



# PEFC ESTONIA SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD PEFC EST 1003:2022



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## Foreword

PEFC (the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) is an independent, non-profit and non-governmental leading global alliance of regional and national forest certification systems promoting sustainable forest management through forest certification and labelling of forest-based products.

Products with a PEFC certificate and label offer assurance that the raw materials used in their manufacture originate from sustainably managed forests, plantations, Trees Outside Forests (TOF) or recycled wood-based materials. PEFC works throughout the entire forest supply chain ensuring that wood and non-wood forest products are produced with respect for the ecological, social and ethical standards.

In Estonia, the Estonian Forest Certification Council (hereinafter: EFCC) implements the PEFC principles with the aim of contributing to the implementation of the principles of responsible and sustainable forestry and raising the awareness of forest owners, wood or wood-based industry, forestry stakeholders and consumers about sustainable forestry, production and consumption. EFCC is a member of the international umbrella organization PEFC and is responsible for the application of the international PEFC system in Estonia.

This standard is a part of PEFC Estonia Forest Certification Scheme (hereinafter: Estonian scheme). The aim of the standard is to promote sustainable development and management of Estonian forests through forest certification, focusing the attention of owners on considering the economic, ecological, social and cultural aspects in forest management. The standard is reviewed no less than every five years with the participation of a broad range of stakeholders and revised, if necessary.

After the entry into force and the end of the transition period, this standard cancels and replaces the 2015 version of PEFC Estonia National Forest Management Standard.

## Introduction

This standard helps forest owners to be an efficient manager of the forest as a renewable resource and increases public awareness of sustainable forestry. The standard has been developed through an open and transparent development process and as a result of consultations and consensus-based discussions of a broad range of stakeholders. The standard and the guidance material supporting its implementation specify the requirements for sustainable forest management.

The forest management standard is a normative document for forest owners, the implementation of the standard gives the right to obtain a PEFC forest management certificate in accordance with PEFC Estonia Forest Certification Scheme.

The standard covers requirements for the management of forests and plantations. Specifications for the management of plantations are provided in the notes to the standard requirements, if applicable, and in Annex 1. In case there are not any notes to the requirement and in Annex 1, the basic requirement applies.

The Board of EFCC formed a working group on March 9, 2020 with the aim of revising the forest management standard. In addition to experts, representatives of 26 different organizations were involved in the work of the working group. The work was coordinated by an independent moderator and organized by EFCC. The working group operated according to the consensus principle, where no single interest of stakeholders or organizations could dominate.

For the revision of the standard 30 meetings were held within the period of March 2020 and April 2022. Since forest management has become the focus of public attention in Estonia, the members of the working group were motivated to have in-depth discussions on the unambiguous wording of each clause of the standard and the need for the actual implementation and verifiability of the requirements.

The standard was drafted in such a way that ensuring compliance with PEFC requirements would not create additional bureaucracy. Instead, it should contribute to promoting sustainable forestry and enable the organization to benefit from it. The technical documentation drawn up to demonstrate compliance with PEFC requirements shall add value to the organization; also, the process-focused approach shall contribute to improving the performance.

In the course of the standard setting process, previous specifications for large and small forest owners were repealed and it was established that all clauses of the standard apply to all those obliged to comply with the requirements of the standard.

Also, the principles of biodiversity conservation were reviewed in the process of revising the standard to ensure that these would not become groundlessly burdensome for the

organization and, in particular, would enable the knowledge in forestry to create greater diversity in nature.

The Enquiry Draft Standard was reviewed by the representatives of major stakeholders. The working group has considered their feedback and improved the comprehensiveness and relevancy of the Enquiry Draft before making it public.

### Implementation of the standard

The forest management standard describes criteria and specific requirements to be implemented by the organization to show compliance with sustainable and responsible forestry.

Forest owners operating according to the defined criteria ensure sustainable forest management and confirm the compliance with the requirements of the standard. Estonian forests are very different, diverse in terms of structure and site type; also, the objectives and practices of forest management are different. The standard establishes common requirements; however, the specific character of forest land ownership (size, location, forest management objectives, applied practices and the intensity of forest use) has been taken into account in the development of the standard.

The indicators formulated in addition to the requirements of the standard determine the minimum required activities demonstrating the compliance with the requirements and ensuring the effectiveness of the activities.

The organization shall keep records of its activities to provide evidence of the compliance with the requirements of the PEFC standard. If PEFC standard does not require a written record to demonstrate the compliance with the requirement, the organization may provide oral verification. If the organization is permitted to explain the issue orally, the auditor shall have the right to request the information in writing in case the audit reveals that oral verification is not sufficient.

### PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks

Sustainable forest management in Estonia is exercised in a manner and to the extent that maintains the viability, biodiversity, productivity and regeneration capacity of the forest and its potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic, social and cultural functions without causing damage to other ecosystems.

The structure of the standard is based on six PEFC international sustainability criteria:

Criterion 1: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest and ecosystem services considering the contribution of forest to the global carbon cycle.

Criterion 2: Activities for the maintenance of the integrity, vitality and ecological functionality of the forest ecosystem.

Criterion 3: Maintenance and enhancement of the productive functions of wood and non-wood forest products, as well as other ecosystem services.

Criterion 4: Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biodiversity in forest ecosystems.

Criterion 5: Maintenance and enhancement of the role of the forest as an ecosystem regulating the environment.

Criterion 6: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of the cultural and socio-economic values of the ecosystem services of the forest.

### Certification – demonstrating compliance with standard requirements

Certification is the process of assuring that the forest owner is managing the forest in compliance with PEFC requirements.

Certification bodies shall be impartial, independent and accredited. Accreditation of certification bodies in Estonia is carried out by the NGO Estonian Centre for Standardisation and Accreditation with membership within the European Co-operation for Accreditation. In other countries the accreditation of certification bodies is carried out by a local accreditation body recognized by PEFC with membership within the International Accreditation Forum.

Organizations seeking to obtain PEFC certification are required to demonstrate their conformity with PEFC endorsed standards. When compliance is assured, the certification body shall issue a certificate valid up to five years and the organization shall earn the right to make “PEFC certified” claims and use the PEFC label.

Upon expiry of the certificate, the certificate holder shall apply for new certification. In addition, continued compliance with PEFC requirements is assessed during annual audits.

Complaints against certified organizations are dealt with according to the respective complaints and appeals procedures established by certification bodies. Issues that remain unresolved shall be resolved according to the respective complaints and appeals procedure of national accreditation bodies and thereafter, if necessary, according to the appeals procedure of the third level – the European Co-operation for Accreditation.

Complaints related to the standards of the PEFC Estonia Forest Certification Scheme or their management are handled by Estonian Forest Certification Council.

## 1. Scope

PEFC Estonia **Sustainable Forest Management** Standard (hereinafter **PEFC Standard**) includes Sustainability Benchmarks of PEFC International which form the basis for the PEFC International for the endorsement of **sustainable forest management** in Estonia. The requirements of the **PEFC standard** are applied to forest land. The standard can also be applied to **plantation**. The requirements apply to forest owners and managers, as well as their contractors operating in **certified areas**. The requirements cover all necessary processes that aim at **sustainable forest management** and provision of **ecosystem services**.

**Plantation** the requirements for **forest** and **forest land** apply, unless otherwise provided in the requirement and in Annex 1.

Annex 2 lists the applicable legislation.

## 2. International Normative Documents

Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No.87)

Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29).

Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)

Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100)

Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No.05)

Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No.111)

Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No.135)

Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138)

Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No.144)

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182)

ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, 1998.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), OJ L 75, 2015

European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe 176, 2000

Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union

International Plant Protection Convention, 1997



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1982

Directive 2009/147 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds

Council Directive 92/43 / EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

PEFC ST 1001, Standard Setting – Requirements

PEFC ST 1002, Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements

PEFC GD 1007, PEFC Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their Revision

PEFC ST 2002, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements

ISO Guide 2, Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary

EU Timber Regulation (EUTR)

REGULATION (EU) No 1143/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971)

Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992)

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979)

### 3. Terms and definitions

**Audited entity:** the certified area or a part of the certified area of the **organization** where PEFC audit is performed (source: ST Working Group).

**EFCC:** NGO Estonian Forest Certification Council.

**Fundamental ILO conventions:** eight conventions (ILO 29, 87, 98, 100, 105, 111, 138 and 182) identified by the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Governing Body as "fundamental" in terms of principles and rights at work (source: ST Working Group).

**Plantation:** a site established on non-forest land where trees and shrubs are grown with regular planting spacing and managed uniformly by age (source: ST Working Group and Forest Act).

*Note:* Forest Act does not apply to **plantations**. Clear-cut areas regenerated with native tree species and afforested non-forest land (eg quarries, agricultural land) are not deemed to be **plantations**, unless the **organization** has defined afforested non-forest land as a **plantation** (source: ST Working Group)

**Management system:** the management of the **organization** ensuring consistent achievement of established objectives and contributing to **sustainable forest management** and provision of **ecosystem services**. It requires the design, approval, execution, control and improvement of the processes (source: ST Working Group)

**Sustainable forest management:** management of **forest** in a manner and to the extent that maintains their viability, biodiversity, productivity and regeneration capacity and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic social and cultural functions that does not cause damage to other **ecosystems** (source: ST Working Group, Ministry of the Environment, 2021).

**Protected species:** Category I, II and III species according to the Nature Conservation Act (source: ST Working Group)

**Forests with the function of balancing the environment:** **forests** mitigating the extreme natural processes, such as the forest reducing the erosion on steep slopes and the floodplain forest buffering floods. Also, **buffer strips** have a balancing function.

**Forests with the function of environmental protection:** **forests** protecting the environment against human activities, eg the limited management zone of a shore or bank (water protection forest), the limited management zone of a protected area or a permanent habitat (a buffer zone of a nature reserve or special protection zone).

**Local community:** local people living in the area bordering or sufficiently adjacent to the **certified area**, with formulated common forest management expectations and a spokesperson chosen from among themselves (source: ST Working Group).

**Prescribed burning:** making suppression fire in case of landscape fires or burning of slash collected into piles or heaps; also, surface burning and targeted use of fire for environmental protection with the aim of creating habitat conditions for **protected species** (source: ST Working Group).

**Cultivation material:** seeds of forest trees, forest plants and parts of forest plants (source: Regulation No. 20 of the Minister of the Environment "Origin of cultivated material permitted for reforestation").

**Landscape:** a socio-ecological system with a perceptible spatial extent, defined and influenced by ecological, historical, economic and cultural processes. The **landscape** consists of a mosaic of natural and/or human-affected ecosystems characterized by the interplay of different objects (including landforms, water bodies, vegetation, land use, settlements and infrastructure) (source: ST Working Group, Scherr et al. 2013).

**Forest:** an **ecosystem** consisting of **forest land**, its flora, fauna and micro-organisms (source: Forest Act, ST Working Group)

**Forest land:** land entered in the land cadastral register as a forest land parcel or a plot of land with an area of at least 0.1 ha and woody plants with the height of at least 1.3 metres and with the canopy density of at least 30 per cent and those areas of forest and/or shrubs complying with the requirements of the structure of forest land which, however, cannot be classified as forest land pursuant to the Forest Act (eg: **plantations**, shrubs, wooded meadows, wooded bogs, parks, arboretums, permanent grasslands with wooded plants (Forest Act and ST Working Group)

**Forest improvement infrastructure:** roads, bridges, culverts, ditches, embankments (source: ST Working Group).

**Forest management work:** forest management, regeneration, cultivation, forest protection, **wood** procurement; enabling and provision of other **ecosystem services** on **forest land**. Also, the definition includes **large-scale forest management work** (source: ST Working Group).

**Forest improvement work:** construction, reconstruction, renewal and maintenance of a drainage system and a road in order to preserve and increase the cultivation value of the land or protect the natural environment on **forest land** (source: ST Working Group and Land Improvement Act).

**Afforestation:** the establishment of **forest** on **non-forest land** by planting, sowing or promoting natural regeneration. The purpose of afforestation is to change land use from **non-forest land** to **forest land** (source: ST Working Group)

**Forest structure:** the species composition and three-dimensional arrangement of trees and other plants in combination with other spatial elements such as soil, landforms, water bodies etc. considered at micro, stand or landscape scale. Typical elements of **forest** structure include the species composition and age distribution of trees, dead **wood**, hollow trees,

native trees, landscape microforms, forest layers and forest gaps, trees, shrubs and other plants (eg locust, willow, hazel, linden, oak, maple, hemp, raspberry) valuable for pollinators due to nectar and/or pollen; as well as the homogeneity or unevenness of the arrangement of the elements of **forest** structure. The elements of forest structure form microhabitats for the rest of the biota (source: ST Working Group).

**Non-forest land:** land parcels registered entered in the Estonian land cadastral register as **non-forest land**, which area is at least 0.1 hectares and which does not have the characteristic features of **forest land**. (source: ST Working Group).

**Non-wood forest products:** Christmas trees, whisks, nuts, berries, mushrooms, game, honey, etc., which may also be derived from **plantations** (source: ST Working Group)

**Cultural heritage landscape:** an area of cultural value under national protection, a historic settlement or a part thereof, or a cultural **landscape** formed by the interaction of man and nature (eg historic fields, hillforts, ancient villages) (source: ST Working Group and Heritage Conservation Act)

**Affected stakeholder:** a group of people directly affected by the activities of the **organization**. Stakeholders include: **local communities**, the staff of the **organization**, immediate neighbours, regional businesses, government agencies, local governments, customers and suppliers (source: ST Working Group)

**Organization:** a legal or natural person holding a **PEFC certificate** or applying for certification and being responsible for meeting the requirements of the **PEFC standard** (source: ST Working Group).

**Main ecosystem service:** a type of **ecosystem service** declared by an **organization** and used for commercial or other purposes by the organization (eg the provision of bird watching or recreation possibilities to nature tourism businesses as a social benefit which may or may not be for financial gain) (source: ST Working Group).

**PEFC certificate:** a document issued by an accredited certifier confirming that an **organization** complies with the requirements of the **PEFC standard** (source: ST Working Group).

**PEFC standard:** PEFC Estonia **Sustainable Forest Management** Standard (source: ST Working Group)

**PEFC chain of custody certificate:** a document issued by an accredited certifier confirming that an **organization** complies with the requirements of the PEFC International Standard PEFC ST 2002:2020 (Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements) (source: ST Working Group).

**PEFC claim:** a claim made in the sales and delivery documents for **wood** or **non-wood** forest products or other ecosystem services from a **certified area**. PEFC claims are "100% PEFC-sertifitseeritud" and/or "100% PEFC Certified" (source: ST Working Group).

**Buffer strip:** a zone (a peripheral zone) with permanent vegetation (mainly trees and shrubs) located between the area of two (or more) different land uses and where special economic techniques are applied to ensure certain functions. The purpose of the **buffer strip** is to reduce the transboundary effects of economic activities, to ensure the partial preservation of the environment or structures in the managed area, as well as the ecological coherence of neighbouring areas; to provide safe habitat for plants and/or habitats (and feeding sites) for animals, birds and other forest fauna and provide/maintain the aesthetic value of the **landscape**. No less than shrubs, undergrowth and trees of the second front are left to grow on the buffer strip (the first front may be left if necessary). Riparian **buffer strip** is a zone with a permanent vegetation along the natural water body to prevent shore erosion, diffuse emissions, sediments and nutrients from entering the water body and to stabilize the shore. A **buffer strip** can also be a meadow-like community with developed turf. A **buffer strip** is a strip of five metres unless stipulated otherwise by legal acts.

**Stand composition:** tree species composition of a stand in full percentage by fronts. The standard uses the ratio of the stock of tree species to the general stock of the respective front to determine the composition coefficient of the stand component. The ratio of the number of trees is used as the composition of young trees, areas of uncertainty and undergrowth. In the case of low-yielding forest land and in the description of the composition factors of shrub fronts, the proportion of canopy cover is used (source ST Working Group and Regulation No. 2 of the Minister of the Environment "Guidelines for Forest Management")

*Note:* also, the proportions of tree species associations are used to describe the stand (source: ST Working Group).

**Wood:** roundwood and energy wood (carvings, trunks, stumps) and wood chips made thereof (source ST Working Group).

**Substitution effect of wood products:** shows how much anthropogenic carbon emissions are saved by replacing non-wood materials (especially concrete, steel or fossil fuels) with **wood** products. The substitution effect shall take into account all carbon emissions from the manufacture and use of both non-wood and **wood**-based products. The substitution effect enables to assess the impact of wood products on climate change mitigation (source ST Working Group).

**Indigenous woodland:** the land that has consistently been **forest land** since the end of the nineteenth century (source: ST Working Group).

*Note:* the definition of land cover on the Russian single-level topographic map may be used as a basis, but it can be specified using both earlier and later map materials.

**Certified Area:** the area owned and/or operated by the **organization** implementing the **PEFC Standard requirements** (source: ST Working Group).

**Large-scale forest management work:** construction and reconstruction of a drainage system and road, as well as large-scale regeneration felling with a significant impact extending beyond the **certified area** (source: ST Working Group)

**Plant protection product:** a preparation used to protect trees and other plants and **wood** against pests or to control or destroy pests (source: ST Working Group).

**Management plan:** a document, set of documents and/or set of electronic data used by an **organization** to describe its **forest** and the objectives and principles of **forest** management and the use of **key ecosystem services** (source: ST Working Group).

*Note: management plan* does not mean a forest management plan within the meaning of the Forest Act.

**Commercial non-wood forest product:** a **non-wood forest product** declared by an **organization** and used for commercial purposes by the **organization** (source: ST Working Group)

**Ecosystem services:** material and/or non-material benefits people obtain from **ecosystems**. The term “benefits from the natural environment” can also be used (source: ST Working Group)

*Note: ecosystem services* are divided into material and immaterial **ecosystem services**. Material **ecosystem services** are divided into **wood** and **non-wood forest products**. **Wood** includes roundwood and energy wood (carvings, trunks, stumps) and wood chips produced from the latter. **Non-wood forest products** include Christmas trees, whisks, nuts, berries, mushrooms, game, honey, etc. Immaterial **ecosystem services** are regulatory or support services (eg soil formation, photosynthesis, nutrient cycling, water regime, environmental protection function, the function of balancing the environment) and socio-cultural benefits (eg possibility for recreation, mobility in the nature, residential value).

**Ecological spatio-temporal connectivity:** the landscape structure of an **ecosystem** and the spatial interconnection of structural elements and their temporal (historic) continuity supporting the distribution of species, the movement and interaction (direct or indirect) of individuals and/or the survival of species in the area (source: ST Working Group).

**Ecologically valuable forest:** the forest that includes rare, sensitive and representative **forest ecosystems** contributing significantly, either on their own or in a network, to the productivity, biodiversity and resilience of the **ecosystem**. **Ecologically valuable forests** are nature reserves, conservation and limited management zones of protected areas and permanent habitats, registered sites of category I species, and **forests** voluntarily designated as ecologically valuable by the owner as described in the management plan.

**Ecologically valuable forest** may also be defined as a valuable habitat in a national register or the **organization** has identified a part of the forest with unique values (source: ST Working Group)

**Ecologically valuable non-forest land:** open bogs without significant drainage (lowland bogs, transitional bogs, raised bogs), semi-natural grasslands without coastal drainage and significant cultivation (coastal meadows, flooded meadows, wooded meadows, alvars, wet meadows) heaths and dunes and semi-natural areas in nature reserves, conservation zones and limited management zones and protected areas of permanent habitats and registered sites of category I species, and **non-forest land** voluntarily designated as ecologically valuable by the **organization** (source: ST Working Group).

**Ecosystem:** a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit (Source: Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, Article 2)

## 4. Content and requirements of PEFC standard

### 4.1 General principles of the **PEFC standard**

- 4.1.1. The requirements of **the PEFC standard** apply to all activities in the **certified area** affecting the **organisation's** compliance with PEFC requirements.
- 4.1.2. **The organization** may participate in certification through an authorized person, but the **organization** shall be aware of the responsibilities associated with certification.
- 4.1.3. The **PEFC certificate** covers all **forest land** owned and/or held by the **organization** consisting of
  - a) **forest land** subject to the application of the Forest Act and where partial certification is not permitted;
  - b) areas covered by trees and/or shrubs complying with the requirements of the structure of **forest land** which, however, cannot be classified as **forest land** pursuant to the Forest Act (eg: **plantations**, shrubs, wooded meadows, wooded bogs, parks, arboretums, permanent grasslands with wooded plants etc).
- 4.1.4. **The organization** shall comply with the requirements of the **PEFC Standard** on all **forest land** owned and/or held by the **organization**, as well as in **plantations** designated by the **organization** for **PEFC certification**.
- 4.1.5. In case there are reasonable objections to the ownership or possession of the property, the disputed area cannot be subject to certification and the **wood, non-wood forest products** and other **ecosystem services** obtained from the area should not be marketed under the **PEFC claim** until the dispute has been resolved.
- 4.1.6. In case an **organization** with a valid **PEFC certificate** acquires and/or increases the **forest land** in its possession, the area is also considered a **certified area** from the date of acquisition.
- 4.1.7. **The organization** shall not be liable for uncoordinated activities performed by the third parties on the land of the **organization** and/or by the previous owner prior to the acquisition of the land by the **organization**. **The organization** shall, where possible, solve the nonconformities caused by such activities and bring them to conformity with the requirements of the **PEFC standard** within one year of the acquisition of the property or, if there are compelling reasons, set a longer period.
- 4.1.8. **The organization** shall keep records of its activities in a manner that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the **PEFC standard**.
- 4.1.9. **PEFC claims** on the products about originating from a **certified area** can only be made by **organizations** covered by a **PEFC certificate**.



- 4.1.10. The organization has the right to make a **PEFC claim** on **wood, non-wood forest products** and **key ecosystem services** to inform consumers and customers with a **PEFC chain of custody** certificate that the product originates from a **certified area**.
- 4.1.11. **The PEFC claim** can only be made with regard to roundwood, wood chips, energy wood and **non-wood forest products**, as well as other **key ecosystem services** originating from the **certified area**.
- 4.1.12. In case the **PEFC standard** does not specify compliance limits, the requirements set out in the legislation apply.
- 4.1.13. In case the **PEFC Standard** does not require record keeping to demonstrate compliance, the **organization** may provide oral verification. If the **organization** is permitted to explain the point orally, the auditor shall have the right to request that such information be provided in writing if the audit reveals that oral verification is not sufficient.
- 4.1.14. The audit monitors the compliance of **forest management** and **forest improvement works** with the requirements of the **PEFC standard** by means of indicators. The use of the indicator in the audit shall be up-to-date and relevant and based on the type of forest, the purpose of the work to be performed, the history of land use and other characteristics.

4.2. **Plantations** may be subject to derogations provided in requirements and Annex 1.4.3. Good Agricultural Practice shall be followed in the management of the **plantations**. In case of doubt or complaints in the course the audit, the existence of precepts issued by the relevant government agencies and state registers may be checked.

4.4. A **buffer strip** is left around the area of the **plantation** or group of **plantations**, and in the **certified area** natural or semi-natural areas with sustainable management that support nature, such as **forests**, swamps, meadows and other land covers fulfilling environmental, ecological, cultural and/or social functions, are defined as set-aside areas. If there are no natural or semi-natural areas in the **certified area**, eg **forests**, swamps, meadows and other land covers, a part of the area suitable for **plantation** is left for natural development in order to perform nature-supporting functions.

## 5. Management

- 5.1. The **organization** shall provide a commitment to comply with the **PEFC standard** and other applicable PEFC requirements.
- 5.2. **The organization** shall confirm the compliance with the requirements of the **PEFC standard** and the confirmation shall be made available to the public on the website of the **organization** or **EFCC** or in another publicly available register/database.

*Indicators:* the confirmation has been published on the website of the **organization** or **EFCC** or in another publicly available register/database.

### 5.3. Management system of the organization

- 5.3.1. **The management system** shall include the principles for planning, organizing, carrying out, monitoring and evaluating the results of the **forest management work** and the assessment of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the **forest management work**.

*Indicators:* The **organization** has developed principles and established the regularity of monitoring.

- 5.3.2. **The organization** shall systematically improve the **management system** in accordance with the requirements of **sustainable forest management**.
- 5.3.3. The **organization** shall establish principles for a **management system** and designate a person(s) responsible for the implementation of the requirements of the **PEFC standard**.

*Note:* in case the **organization** is a natural person, the natural person is by default responsible for meeting the requirements of the **PEFC standard**, unless the natural person has authorized someone else to be held responsible.

*Indicators:* the principles of the **management system** have been developed and the responsible person(s) have been appointed. The organization is able to provide no less than the following information: the structure of the **organization**, person(s) responsible for meeting the requirements of the **PEFC standard**, principles of document management, principles of communication with the **local community**, principles of internal audit, principles of dispute and complaint resolution.

## 6. Planning

### 6.1. Actions to address risks and opportunities

6.1.1. The **organization** shall consider risks and opportunities concerning the compliance with the requirements of the **PEFC standard**. The assessment of risks and opportunities shall be up-to-date and relevant and the size of the organisation and the scale of operations shall be considered.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has a methodology for assessing risks and opportunities in place. Risks and opportunities have been assessed.

### 6.2. Affected stakeholders

6.2.1. The **organization** shall identify the **stakeholders affected by forest management activities** and their potential needs and expectations.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has identified **affected stakeholders**, their potential needs and expectations.

### 6.3. Management plan

6.3.1. The **management plan** shall be based on applicable local, national and international legislation as well as existing land-use or other official land use plans.

6.3.2. The **organization** shall have an up-to-date and relevant overview of its **forest**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has the inventory and mapping of the **forest** performed in accordance with the legislation and established planning. The **organization** has policies in place to ensure up-to-date and relevant **forest** inventory data.

6.3.3. The **organization** shall have established management policies that reduce the risks of damage to and deterioration of the ecosystem and policies that support the ensuring of the good condition of the **ecosystem**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has established management policies supporting the maintenance of the good condition of the **ecosystem** in a longer term.

6.3.4. The **management plan** shall include no less than

- a) an obligation to comply with the requirements of the **PEFC standard**;
- b) the purpose of the land parcels;
- c) the intended use of the land parcels;
- d) a summary of the description of the **forest** (including area distribution of land use, areas of stand development classes by main tree species, area and/or proportion of **ecologically valuable forest** and **ecologically valuable non-forest land**), presence of the **forest with the function of significant environmental protection, forest with the function of balancing the environment** and **forest of cultural value**;

- e) long-term goals **for sustainable forest management**;
- f) the average annual felling area and/or volume, including the justification thereof.

*Indicators:*

- (a) the confirmation sentence can be found on the websites of the **organization, EFCC** or in another publicly available register/database;
- (b) the **organization** has defined the purpose of the land parcels.
- (c) the **organization** has defined the intended use of the land parcels.
- (d) the **organization** has a record of the summary of the description of the **forest** (including databases);
- (e) the **organization** has set out in writing long-term objectives for **sustainable forest management**;
- (f) the **organization** has provided average annual felling areas and /or volumes and the justification thereof.

- 6.3.5. In case the management plan covers the **commercial** use of **non-wood forest products** and other **key ecosystem services** by the **organization**, the organization shall include the annually allowable use and/or area of **commercial non-wood forest products** and other **key ecosystem services** ensuring their long-term sustainability.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has developed principles for assessing the sustainability of **commercial use of non-wood forest products** and other **key ecosystem services**. The **organization** has provided data on sustainable annual allowable use and/or area of the products.

- 6.3.6. Science-based approach is used in **forest management work** and **forest** management is built on good practice.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has records on the practices used and descriptions of the use of basic forestry knowledge, as well as up-to-date scientific information in forest management where relevant.

- 6.3.7. The **organization** shall make the summary of the **management plan** publicly available. The **management plan** shall include no less than

- a) an obligation to comply with the requirements of the **PEFC standard**;
- b) long-term forest management objectives and a summary of forest management principles of the **organization**;
- c) a summary of the previous PEFC audit.

*Note:* confidential information, the disclosure of which is restricted by law (eg nature protection restrictions, personal data) and confidential information in the audit report shall be excluded from the summary of the **management plan**.

*Indicators:* the information has been published on the website of the **organization** and/or **EFCC** or in another publicly available register/database.

## 6.4 Compliance requirements

### 6.4.1 Legal compliance

6.4.1.1 The activities of the **organization** shall comply with legal acts.

6.4.1.2. The **organization** shall take measures to prevent illegal activities in the **forest**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has policies in place to ensure that all employees have relevant and up-to-date knowledge and the activities comply with legal acts and illegal activities in the **forest** are prevented.

### 6.4.2. Land rights

6.4.2.1 The ownership or possession of each property of the **organization** shall be unequivocally proved.

*Indicators:* the ownership or possession has been unequivocally proved in the state register or documented.

### 6.4.3 Occupational health, safety and working conditions

6.4.3.1 Occupational safety requirements shall be met and appropriate personal protective equipment shall be used when performing **forest management work**.

*Indicators:* appropriate personal protective equipment is used when performing **forest management work**.

6.4.3.2 Employees of the **organization** shall be informed of the risks associated with their work and measures shall be taken to prevent the risks.

*Indicators:* the results of the risk analysis have been communicated to employees. Safety instructions have been laid down and carried out.

6.4.3.3 The working and rest time of the employees of the **organization** shall comply with legal acts or collective agreements.

6.4.3.4 The employees of the **organization** shall receive a fair wage. Temporary agency workers may be employed only if the **organization** can demonstrate that the rights of the temporary agency workers are guaranteed.

*Note:* people with similar responsibilities, including temporary staff, receive equal pay in the **organization**.

*Indicators:* employees of the **organization** and natural persons providing services to the **organization** are registered in the Register of Employees (TÖR). In case of the use of employees performing duties by way of temporary agency work, temporary employment contracts have been concluded and the temporary staff is treated in the same way as the staff of the organization. Employment contracts have been concluded. The employees of the **organization**

are paid at least the minimum wage.

6.4.3.5 The **organization** shall create a working environment where discrimination and unfair treatment of employees shall be avoided and equal opportunities for employees shall be ensured.

*Indicators:* there is no discrimination or unfair treatment of employees and employees have been granted equal opportunities. Records on labour dispute resolutions regarding the working environment and labour relations can be provided as evidence.

## 7. Support

### 7.1. Resources

- 7.1.1. The **organization** shall plan the means to establish, operate and improve the **management system** in accordance with the long-term objectives of **sustainable forest management** of the **organization**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has allocated resources to establish, operate and improve the necessary **management system**.

### 7.2. Competence

- 7.2.1. The **organization** shall ensure that **forest management work** is carried out by competent persons.

*Indicators:* the employees of the organization have a document certifying their competence (eg professional certificate, professional education, training certificate or a document providing evidence on instruction) or a corresponding requirement has been included in service contracts.

- 7.2.2. Persons performing **forest management work** for the **organization** shall have knowledge of **sustainable forest management** and shall keep themselves up-to-date through continuous training, including no less than participation in a training or instruction introducing the principles of **sustainable forest management**. The **organization** shall provide persons carrying out **forest management work** with necessary information and ensure trainings on **sustainable forest management**.

*Indicators:* The **organization** has provided necessary information on **sustainable forest management**. Persons performing **forest management work** have a document providing evidence on knowledge of **sustainable forest management** (eg a training certificate or a proof of instruction) and/or a corresponding requirement has been included in service contracts. The **organization** has provided employees with necessary information on relevant legal acts.

- 7.2.3. Persons working in **plantation** certified by the **organization** shall have relevant knowledge of Good Agricultural Practice.

*Indicators:* the persons working in certified **plantation** are familiar with Good Agricultural Practice.

### 7.3. Communication

- 7.3.1. Information on **large-scale forestry work** in the **certified area** shall be available to **the local community** and the immediate neighbour of the work site.

*Indicators:* the information is available, eg public registers, various communication methods and media of the **organization**. Feedback channels have been introduced and appeals have been dealt with to ensure effective communication. Engagement meetings have been held if applicable.

## 7.4. Complaints

7.4.1 The **organization** shall have a policy for resolving complaints and disputes concerning **forest management work**, ownership or tenure and working conditions. Disputes and complaints shall be settled in accordance with these principles.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has developed a policy for resolving disputes and complaints. Disputes and complaints have been resolved in accordance with these principles.

## 7.5. Documented information

7.5.1 The **organization** shall document the information related to **forest management work**.

*Indicators:* the documented information is up-to-date and relevant.

7.5.2 When supplying **wood** the **organization** shall provide no less than the following information to the customers holding a **PEFC chain of custody certificate**:

- (a) the identification of the cadastral unit indicating the origin of the wood and, in the case of the state forest, the number of the quarter and forest allocation;
- (b) the name of the assortment;
- (c) the quantity of the assortment;
- (d) tree species or a group of tree species;
- e) **PEFC certificate** number;
- (f) the applicable **PEFC claim**;
- (g) the name of the **organization**;
- (h) date of delivery.

*Note:* tree species (eg silver birch, dwarf birch, black alder, grey alder, aspen, hybrid aspen, larch species) may be reported as groups of tree species (eg birch, aspen, alder, larch, etc). It is not required to identify shrub species. Also, in case of firewood, energy wood and woodchips the tree species group “coniferous” or “deciduous” may be used if the species are mixed.

*Indicators:* sales and shipping documents are properly drawn up (eg Waybill, Bill of Lading, Delivery and Receipt of timber, invoice, Certificate of Origin).



## 8. Forest management

### 8.1. Criterion 1: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest and its ecosystem services considering the contribution of the forest to the carbon cycle

- 8.1.1. The objective of forest management is the maintenance and enhancement of the **forest** and its **ecosystem services** (including the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of **forest**).

*Note:* In case of **plantations** the requirement has to be met at least in **buffer strips** and set-aside areas of **plantations**.

*Indicators:* the **management plan** includes long-term objectives.

- 8.1.2. Climate-friendly and resource-efficient practices in **forest management work** shall be preferred to maintain or enhance **forest** stocks and the quality of **wood**, the ability of carbon sequestration in the future while considering the **substitution effect of wood products**; as well as avoid significant adverse impacts on **forest** stock, the quality of **wood** and/or **key ecosystem services**.

*Indicators:* Climate-friendly and resource-efficient practices are preferred in **forest management work** to avoid adverse effects on **key ecosystem services**.

- 8.1.3. Conversion of **native forest land** to **non-forest land** is not permitted, except in justified cases:

(a) with the permission or approval of a government agency or local authority in accordance with applicable legislation and land use plans; also, as a result of consultations with **affected stakeholders**; and

(b) it does not cover more than 5% of the forest type class of the certified **forest** area of the **organization**, and

(c) it does not have a significant adverse effect on ecologically, culturally or socially significant areas or on other protected areas and creates long-term heritage, nature conservation, socio-economic **values**; and

(d) areas with significant carbon stocks and areas are not deforested.

*Note:* the requirement does not apply in case the conversion of **native forest land** to **non-forest land** is in the public interest and the decision on deforestation cannot be influenced by the **organization**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has relevant documentation (permits/approvals) if required. No more than 5% of the area of forest class of forest growing on mineral soil and peatland forest class has been deforested in certified **forest land**.

- 8.1.4 **Ecologically valuable non-forest land** and **cultural heritage landscapes** shall not be afforested, except in justified cases:

- (a) with the permission or approval of a government agency or local authority in accordance with applicable legislation and land use plans; and
- (b) the process is transparent and open and **affected stakeholders** have had an opportunity to contribute to the process; and
- (c) it does not have a significant adverse effect on ecologically, culturally or socially significant areas or on other protected areas and creates long-term heritage, nature conservation, cultural or socio-economic values; and
- (d) it does not damage ecosystems with great carbon sequestration; and
- (e) it does not cover more than 5% of **ecologically valuable non-forest land** and **heritage landscape** of the organisation.

*Note:* **ecologically valuable non-forest land** and **cultural heritage landscapes** afforested after 31.12.2010 cannot be certified, except in justified cases.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has relevant documentation (permits/approvals) if required. No more than 5% of the **ecologically valuable non-forest land** and **heritage landscape** has been afforested.

- 8.1.5 Conversion of **native forest land, ecologically valuable non-forest land** and **heritage landscapes** to **plantations** is not permitted.

*Note 1:* **plantations** established on **native forest land, ecologically valuable non-forest land** and **heritage landscapes** after 31.12.2010 cannot be certified.

*Note 2:* traditional land use (eg fruit tree and berry plantations) is permitted in cultural heritage landscape.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has relevant documentation if required.

## 8.2. **Criterion 2. Activities aiming at the maintenance of forest ecosystem integrity, viability and ecological functionality**

- 8.2.1. The good status of the **ecosystem** shall be maintained or enhanced, if necessary in the **forest** by making the best use of the **forest structure** and natural processes. A damaged or gradually impoverished **ecosystem** with reduced ecological integrity (degraded **ecosystem**) shall be restored wherever and as far as economically feasible or left to natural development (succession).

*Note:* In case of **plantations** the requirement has to be met at least in **buffer strips** and set-aside areas of **plantations**.

*Indicators:* the condition of the **forest** has been described in the forest register, forest management plan or other records and the long-term objectives of forest management have been described in the management plan. Degraded areas have been mapped, the feasibility of the restoration has been determined and appropriate techniques have been applied according to the long-term plan in the areas designated for restoration.

8.2.2 The viability and resilience of the **forest** to adverse environmental factors shall be ensured to contribute to the maintenance of the genetic, species and structural diversity of the **forest**; the natural regulation mechanisms shall be supported.

*Note:* In case of **plantations** the requirement has to be met at least in **buffer strips** and set-aside areas of **plantations**.

*Indicators:* the **forest** has as diverse tree species composition and age distribution as possible. There is woody biomass of different decomposition state in the **forest** (eg dead standing and lying trees, decomposed wood, stumps, retention trees), natural succession and diverse undergrowth; also birds, animals, plants, mosses, fungi, etc. of significant importance or indicating the biological state and diversity of the **forest**.

*Note:* the requirement does not necessarily apply to plantations.

8.2.3 The health of the **forest** shall not be intentionally endangered or damaged.

8.2.3.1. Alien species and/or genotypes threatening the natural balance shall not be introduced or spread in the forest.

8.2.3.2. Species and/or species genotypes threatening the condition of other forest owners' forests, the growth of trees, the quality of **timber** or other **key ecosystem services** shall not be introduced or spread in the **forest**.

8.2.3.3. In case the **organization** has introduced in the **forest** the species and/or genotypes of the species referred to in clauses 8.2.3.1. and 8.2.3.2. before 31.12.2022, the **organization** shall ensure the safety of the **forest** of other owners in case of natural distribution of these species and/or genotypes.

*Indicators about the clause 8.2.3.:* there are not any deliberately introduced alien species and genotypes in the **forest**.

8.2.4 The use of fire in **forest management work** is prohibited, except in case of burning of slash collected into piles or heaps at the felling site pursuant to the Forest Act; also, in case it is justified (for the purpose of regeneration or nature conservation) and approved by the Rescue Board.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has justified the need for **prescribed burning** and the **prescribed burning** has been approved by the Rescue Board.

8.2.5. The **organization** shall develop measures for avoiding accidental littering. The **organization** shall not take litter into the forest. The spillage of oil and fuel shall be prevented during **forest management work**. The **organization** and/or contractor shall have preparedness for the prevention and elimination of the spillage of oil and fuel and littering. Inorganic waste and litter are collected and disposed of in an environmentally sustainable manner.

*Indicators:* the spillage of oil and fuel and littering during **forest management work** has been prevented. The work site of the forest machinery has been supplied with primary pollution control equipment (eg shovel, absorbent storage container/plastic bag for contaminated material). The **organization** has policies, readiness and capability to prevent and eliminate oil and fuel spillage (eg appropriate clauses in service contracts, leak-proof canisters and fuel tanks).

- 8.2.6 Biological measures and means shall be preferred to prevent and restrain damage to the **forest**. The use of non-biological **plant protection products** on **forest land** is permitted only in justified cases.

*Indicators:* biological plant protection products have been used in treating forest plants (eg spraying with a plant protection product, waxing, glue-sand treatment to control the pine weevil and using repellents to prevent game damage). If necessary, pheromone traps and/or trap trees have been used, the stumps of the felled trees have been treated to prevent the spread of root rot; stands with species composition suitable for the habitat type, mixed forest, timely felling etc are preferred.

- 8.2.7 The use of non-biological **plant protection products** shall be documented.

*Indicators:* the use of non-biological **plant protection products** has been documented (including the time, place and means).

- 8.2.8 The use of **plant protection products** of hazard classes 1A and 1B according to World Health Organization (WHO) and other very toxic **plant protection products** is prohibited.

*Indicators:* documentation on the use of non-biological **plant protection products** is available.

- 8.2.9 The use of **plant protection products** containing glyphosate and other Chlorinated Hydrocarbons and Persistent Organic Pollutants is prohibited on **forest land**.

*Indicators:* documentation on the use of non-biological **plant protection products** is available.

- 8.2.10 The use of **plant protection products** shall be carried out in accordance with the instructions of the manufacturer, employees shall be trained, instructed and provided with appropriate personal protective equipment.

*Indicators:* users have been instructed, users of non-biological **plant protection products** have a plant protection certificate, appropriate personal protective equipment is being used, the documentation is up-to-date and relevant.

- 8.2.11 Only organic fertilizers, natural mineral fertilizers, natural soil improvers, biostimulants and bioregulators can be used on **forest land**, unless prohibited by national legislation. The use of fertilizers shall be controlled and not harmful to the

environment. Supporting the natural processes of soil shall be preferred to fertilization.

*Note 1:* natural mineral fertilizers are eg wood ash, peat ash, straw, hay and root ash; soil improvers are lime, dolomite powder, oil shale ash.

*Note 2:* In case of **plantations** the use of fertilizers shall be controlled and not harmful to the environment. Supporting the natural processes of soil shall be preferred to fertilization.

*Indicators:* the use of fertilizers has been documented (including time, place and means).

### 8.3. **Criterion 3. Maintenance or enhancement of the productivity of timber, non-wood products and other key ecosystem services**

8.3.1 The capacity of the **forest** to produce **timber** and/or provide other **key ecosystem services** shall be maintained after the completion of **forest management work**.

*Indicators:* The **organization** has laid down sustainable volumes.

8.3.2 The **organization** shall take into account potential market changes regarding **wood, commercial non-wood forest products** and other **key ecosystem services** when planning its economic activities, as well as achieve good results.

*Indicators:* potential market changes have been taken into account in the planning of economic activities.

8.3.3 **Forest management work** shall be carried out at a time and in a way that does not reduce the capacity of **forest** to produce wood **and non-wood forest products** and/or other **key ecosystem services**.

*Indicators:* soil and retained trees have not been significantly damaged. **Forest management work** on protected natural objects has been carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in the protection management plan and other requirements (eg work has been carried out on frozen or dry soil). Conditions for maintaining the capacity of the **forest** to produce **key ecosystem services** have been granted.

8.3.4 The harvesting level and the uses of **wood, commercial non-wood forest products** and/or other **key ecosystem services** shall be optimal to ensure long-term sustainability of forest productivity.

*Indicators:* the harvesting level does not exceed the defined long-term sustainable volume.

8.3.5 **Forest improvement infrastructure** shall be designed, built, reconstructed, upgraded and maintained to improve the availability of **wood, commercial non-wood forest products** and other **key ecosystem services** with the least possible damage to the environment.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has a clear understanding of the activities related to the **forest improvement infrastructure**; work projects and appropriate approvals for the construction, reconstruction and renewal of the forest improvement infrastructure are in place. The habitats of the **protected species**, environmental protection requirements and other restrictions have been taken into account in the course of the work.

#### 8.4. **Criterion 4. Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest**

- 8.4.1. The planning of **forest management work** shall take into account the preservation and conservation of biodiversity of local origin at **landscape, ecosystem**, species, as well as genetic level.

*Note:* In case of **plantations** the requirement has to be met at least in **buffer strips** and set-aside areas of **plantations**.

*Indicators:* **cultivating material** used for **reforestation** originates from a permitted region of origin; alien species and genotypes endangering biodiversity have not been intentionally introduced in **forest land**. In the event of the threat of the invasion of the species endangering the natural balance, the relevant national authority has been notified and recommendations for the prevention of the spread of the species are being followed.

- 8.4.2. **Ecologically valuable forest** shall be identified and mapped in the course of forest inventories on the basis of national registers and/or the voluntary decision of the **organization**.

*Indicators:* the location of **ecologically valuable forest** is known to the **organization**.

- 8.4.3. Planning and carrying out **forest management work** shall aim at preserving **ecologically valuable forest** by means of excluding such **forest** from management or using techniques that do not significantly damage ecological values but rather promote the maintenance or development of the values and enrich the **forest structure**.

*Indicators:* inventory data, maps and forest notifications are consistent and show that **ecologically valuable forest** have been excluded from forest management or **forest** management has been planned and carried out according to the policy of the **organization** and has not compromised ecological values. Completed **forest management work** complies with the protection rules; appropriate approvals are in place. The number of structural elements left in the **forest** is in accordance with the requirements of legal acts. Logging operations have not been carried out during the breeding season in known nesting sites of Category I and II bird species, except in stands destroyed by natural disasters provided it is necessary for preventing the deterioration of the wood; or in stands

of poor health caused by natural factors provided it is essential to limit the spread of forest damage to ensure forest protection.

- 8.4.4. **Protected species** shall not be marketed unless permitted by legal acts and CITES – the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The **organization** shall take measures for the protection of protected, endangered and vulnerable species, as well as increasing their population, if applicable.

*Indicators:* sales documentation of marketed **protected species**. The **organization** has met relevant requirements for the protection of species or implemented voluntary/self-initiated nature conservation activities.

- 8.4.5. The **forest** shall be regenerated in a way that ensures the long-term sustainability and productivity of the **forest** and/or **key ecosystem services**.

*Indicators:* the **forest** has successfully regenerated and **key ecosystem services** have preserved or restored or are restoring.

- 8.4.6. The **cultivating material** suitable for the habitat type and originating from a permitted region shall be used for reforestation and **afforestation**. Invasive and/or alien species and hybrids prohibited in Estonia shall not be used in the **plantation**.

*Indicators:* the species and hybrids originating from a permitted region of origin have been used for reforestation and **afforestation**. Invasive and/or alien species and hybrids prohibited in Estonia have not been used in the **plantation**.

- 8.4.7. The techniques contributing to maintaining, improving, recovering or restoring the ecological spatio-temporal coherence of the forest shall be preferred in **forest management work**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has used necessary methods of work, as a result, there are structures and characteristics ensuring the **ecological spatio-temporal coherence** of the **forest in the audited entity**, eg retention trees of different species, groups of retention trees with the second layer and/or undergrowth; **wood** of different decomposition state (eg standing and lying dead trees, decomposed wood, stumps); **buffer strips** have been left; **forest** microstructures, forest of different composition and age, natural growth and diversity of undergrowth, as well as birds, animals, plants, mosses, lichens, fungi, etc of significant importance indicating the biological state and diversity of the **forest** have been preserved.

Single retention trees or groups of retention trees have been left in the clear-cut area of 3 ha to ensure coherence; in case of areas over 3 ha groups of retention trees have been preferred.

At least twice as many retention trees as required in the commercial forest have been left at the known site of category I and II species in the protected natural object.

Trees and shrubs providing nectar and pollen are located mainly on the open edges of the felling sites (eg roads, division lines between compartments, ditches,

shores of water bodies) or at least half of the canopy of these trees and bushes is exposed to light to enable them to develop blossoms.

*Note or explanation to the **buffer strip** indicator: **buffer strips** are primarily left on the edge of the felling site adjacent to agricultural land, semi-natural grassland, bog or natural water-body. In case of suitable conditions, existing standing and lying dead trees shall be preserved and retention trees or groups of retention trees shall be left growing. The number of standing dead trees can be increased by stubbing, particularly in habitat types with a higher risk of wind-throw.*

8.4.8. The use of genetically-modified **cultivating material** is prohibited.

*Indicators:* data on the origin of the **cultivating material** have been used.

8.4.9. Techniques aiming at maintaining or improving the **structural** variability of the **forest** and the diversity of the micro-habitats shall be preferred in the course of **forest management work**.

*Note:* In case of **plantations** the requirement has to be met at least in **buffer strips** and set-aside areas of **plantations**.

*Indicators:* in particular, the variability in the composition, age, layer and landscape of the stand is being considered. The **organization** has used appropriate techniques; as a result, there is lying and standing dead wood, natural regeneration and diversity of undergrowth in the **forest**; also, plants producing nectar and pollen have been left growing. Micro-scale landforms have not been significantly damaged. In case of suitable conditions and possibilities there are mixed stands, clear-cut strips and stands of different age and tree species in the **landscape**.

8.4.10. **Forest management work** shall be carried out in a way that it does not cause permanent damage to the **forest** as an **ecosystem**. Measures shall be taken to maintain or enhance **forest structure** and biodiversity and/or **key ecosystem services** where possible.

*Note:* In case of **plantations** the requirement has to be met at least in the **buffer strips** and set-aside areas of **plantations**; permanent damage to the soil shall not be caused in the **plantation** area.

*Indicators:* significant permanent damage has not been caused to the **forest** as an **ecosystem**. In case of damage appropriate measures have been taken to aim at improving the condition.

8.4.11. The impact of the planned work shall be assessed in the design and construction of the **forest improvement infrastructure** and solutions with the least negative impacts on **ecologically valuable forest, ecologically valuable non-forest land** and natural water bodies shall be found. In case of significant adverse impacts mitigation measures shall be taken.



*Indicators:* impacts and risks have been assessed in the design and construction of **forest improvement infrastructure**. Required state permits/approvals have been obtained. In case of negative effects mitigation measures have been taken.

- 8.4.12. Measures shall be taken to reduce extensive game damage. In order to reduce extensive game damage to the **forest**, forest ecosystem and **key ecosystem services**, measures must be taken to ensure optimal condition.

*Indicators:* In the event of extensive damage, measures have been planned and taken (eg use of repellents, agreements with hunting associations).

- 8.4.13. Ecologically important structural elements (eg standing and lying dead trees, hollow trees, trees with traces of burning, areas of old trees, infrequent tree species in the stand, large rocks, stone fences, natural kettle holes) shall be maintained while carrying out **forest management work** to preserve biodiversity taking into account their impact on the health of the **forest**, the quality of **timber** and the state of the **ecosystem**, neighbouring **ecosystems** and safety of people.

*Note:* In case of **plantations** the requirement has to be met at least in **buffer strips** and set-aside areas of **plantations**.

*Indicators:* the existence of different structural elements, eg trees of different generations and age, diverse **stand composition** in **the audited entity**, hardwood trees and linden, standing and lying dead trees, retention trees, wind-thrown trees with root balls and stumps, bushes (eg common buckthorn, honeysuckle, sweet gale, alder buckthorn, bird cherry, rowan). The number of standing dead trees can be increased by stubbing, particularly in habitat types with a higher risk of wind-throw.

8.5. **Criterion 5. Maintaining and enhancing the role of the forest as an ecosystem regulating the environment.**

- 8.5.1. The role of the **forest** in balancing the environment such as its role in reducing erosion and flooding, buffering water regimes, regulating the climate, ensuring carbon sequestration and/or providing other **key ecosystem services** to the society shall be maintained or enhanced.

*Indicators:* riparian **buffer strips** have been left by the shores of natural water bodies. The soil of the riparian **buffer strips** has not been damaged. The **organization** has identified significant cultural and socio-economic **ecosystem services**.

*Note to the riparian **buffer strip** indicator:* shrubs, undergrowth and the trees of the second layer have been left growing on the riparian **buffer strip**. In case of suitable conditions, the existing standing and lying dead trees shall be preserved and retention trees or groups of retention trees shall be left growing. The **buffer strip** can also be a meadow-like community with developed turf.

- 8.5.2. The **organization** shall have an overview of significant forests with the function of environmental protection and **forests with the function of balancing the environment**, and the management of these **forests** shall ensure the long-term preservation of these functions.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has mapped significant **forests** with the **function of environmental protection** and **forests** with the **function of balancing the environment**. The list of stand compartments that can be identified on the map and in nature is also deemed as being mapped.

- 8.5.3. The time, machinery and techniques appropriate to **forest management work** shall be used to minimize damage to the soil, prevent erosion and sediment transfer to water bodies, as well as prevent clogging of waterways. Special attention shall be paid to **forest management work** carried out on thin and other sensitive soils and in erosion-prone areas.

*Note:* the requirement of the prevention of the clogging of waterways does not apply to the areas of restoration of bog habitats and forests characterized by excessive moisture.

*Indicators:* watercourses (streams, ditches, rivers) are not clogged after the completion of **forest management work**. Riparian **buffer strips** have been left along the shores of natural water bodies. The soil of the riparian **buffer strips** is not damaged or contaminated and timber, fuel or lubricants have not been stored on the **buffer strip**.

*Note to the riparian **buffer strip** indicator:* shrubs, undergrowth and the trees of the second layer have been left growing on the riparian **buffer strip**. In case of suitable conditions, the existing standing and lying dead trees shall be preserved and retention trees or groups of retention trees shall be left growing. The **buffer strip** can also be a meadow-like community with developed turf.

- 8.5.4. Fuels and lubricants and **plant protection products** shall be prevented from entering water bodies in the course of **forest management work**.

*Indicators:* fuels, lubricants and **plant protection products** have not entered in water bodies. It has been ensured that refuelling and the use of tankers does not pollute water bodies (eg tankers with special nozzles, double walls or safety enclosures are used to prevent leakage, storing fuel in special fuel canisters).

- 8.5.5. In the course of the construction, reconstruction and renewal of **forest improvement infrastructure** the damage to the surface must be kept to a minimum and the watercourses shall be prevented from clogging to preserve the natural water regime of the watercourse as much as possible, reduce the reaching of sediments to the upstream catchment and natural watercourses and prevent the release of fuels and lubricants into watercourses.

*Indicators:* the natural condition of the natural water body has been preserved and, if necessary, sediment ponds, etc have been established to prevent damage. Watercourses (streams, ditches, rivers) are not blocked after the completion of the **forest improvement work**. Fuels or lubricants have not entered water bodies.

8.6. **Criterion 6. Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of the cultural and socio-economic ecosystem services of the forest**

8.6.1. The cultural and socio-economic values of the **forest** shall be considered in carrying out **forest management work**.

*Note:* In case of **plantations** the requirement has to be met at least in **buffer strips** and set-aside areas of **plantations**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has mapped **forests** of cultural value. The list of stand compartments that can be identified on the map and in nature is also deemed as being mapped.

8.6.2. The **organization** shall not impose unreasonable restrictions on the right of entry in the forest. According to the right of entry, the **forest** is open to everyone, taking into account the characteristics of the economic activities of the **organization**. Restrictions are permitted in justified cases, such as the protection of property rights, ensuring the health of the **forest**, gaining financial benefit for the provision of **key ecosystem services**, prevention of deliberate littering and ensuring safety or in case the provision of **ecosystem services** may threaten the preservation of natural habitats.

*Indicators:* the use of the **forest** is possible within the framework of the right of entry, restrictions to the right of entry have been appropriately justified. In recreational forests it is possible to use the trails and roads after the completion of the **forest management work**.

8.6.3. The historical, cultural and spiritual values provided in national legal acts or agreed upon between the **local community** and the **organization** shall be taken into account.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has preserved cross-trees with registered historical crosses; registered cross-forests and immovable monuments have not been damaged. The values to be preserved (eg graves, tombs, cemeteries, burial mounds, stone fences, grove springs or healing springs, grove stones or worship stones, forest bunkers) and **forest management** practices in these areas have been agreed upon between the **local community** and the **organization**.

8.6.4. Forest management shall promote the cultural and socio-economic well-being of the local population in the long term. The **local community** will be involved in the planning of the **forest management work** where appropriate.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has identified significant cultural and **key ecosystem services**. Justified suggestions made by the **local community** have been responded and addressed.

- 8.6.5. The best use is made of the traditional knowledge and innovative ideas of the **local communities** and the benefits and costs arising from the utilization of such knowledge are being shared equitably.

*Indicators:* in case the traditional knowledge and innovative ideas of the **local communities** have been used, agreements with **local communities** have been concluded and documented, as appropriate.

- 8.6.6. The **organization** shall take into account and promote the role of forestry in Estonian economy and local socio-economic well-being; therefore, attention is paid to the employment of the people in the region, as well as to the need of the businesses for raw material in Estonia.

*Indicators:* regional labour has been used where possible, Estonian businesses adding value to and using timber have been preferred in the supply of **wood**.

- 8.6.7. The organization shall enable research in its **forest**, taking into account the ownership, the specific character of the economic activities of the **organization**, the safety of the people and the impact on forest resources and timber quality, as well as **key ecosystem services**. Research that supports sustainable forest management is preferred in **PEFC-certified forests**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has not created unreasonable obstacles to research or has entered into necessary agreements with researchers.

- 8.6.8. The **organization** shall allow the national defence to carry out trainings in its forest, taking into account the ownership, specific character of the economic activities of the **organization**, safety of people and the impact on the growing stock, timber quality and **key ecosystem services**.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has not created unreasonable obstacles to the trainings of the national defence.

## 9. Performance evaluation

### 9.1. Monitoring, analysis and evaluation

- 9.1.1. The **organization** shall periodically evaluate the change in forest resources, the quality of the **forest management work** and its impact on **forest** and **key ecosystem services**, and correct its activities, if necessary. The organization shall also assess the environmental, social and economic impact of the **forest management work**.

*Indicators:* the quality of **forest management work** and various impacts have been evaluated. The results of the evaluation have been taken into account. The results of the evaluation have been taken into account in the planning and implementing of **forest management work** and the results of evaluation have been added to the **management plan**.

- 9.1.2. The existence of natural and man-made damage and its impact on the health of the **forest** and the quality of **key ecosystem services** shall be periodically monitored and corrected, if necessary.

*Indicators:* natural and man-made damage has been registered. The **organization** has set monitoring frequency.

- 9.1.3. The **organization** shall regularly monitor and evaluate the use and condition of **commercial non-wood forest products** and correct its activities, if necessary.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has monitored and evaluated the use and condition of **commercial non-wood forest products**. The **organization** has set monitoring frequency.

- 9.1.4. The **organization** shall regularly monitor the compliance with occupational health and safety requirements and correct its activities, if necessary.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has carried out the risk analysis of the working environment, established safety guides and carried out safety instructions. In case of accidents at work, investigations of the accidents have been carried out (a register of accidents at work and investigation reports are available) and measures have been taken to prevent the occurrence of similar accidents.

### 9.2. Internal audit

- 9.2.1. The **organization** shall, no less than once during the certification period, analyse its activities in planning and performing the work and the compliance of the activities with the requirements of the **PEFC standard**.

9.2.2. The **organization** shall:

- a) plan, establish, implement and maintain an internal audit programme including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting of internal audits and take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous internal 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.

*Indicators about the clause 9.2.:* internal audit has been carried out and its results have been approved by the management.

### 9.3. Management review

- 9.3.1. The **organization** shall annually review the **management system**; the review decision shall include the current situation concerning the activities taken as a result of the previous **management review**, changes in inputs and internal functioning important for the **management system**, opportunities and decisions for continuous improvement of the **management system**, and information about the performance of the activities of the **organization**, including trends in non-conformities and corrective measures, as well as monitoring and internal audit results identified in the previous audit.

*Indicators:* the **management system** is functioning effectively. Necessary corrective measures have been taken. Trends, non-conformities and corrective measures, as well as possibilities for constant improving of the **management system** have been discussed at management level. Decisions on continuous improvement of the **management system**, as well as making amendments to the **management system** if applicable, have been made. The results of the review by the management have been documented.

## 10. Improvement

### 10.1. Nonconformity and corrective action

10.1.1. When a nonconformity with the standard is detected in the course of audit, the **organization** shall react to the nonconformity and

- 10.1.1.1. assess the reasons for the nonconformity;
- 10.1.1.2. plan measures to prevent the recurrence of the nonconformity and, if possible, eliminate it;
- 10.1.1.3. address the results of the nonconformities;
- 10.1.1.4. assess the effectiveness of the corrective action.

*Indicators about the clause 10.1.1.:* the causes for the nonconformity have been assessed and measures for the prevention of the recurrence of the nonconformity have been planned (including at management level). Corrective action shall be in compliance with the impact of the identified nonconformity. Changes to the **management system** have been made, if necessary. The nonconformities and corrective actions of the **organization**, as well as the assessment of the efficiency of corrective measures have been documented.

### 10.2. Continual improvement

10.2.1. The **organization** shall maintain an up-to-date and suitable management system.

*Indicators:* the **organization** has developed a basis for the assessment of the ability of the **management system** to react to nonconformities in suitable and timely manner and to provide evidence thereof.

## Annex 1. Specifications for plantations

Standard clause number	Standard requirement	Specifications for plantations
8.1.1.	The objective of forest management is the maintenance and enhancement of the <b>forest</b> and its <b>ecosystem services</b> (including the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of <b>forest</b> ).	In case of <b>plantations</b> the requirement has to be met at least in <b>buffer strips</b> and set-aside areas of <b>plantations</b> .
8.1.5.	Conversion of <b>native forest land, ecologically valuable non-forest land</b> and <b>heritage landscapes</b> to <b>plantations</b> and other <b>man-made/cultural non-forest land</b> is not permitted.	<b>Plantations</b> established on <b>native forest land, ecologically valuable non-forest land</b> and <b>heritage landscapes</b> after 31.12.2010 cannot be certified.
8.2.1.	The good status of the <b>ecosystem</b> shall be maintained or enhanced, if necessary in the <b>forest</b> by making the best use of the <b>forest structure</b> and natural processes. A damaged or gradually impoverished <b>ecosystem</b> with reduced ecological integrity (degraded <b>ecosystem</b> ) shall be restored wherever and as far as economically feasible or left to natural development (succession).	In case of <b>plantations</b> the requirement has to be met at least in <b>buffer strips</b> and set-aside areas of <b>plantations</b> .
8.2.2.	The viability and resilience of the <b>forest</b> to adverse environmental factors shall be ensured to contribute to the maintenance of the genetic, species and structural diversity of the <b>forest</b> ; the natural regulation mechanisms shall be supported.	In case of <b>plantations</b> the requirement has to be met at least in <b>buffer strips</b> and set-aside areas of <b>plantations</b> .
8.2.11.	Only organic fertilizers, natural mineral fertilizers, natural soil improvers, biostimulants and bioregulators can be used on <b>forest land</b> , unless prohibited by national legislation.  <i>Note 1:</i> natural mineral fertilizers are eg wood ash, peat ash, straw, hay and root ash; soil improvers are lime, dolomite powder, oil shale ash.	In case of <b>plantations</b> the use of fertilizers shall be controlled and not harmful to the environment. Supporting the natural processes of soil shall be preferred to fertilization.
8.4.1.	The planning of <b>forest management work</b> shall take into account the preservation and conservation of biodiversity of local origin at <b>landscape, ecosystem</b> , species, as well as genetic level.	In case of <b>plantations</b> the requirement has to be met at least in <b>buffer strips</b> and set-aside areas of <b>plantations</b> .
8.4.6.	The <b>cultivating material</b> suitable for the habitat type and originating from a permitted region shall be	Invasive and/or alien species and hybrids



	used for reforestation and <b>afforestation</b> . Invasive and/or alien species and hybrids prohibited in Estonia shall not be used in the <b>plantation</b> .	prohibited in Estonia shall not be used in the <b>plantation</b> .
8.4.9.	Techniques aiming at maintaining or improving the <b>structural</b> variability of the <b>forest</b> and the diversity of the micro-habitats shall be preferred in the course of <b>forest management work</b> . <b>land</b> .	In case of <b>plantations</b> the requirement has to be met at least in <b>buffer strips</b> and set-aside areas of <b>plantations</b> .
8.4.10.	<b>Forest management work</b> shall be carried out in a way that it does not cause permanent damage to the <b>forest</b> as an <b>ecosystem</b> . Measures shall be taken to maintain or enhance <b>forest structure</b> and biodiversity and/or <b>key ecosystem services</b> where possible.	In case of <b>plantations</b> the requirement has to be met at least in the <b>buffer strips</b> and set-aside areas of <b>plantations</b> ; permanent damage to the soil shall not be caused in the <b>plantation</b> area.
8.4.13.	Ecologically important structural elements (eg standing and lying dead trees, hollow trees, trees with traces of burning, areas of old trees, infrequent tree species in the stand, large rocks, stone fences, natural kettle holes) shall be maintained while carrying out <b>forest management work</b> to preserve biodiversity taking into account their impact on the health of the <b>forest</b> , the quality of <b>timber</b> and the state of the <b>ecosystem</b> , neighbouring <b>ecosystems</b> and safety of people.	In case of <b>plantations</b> the requirement has to be met at least in <b>buffer strips</b> and set-aside areas of <b>plantations</b> .
8.6.1.	The cultural and socio-economic values of the <b>forest</b> shall be considered in carrying out <b>forest management work</b> .	In case of <b>plantations</b> the requirement has to be met at least in <b>buffer strips</b> and set-aside areas of <b>plantations</b> .

## Annex 2. List of applicable legislation

- Forest Act
  - Forest management rules
- Forest management guide
- Requirements for tests and examinations of forest managers, the procedure for the organisation and evaluation of test and examination results and the establishment and the rules of procedure of the committee of experts
- Requirements for the technical equipment of the forest management work
- A guide to the methodology for forest assessment
- List of data to be submitted in the forest notification and the procedure and deadlines for the submission, processing and registration of the forest notification
- Rules for the carriage of timber, requirements for Deeds of Delivery and Acceptance of Timber and Bill of Lading, and form of notification submitted to the Tax and Customs Board for logging rights or timber sold or purchased
- Plant Propagation and Plant Variety Rights Act
- Requirements for the origin of the source material of cultivated material, supply and marketing of cultivated material permitted for reforestation
- List of alien tree species allowed for reforestation
- Procedure for the calculation of the cost of forest located on the land to be privatised
- Procedures for carrying out improvement cutting and the procedure for cutting boundary lines on unlawfully transferred land
- The terms and conditions of special carriage, the procedure for special carriage, issue of special permits as well as compensation of costs caused to the road owner, the fee for reviewing a special permit and the special fee rates.
- Compensation of costs caused to the road owner by special carriage, special fee rates and the procedure for issuing special permits.
- Rules for driving large and / or heavy-goods vehicles
- The methods for measuring of timber and determining the volume thereof and the requirements set for measurement accuracy and for the documentation of the results of measurements
- Guide for the classification and selection of habitats
- Distribution of counties with high, medium and small forest fire risk
- Requirements for drag roads
- Nature Conservation Act
- Hunting Act
- Heritage Protection Act
- Land Improvement Act
- Earth's Crust Act
- Water Act
- General Part of the Environmental Code Act
- Occupational Health and Safety Act

- Employment Contracts Act
- Law of Property Act
- Law of Property Act Implementation Act
- Law of Obligations Act
- General Part of the Economic Activities Code Act
- Commercial Code
- Income Tax Act
- Value-Added Tax Act
- Land Register Act
- Restrictions on Acquisition of Immovables Act
- Land Cadastre Act
- Land Tax Act
- Taxation Act
- Plant Protection Act
- Fire Safety Act
- Road Transport Act
- Customs Act
- Planning Act
- Building Code
- An Act to Implement the Building Code and the Planning Act
- Accounting Act
- Anti-corruption Act
- Penal Code
- Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act
- Environmental Taxes Act
- Tourism Act
- Statutes of the State Forest Management Centre
- Procedure for the right to cut forest and sale of forest material growing in a state forest
- Procedure for the sale of cutting rights and timber in state forest
- Social Tax Act
- Trade Unions Act
- Community-scale Involvement of Employees Act
- Collective Agreements Act
- Collective Labour Dispute Resolution Act
- List of occupational hazards and work prohibited to minors
  
- Occupational health and safety requirements set for the workplace
- Occupational health and safety requirements set for the use of the work equipment
- Occupational health and safety requirements for the use of dangerous chemicals and materials containing such chemicals
- Occupational health and safety requirements for manual handling of loads

- Occupational health and safety requirements for working environment affected by noise, the level of noise in the working environment and the procedure for measuring noise
- Occupational health and safety requirements for working environment affected by vibration, the level of vibration in the working environment and the procedure for measuring vibration
- Occupational health and safety requirements for working environment affected by electromagnetic fields, the level of and application values for the exposure to electromagnetic fields and the procedure for measuring electromagnetic fields
- Occupational health and safety requirements for working environment affected by biological hazards
- Unemployment Insurance Act
- Equal Treatment Act
- Gender Equality Act
- Child Protection Act
- Public Procurement Act
- Legislation regulating the felling of trees in the local government
- Good Agricultural Practice
- Protection rules for protected parks, arboretums and stands