercu_des_stocks_de_carbone_et_leurs_variations_dans_les_forets_du_Bassin_du_Congo

⁸ For example: <http://lucid.wur.nl/datasets/high-carbon-ecosystems>

Annexe 3: overview of the applicable legislation

Some of the requirements of the PEFC international benchmark are not explicitly included in the requirements of this regional **standard** because they are already reflected in the national legislation of the countries covered.

The tables below list the legislative references to recall the national framework. The national interpretation guides that are provided as a complement to the PAFC Congo Basin certification scheme help to complete this framework.

About management plans that should be appropriate to the size and use of the forest (requirements 6.1.1) and sustainable harvesting of wood and non-wood products (requirements 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.3.1 and 6.3.2).

Sustainability of forest exploitation is an intrinsic principle of forest management in each of the three targeted countries. Management planning is based on multi-resource inventories, particularly of trees, which provide information on the state of the resource throughout the **FMU** and from which various parameters are deduced: minimum logging diameters, stocking rates to be respected, a rest period (rotation) between two logging phases in the same place.

Technical guidelines for management inventories and **management plans** exists in the three countries.

	Reference	Content
Cameroon	Law 94/01 - Art 22	Obligation of a management plan for every permanent forest
	Law 94/01 - Art 23	Definition of forest management: planning of activities, with a view to sustainable development
	Law 94/01 - Art 29	Each permanent forest subdivision has a management plan
	Law 94/01 - Art 40 (3)	Forest exploitation is subject to a prior inventory
Congo	Law 33-2020 - Art 75	Each FMU has its own management plan
	Law 33-2020 - Art 77	The development of the management plan is based on the principles of sustainable development
Gabon	Law 16-01 – Art 3	Sustainable management is based, among other things, on continuous resources inventories
	Law 16-01 – Art 17-18	Definition of a sustainable management of forest resources
	Law 16-01 – Art 20	All conceded forests must be subject to a management plan
	Law 16-01 – Art 22	Sustainable management operations and parameters that must be defined and respected in the management plans.

About management documents duration and review (requirements 6.1.1 and 6.1.5):

	Reference	Content
Cameroon	Law 94/01 - Art 29 (2)	Periodic review of Management plans or if necessary; If something happens that modifies production prevision (limits changes, law changes), a revision has to be done.
Congo	Law 33-2020 - Art 117	Maximum duration of management and transformation convention is 30 years
Gabon	Law 16-01 - Art 21	Management Plan includes the review of management
	Law 16-01 - Art 26	Management Plan is revisable every 5 years
	Law 16-01 - Art 98	Duration of a CFAD = duration of rotation

About workers contractors and other operators' wages (requirement 9.1.2)

The national requirements are shown in the table below. Requirement 9.1.2 indicates that they must be met, as a minimum.

	Reference	Content
Cameroon	Decree n ° 2014/2217 of 07/24/2014	Revalorization of the guaranteed minimum interprofessional wage: 36,270 CFA francs / month
Congo	Decree n ° 2008-942 of 12/31/2008	Defines the amount of the guaranteed minimum interprofessional wage: 50,400 CFA francs / month
Gabon	Decree n ° 855 / PR / MTE of November 9, 2006	Defines the guaranteed minimum inter-professional wage: 80,000 CFA francs / month
	Decree n ° 127 / PR / MTEPS of 23 April 2010	Defines the minimum monthly income in the Republic of Gabon - 150,000 CFA francs / month