

Estonian Forest Certification Council

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PEFC national forest management standard for Estonia

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Estonian Forest Certification Council

Aim of the PEFC national forest management standard for Estonia (hereinafter referred to as the Standard)

The Standard requirements can be implemented for performing certification of forest property as following:

- * Individual certification of the forest property;
- * Forest owner group certification.

Individual certification of the forest property

The forest owner or manager submits certification application directly to a certification body and PEFC forest management certificate is issued directly to the forest owner or manager.

Forest owner group certification

The forest owners or managers can join together and apply for the certification as a group. In group certification all members of the group decide to achieve and ensure the conformity with the Standard.

Terms and definitions

ECOLOGICAL NETWORK – The network refers to such position of detached plots of forest land or their connection with ecological corridors that guarantee interaction between the populations of species for the survival of the species.

PLANTATION - Tree and shrub plantation (pursuant to Forest Act) is a site of habitat established for intensive growing of trees and shrubs on non-forest land where trees and shrubs are grown with regular planting spacing and managed uniformly by age.

LARGE-SCALE FOREST MANAGER – with forest area exceeding 100 000 ha

FOREST MANAGER – forest owner or person holding forest management rights

INTERESTED PARTY – adjacent neighbour, local community

RETENTION TREE – trees necessary for ensuring biological diversity, which are retained in the clearcut area. These trees are selected from amongst overstory trees of different species with the largest diameter, preferably broadleaved trees, pines and aspens, as well as trees with distinctive features, e.g. burns, hollows, or big branches.

Public input and accessibility of the Standard

The Standard is a public document and can be freely distributed to all interested parties, provided that the standard is distributed without any modifications. The actual version of the Standard is publicly available for download and/or printout on www.pefc.ee.

This standard is subject for consultation and comments from all interested parties. All interested parties who have comments regarding this Standard or have suggestions for improving it are requested to send them in written to Estonian Forest Certification Council (Mustamäe tee 50, Tallinn 10621) or by e-mail info@pefc.ee. Based on comments and/or suggestions from interested parties the Estonian Forest Certification Council could introduce the improvements, in accordance with Standard review procedures.

The Standard was approved by the Estonian Forest Certification Council on August 10, 2015 and it is subject to a recurring revision after 5-years, or during the intermediate period in accordance with Standard review procedures.

PEFC national forest management standard for Estonia

This Standard is developed and approved by Estonian Forest Certification Council (National governing body). The Council has the support of the major forest owners' organizations (by managed forest territory) and is the member of PEFC Council (www.pefc.org).

The standard working group was established according to the principle of participation involving the representatives of as many interested parties as possible (the working group was open for all stakeholders). Economic, social as well as nature conservation aspects of forests were analyzed.

Information about the results of the work of the working groups was communicated on regular basis to the public. The Internet homepage was active, as well as forestry mailing lists. Information about the most important developments of the establishment of the certification scheme was provided at www.eramets.ee. All interested persons had an opportunity to send their opinions and comments regarding the Standard.

The original wording of the criteria of the standard was formulated by competent specialists. The specialists presented their work to a broad audience for discussion. Some of the discussion was carried out by e-mail.

The discussions were focusing on the analysis of the different criteria of the standard. Arguments for and against the structure, content and compatibility of the criteria with the current legislation and forest management practice were presented. The procedure can be described as follows: members of the working group made oral comments on the criteria, minutes of the meeting were taken. The manager of the working group prepared an amended version of the standard after the minutes of the meeting had been completed.

The principles of the standard were formulated as "criteria". The criteria are defined as the principle characteristic features of forest and management ensuring sustainable and effective development of forest management and conservation. The criteria describe forest as an object and forest management as a process. Correspondence of forest and forest management to the defined standard can be verified against "indicators" expressing concrete volume in terms of objects or processes. The descriptive indicators include also requirements for documented evidence; which shall be presented by forest managers.

Criteria

1. Forest management plan shall be established for the managed forest (IS Cr. 5.1)

- 1.1. Forest management planning shall aim to maintain or increase forests and other wooded areas and enhance the quality of the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of forest resources, including soil and water.
- 1.2. Forest management plan or information related to it shall include:
 - 1.2.1. Forest inventory data not older than 10 yrs;
 - 1.2.2. Total area of young growths, areas left for natural regeneration and open-canopy forest plantations;
 - 1.2.3. Nature conservation restrictions and other restrictions to forest management;
 - 1.2.4. Estimates and general plan of the volume of forestry works for at least 10 years starting from compiling the plan;
 - 1.2.5. Map of forest stand;
 - 1.2.6. A large-scale forest manager shall additionally have:
 - 1.2.6.1. The forecast of the composition and the growing stock of the forest for at least 10 years starting from compiling the plan;
 - 1.2.6.2. Map of the road network and ditches;
 - 1.2.6.3. Estimate on the condition of roads and the need for building new roads.
- 1.3. Forest management plan shall be periodically updated.
 - 1.3.1. Management plan revision shall occur in timely manner and the revision period shall not exceed 10 years.
- 1.4. Forest management shall be take into account the results of scientific research and where relevant, contribute to research activities and data collection needed for sustainable forest management or support relevant research activities carried out by other organizations, as appropriate.

2. Objectives of forest use shall be clearly specified and made available for interested persons (IS Cr. 5.1)

- 2.1. By means of the forest management plan, appropriate silvicultural measures shall be planned to maintain or reach a level of the growing stock that is economically, ecologically and socially desirable.
- 2.2. Objectives of forest use shall be specified in the forest management plan or another document. Objectives of forest use shall be generally established by forest manager in the course of preparing the forest management plan.
- 2.3. Objectives of forest use, estimate of forestry works and the general plan shall be available for interested persons.
- 2.4. Conversion of forests to other types of land use, including conversion of primary forests to forest plantations, shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion:
 - a) is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation relevant for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority including consultation with materially and directly interested persons and organisations; and
 - b) entails a small proportion of forest type; and
 - c) does not have negative impacts on threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species or other protected areas; and
 - d) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.

3. An up-to-date monitoring system shall be implemented (IS Cr. 5.1)

- 3.1. FOREST MANAGER shall implement a monitoring system to monitor, at least:
 - 3.1.1. The condition of forests and damage to forests
 - 3.1.2. Quantity of harvested timber, area of harvesting and reforested area
- 3.2. LARGE-SCALE FOREST MANAGER shall additionally monitor:
 - 3.2.1. The quantity of non-wood forest products collected for sale (Christmas trees, seeds, seedlings, wild game);
 - 3.2.2. Littering of forests;
 - 3.2.3. The number of seed and retention trees retained during regeneration cutting per hectare;
 - 3.2.4. Damage caused to forest soil and roads in the course of forestry works;
- 3.3. Forest damaged shall be registered and appropriate institutions shall be notified.
- 3.4. Forest monitoring shall give feedback to forest management plan.

4. Forest management shall ensure the preservation of objects protected under heritage and nature conservation and objects of cultural value (IS Cr. 5.1)

- 4.1. FOREST MANAGERS know the location of objects of natural or cultural value in certified land. *They are able to show them either on site or the objects have been entered in GIS.*
- 4.2. Forest management shall not deteriorate the condition of known objects of nature and heritage conservation and other objects of cultural value.
- 4.3. If objects of potential protection value are discovered, the relevant state agency shall be notified of the findings and care is taken to avoid causing damage to these objects.
- 4.4. Management of areas of protection value is performed pursuant to the established procedure.
- 4.5. LARGE-SCALE FOREST MANAGER shall continuously update information about the registered protected areas in their lands.

5. Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality (IS Cr. 5.2)

- 5.1. Forest management plan or its equivalent shall specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation of and damages to forest ecosystems. Forest management planning shall make use of strategic instruments set up to support these activities.
- 5.2. During forest management, FOREST MANAGER shall preserve the parts of forest that are protected pursuant to law.
- 5.3. FOREST MANAGER is able to show the protected parts of the forest either on site or the objects have been entered in GIS.
- 5.4. LARGE-SCALE FOREST MANAGER: shall protect the representative sample (at least 5%) of the existing rare and/or endangered ecosystems in their natural state.
- 5.5. FOREST MANAGER shall organize management of game population to minimise damages to the forest by game.
- 5.6. Disposal of waste on forest land shall be strictly avoided during forest management activities.
 - 5.6.1. The spillage of oil during forest management operations shall be avoided. Machinery shall be supplied with oil spill cleanup kit (shovel, absorbent and storage container/bag for contaminated material).

6. Appropriate techniques and means shall be applied to protect plants against diseases and pests (IS Cr. 5.2)

- 6.1. The use of World Health Organization (WHO) Type 1A and 1B pesticides and other

highly toxic pesticides shall be prohibited.

- 6.2. Pesticides, such as chlorinated hydrocarbons whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use, and any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. (Note: “pesticides banned by international agreements” are defined in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants 2001, as amended.)
- 6.3. The use of pesticides shall follow the instructions given by the pesticide producer and be implemented with proper equipment and training.
- 6.4. Where fertilisers are used, they shall be applied in a controlled manner and with due consideration for the environment.
- 6.5. For protection against pest shall be preferred appropriate silvicultural techniques and natural resources.

7. Forest management shall maintain the productivity of forests (IS Cr. 5.3)

- 7.1. Forest management planning shall aim to maintain the capability of forests to produce a range of wood and non-wood forest products and services on a sustainable basis.
- 7.2. Regeneration, tending and harvesting operations shall be carried out in time, and in a way that does not reduce the productive capacity of the site (for example, by avoiding damage to retained stands and trees as well as to the forest soil) and by using appropriate systems.
- 7.3. For regeneration of harvested parts of the forest, the tree species suitable to the habitat and the objectives of the forest manager shall be taken into consideration, provided that the sustainable productive capacity of forests is not significantly reduced.
- 7.4. Forest management planning shall aim to achieve sound economic performance taking into account any available market studies.

8. Forest management shall encourage the diversified use of the forest (IS Cr. 5.3)

- 8.1. If FOREST MANAGER also manages non-wood resources, the industrial potential of these resources shall be ascertained.
- 8.2. In the case of industrial exploitation of by-products, also plan concerning the use of the by-products of the forest, conforming to the forest management plan, shall be presented in the annex to the forest management plan.
- 8.3. The methods of use of by-products of the forest must not in the long term deteriorate the condition of forest and significantly decrease its productive capacity (both in timber production and non-wood forest use).
- 8.4. Protected and endangered plant and animal species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes.

9. Techniques suitable for the habitat shall be used for soil scarification (IS Cr. 5.4)

- 9.1. Scarification of the soil must not hinder the further forest management or cause erosion, deflation, paludification or deterioration of the site in any other manner.

10. Forest management shall ensure high-quality regeneration (IS Cr. 5.4)

- 10.1. Forest management shall ensure successful regeneration through natural regeneration or, where not appropriate, planting that is adequate to ensure the quantity and quality of the forest resources.
- 10.2. For reforestation and afforestation, origins of native species and local provenances that are well-adapted to site conditions shall be preferred, where appropriate. Only those introduced species, provenances or varieties shall be used

whose impacts on the ecosystem and on the genetic integrity of native species and local provenances have been evaluated, and if negative impacts can be avoided or minimised.

- 10.3. Regeneration shall be monitored and damages shall be reported to the relevant government agency.
- 10.4. Genetically-modified trees shall not be used in the forest.

11. Maintenance cutting shall ensure the good condition of the remaining forest (IS Cr. 5.4)

- 11.1. The aim of maintenance cutting is creating favourable growth conditions for remaining trees and enhancing the quality of the stand by removing trees with poorer health and tree trunk features.
- 11.2. In the course of maintenance cutting, damaging the forest soil shall be avoided.
- 11.3. In the course of maintenance cutting, damaging the retained trees shall be avoided .
- 11.4. Elements of stands necessary in terms of biological diversity (standing dead wood and down timber, retention trees etc.) shall be retained during maintenance.
- 11.5. Forest management practices shall, where appropriate, promote a diversity of both horizontal and vertical structures (uneven-aged stands) and the diversity of species (mixed stands).

12. Regeneration cutting shall avoid causing damage to the environment (IS Cr. 5.4)

- 12.1. In the course of planning regeneration cutting, the specifics of the site shall be taken into consideration and measures shall be taken for reforestation already during the cutting (if necessary, the vital undergrowth and seed trees shall be retained).
- 12.2. In regeneration cutting and planning thereof, the risk of post-cutting damage to neighbouring stands shall be minimised (windthrow due to clear-cut adjacent area, higher risk of pest damage due to the timber that has been left behind, etc.)
- 12.3. Causing damage to forest soil shall be avoided during regeneration cutting.
- 12.4. Structural elements necessary in terms of biological diversity (standing dead trees and down timber, retention trees etc.) shall be retained during regeneration cutting.
- 12.5. In regeneration cutting, the specific features of the landscape shall be taken into consideration and valuable elements of landscape and objects of heritage culture shall be preserved.

13. Land improvement in the forest shall be carefully planned (IS Cr. 5.5)

- 13.1. In managed forests suffering from excess humidity, new land improvement systems shall be constructed in justified cases;
- 13.2. If new systems are constructed in an area of more than 100 hectares, environmental impact assessment shall be conducted.
- 13.3. Existing land improvement systems shall be maintained in good working order.
- 13.4. Maintenance, renovation and reconstruction of land improvement systems shall proceed from valid legislation.

14. Use of roads for transporting timber and construction of new roads shall take economic, natural and social conditions into consideration (IS Cr. 5.5)

- 14.1. Damaging the road upon transport of timber shall be avoided, but if damage occurs, the damaged roads shall be repaired.
- 14.2. The owner is entitled to restrict the use of roads, if it is justified (in terms of protection of ownership rights, structural conditions of the roads etc.).

- 14.3. Traffic restrictions related to road closure shall be signposted as specified by law.
- 14.4. Infrastructure shall be planned and constructed in a way that minimises damage to ecosystems, especially to rare, sensitive or representative ecosystems and genetic reserves, and that takes threatened or other key species – in particular their migration patterns – into consideration.

15. Forest management shall consider the interests of the local community (IS Cr. 5.6)

- 15.1. Forest management planning shall aim to respect the multiple functions of forests to society, give due regard to the role of forestry in rural development, and especially consider new opportunities for employment in connection with the socio- economic functions of forests.
- 15.2. Forest management shall take into account the comprehensive plans and thematic plans of local governments and the resulting restrictions.
- 15.3. Forest management practices shall make the best use of local forest-related experience and knowledge.
- 15.4. If possible, local labor force shall be used for forest management.
- 15.5. Information on forestry works shall be accessible for interested persons.
- 15.6. Forest management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities.
- 15.7. Appropriate mechanisms shall be used for resolving complaints and disputes that respectfully involve and consider the disputants in process.
- 15.8. Records shall be maintained of disputes over tenure and use rights.

16. Forest management shall not place unjustified restrictions to right of public access (IS Cr. 5.6)

- 16.1. FOREST MANAGER shall not without good reason impose restrictions to staying in the forest from sunrise to sunset and to gathering mushrooms, berries or medicinal herbs.
- 16.2. Restrictions to the right of public access due to the commercial use of by-products shall have to be justified.
- 16.3. FOREST MANAGER may restrict gathering by-products in the commercial growing areas of the respective cultures or in case such activity may seriously endanger the preservation of natural communities.
- 16.4. Without good reason, no restrictions shall be placed on forest recreation. Good reasons may include, for example, the fire-risk period, restrictions for ensuring safety during cutting works, hunting, nature conservation restrictions pursuant to law, protection of cultural property and ownership, temporary measure for prevention of registered repeated acts of vandalism or illegal waste disposal.

17. Ongoing training for forest managers and forestry workers and enhancement of their awareness (IS Cr. 5.6)

- 17.1. Forest managers, contractors, employees and forest owners shall be provided with sufficient information and encouraged to keep up-to-date through continuous training in relation to sustainable forest management.
- 17.2. People employed in forest management have completed at least one training course in relation to sustainable forest management (incl. biological diversity-related training) within the last five years.
- 17.3. Forestry works shall be performed by competent persons.

18. Occupational safety requirements shall be followed in forest management (IS Cr. 5.6)

- 18.1. Forestry work shall be planned, organised and performed in a manner that enables health and accident risks to be identified and all reasonable measures to be applied to protect workers from work-related risks. Workers shall be informed about the risks involved with their work and about preventive measures.
- 18.2. FOREST MANAGER shall organise occupational safety training for employees.
- 18.3. Working conditions shall be safe and everyone, who is assigned a task at forestry works, is supervised and trained about safe working techniques.

19. Forest management shall comply with all laws and regulations and the requirements of this standard (IS Cr. 5.7)

- 19.1. FOREST MANAGER shall comply with all applicable laws.
- 19.2. Contracts made by FOREST MANAGER with contractors shall include the obligation to comply with the requirements of this standard and the forest manager shall monitor compliance with the requirements.
- 19.3. Forest management shall involve submitting all documents prescribed by the law and payment of all taxes prescribed by the law.
- 19.4. The ownership rights and the form of land possession of the respective forest area shall be clearly specified, documented and stipulated. Also the legal, customary and traditional rights related with the forest land shall be explained, recognised and observed.
- 19.5. Documents giving evidence of the compliance of forest management with the requirements of the standard shall be preserved.