

Conformity assessment of the
**Vietnam Forest Certification Office Scheme for
Sustainable Forest Management**
against the PEFC Council Requirements

Final Report | August 2020

ABOUT ITS GLOBAL

ITS Global is a consultancy that specialises in public policy in the Asia Pacific region. Its expertise encompasses international trade and economics, direct foreign investment, environment and sustainability, international aid and economic development, and corporate social responsibility and management of strategic risks.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

BMP	Best Management Practices
CB	Certification Body
CoC	Chain of Custody
ENGO	Environmental Non-Government Organization
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FM	Forest Management
FMU	Forest Management Unit
GD	Guidance Document
I	Indicator
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
PEFCC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Council
SDG	Standard Development Group
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
ST	Standard
TD	Technical Document
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

International Trade Strategies Pty Ltd (trading as ITS Global Asia Pacific) was invited by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) Council to tender for the conformity assessment of the Vietnam Forest Certification System (VFCS) Scheme for Sustainable Forest Management (hereafter referred to as the Applicant Scheme), against the requirements of the PEFC Council.

Vietnam Forest Certification Office (VFCO) submitted its standards to the PEFC Council for endorsement and mutual recognition on 6 September 2019. Scheme documentation includes standards and procedural documents governing standard setting and standard review procedures, investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals, notification of certification bodies, sustainable forest management requirements, requirements for bodies providing audit and certification services, logo usage rules, and chain of custody requirements. The Applicant Scheme includes provisions for individual and group certification.

METHODOLOGY

This report assesses the Applicant Scheme's rules governing the maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests; and whether the applicant scheme complies with these requirements in practice.

ITS Global has reviewed the content of the Applicant Scheme for technical competence and completeness. ITS Global has assessed the Applicant Scheme's conformity with the requirements of the PEFC Council, as stipulated in PEFC GD *Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Systems and their Revision*.

SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT

The following aspects of the Applicant Scheme have been assessed against the PEFC international standards and technical documents where relevant:

- A general analysis of the structure of the system of the proposed Applicant Scheme (i.e. national PEFC forest certification system)
- An assessment of the standard setting procedures and process against PEFC ST 1001:2010, Standard Setting - Requirements
- An assessment of the forest certification standard(s) against PEFC ST 1003:2010, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements
- An assessment of the group certification model against PEFC ST 1002:2010, Group Forest Management Certification - Requirements
- Procedures for logo licensing (PEFC ST 2001:2008 v2, PEFC Logo usage rules - Requirements)
- An assessment of the complaints and dispute resolution procedures against PEFC GD1004:2009, Administration of PEFC scheme, chapter 8

- An assessment of certification and accreditation procedures, as defined in Annex 6 (Certification and Accreditation Procedures)
- Any other aspects which can affect functions, credibility and efficiency of the Applicant Scheme.

ITS Global has also been asked to provide an additional assessment of the standard setting procedures against PEFC ST 1001:2017, Standard Setting – Requirements for future development of VFCS. This is provided as an Annex to the report.

The following normative references have been used for this assessment:

- PEFC ST 1001, Standard Setting - Requirements
- PEFC ST 1003, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements.
- PEFC ST 1002, Group Forest Management Certification - Requirements
- PEFC ST 2002:2013, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements
- PEFC ST 2003:2012, Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard
- PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC scheme, chapter 8
- TD Annex 6 (Certification and Accreditation Procedures)
- PEFC ST 2001, PEFC Logo usage rules - Requirements (hereinafter PEFC Logo usage rules)
- PEFC GL7/2007, PEFC Council procedures for the investigation and resolution of complaints and Appeals
- ISO/IEC 17021, Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ISO/IEC 17065, Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- ISO 19011, Guidelines for auditing management systems

Note: 'Viet Nam' and 'Vietnam' are used interchangeably in this report. All refer to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The consultant recommends that the Vietnam Forest Certification System be endorsed by the PEFC Board of Directors.

The consultant also notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the completion of the assessment process significantly, and that this endorsement be made as soon as possible.

This recommendation is made under the condition that a small number of minor non-conformities will be remedied within a six-month period, noted below in the Summary of Findings.

3. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The following is a summary of findings for the full report:

GENERAL

VFCS submitted its standards to the PEFC Council for approval in September 2019. Scheme documentation includes standards and procedural documents governing standard setting and standard review procedures, investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals, notification of certification bodies, sustainable forest management requirements, requirements for bodies providing audit and certification services, logo usage rules, and chain of custody requirements. The Applicant Scheme includes provisions for individual and group certification.

The structure of the scheme and the documentation is clear and for the most part unambiguous.

STANDARD SETTING PROCEDURES

The System conforms to the PEFC requirements.

STANDARD SETTING PROCESS

The System conforms to the PEFC requirements. There was a minor non-conformity noted in the process relating to the commencement and conclusion of the public consultation period on the enquiry draft, which was not announced clearly. However, this did not impact the integrity of the public consultation on the draft. Stakeholder consultations as part of this assessment indicated that all relevant stakeholders were aware of the public consultation process commencement and conclusion, and none was excluded.

FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

In the forest management standard there were a number of minor non-conformities. They are as follows.

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

There is no requirement for a management plan or its equivalent to be made public. During the comment period VFCS provided a re-draft of the relevant indicator, which requires the public availability of the draft or its equivalent.

5.2.8 The use of pesticides shall be minimised and appropriate silvicultural alternatives and other biological measures preferred.

It is understood that there was a translation error between the Vietnamese version of the standard and the English version. The Vietnamese word that could be interpreted as minimise was translated to 'strictly control'.

During the comment period VFCO provided a re-draft of the relevant indicator.

GROUP CERTIFICATION MODEL

The System conforms to the PEFC requirements.

CHAIN OF CUSTODY STANDARD

The System conforms to the PEFC requirements.

PROCEDURES FOR LOGO LICENSING

The System conforms to the PEFC requirements.

CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION ARRANGEMENTS

A minor non-conformity in the certification procedures has been noted. The scheme documentation as submitted does not include requirements for usage of information from external parties as audit evidence. However, VFCO has provided a draft of a revised requirement for the standard that addresses the issue. This was provided during the comment period.

The scheme documentation also does not require that an accredited certificate bears an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body. Similarly, VFCO has provided an undertaking that this requirements will be addressed within a six-month period.

It is the consultant's view that the action taken by the VFCO in relation to external evidence means that this is a minor rather than major non-conformity and does not impact the integrity of the system. Similarly, the requirement of accreditation body symbol use does not undermine the integrity of the accreditation procedures themselves, as underlined by the necessary accreditation requirements.

COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

The System conforms to the PEFC requirements.

GENERAL OBSERVATION

The translation of the VFCS Standards from Vietnamese into English contain a significant number of minor grammatical and syntactical errors. These errors do not compromise the functioning of the system or prevent it from being understood in English. Recording and correction of all of these errors is beyond the scope of this report. However, VFCS should consider a wholesale, professional English-text proofread of the standards. Some more urgent editorial suggestions will be provided in the Final Draft report.

ITS Global has also been asked to provide an additional assessment of the standard setting procedures against PEFC ST 1001:2017, Standard Setting – Requirements for future development of VFCS. This assessment is not part of this main evaluation and will be provided separately.

SPECIFIC OBSERVATION

It was noted through the field assessment that the Vietnam War (1955 – 1975) resulted in a large number of unexploded ordnances throughout Vietnam. These devices have and continue to result in injuries and death to Vietnam’s rural population, particularly in forest areas.

The Government of Vietnam has provided significant resources to disposing of these devices under the coordination of Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs. The consultant believes that the VFCS Forest Management Standard should contain an additional requirement for forest owners to utilise Ministry of Labor services to undertake UXO risk and clearance operations, prior to any forestry activity.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE SYSTEM OF THE PROPOSED APPLICANT SCHEME

FORESTS AND THE FOREST SECTOR IN VIETNAM

Background

Forests in Viet Nam have had a turbulent history over the past 50 years. Conflict in the region severely deforested large sections of Viet Nam. This was due to a combination of the use of herbicides and artillery damage, resulting in forest loss of around 2 million ha.¹

Forest cover fell to as low as 17% in the late 1970s, before commencing recovery in the late 1990s. Large-scale replanting and rehabilitation programs have resulted in Vietnam reporting continuous forest cover increases for three decades.

Forest cover is currently around 41% or slightly over 14 million ha. Around 62% of the forests are natural forests; the remainder are plantations. Viet Nam has diverse soil and climactic conditions, resulting in a range of natural forest types: evergreen and semideciduous broad-leaved forests; deciduous forests; bamboo and palms, coniferous forests, and open broad-leaved forests. There are around 2084 native species in natural forests; plantation species are largely acacia, rubber, conifer and eucalypt species.

Forest and related industries support many livelihoods. There are around 4,500 companies undertaking wood and forest product processing, and 300 traditional carpentry villages. The woodchip industry provides significant employment and is a source of government revenue. More broadly, the industry is a significant contributor to export revenue.

Forests are administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Forest regulations and policy in Vietnam are well developed. The main law on forestry is the Luật Lâm Nghiệp 2017 (Law On Forestry 2017). Numerous long-term strategies were introduced in 2006 to support the sector.

The Vietnam Forest Certification Office (VFCO) as the National Governing Body was established under the auspices of the Vietnam Administration of Forestry - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. VFCO joined PEFC as a member in May 2019 and submitted its standards to the PEFC Council for approval in September 2019. Scheme documentation includes standards and procedural documents governing standard setting and standard review procedures, investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals, notification of certification bodies, sustainable forest management requirements, requirements for bodies providing audit and certification services, logo usage rules, and chain of custody requirements. The Applicant Scheme includes provisions for individual and group certification.

¹ Prof. Dr Nguyen Ngoc Lung (2011). *Forest Resources Management and Development In Vietnam*/ Department for Forestry Development Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 2 Ngoc Ha, Hanoi, Vietnam

THE SCHEME

The VFCO has developed a number of procedural documents for the Applicant Scheme. They are listed as follows:

Guidelines

VFCS GD 1001:2019 Description of the Scheme and Operation

Standards

VFCS ST 1002:2019 Standard Setting Procedures

VFCS ST 1003:2019 Sustainable Forest Management Standard

VFCS ST 1004:2019 Group Forest Management Standard

VFCS ST 1008:2019 VFCS Logo Usage Rules and Requirements

Operational Rules

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Requirements for Certification Bodies

VFCS GD 1007:2019 Notification Procedures for Certification Bodies

VFCS GD 1009:2019 Issuance of VFCS PEFC Logo Licenses

VFCS GD 1010:2019 Procedure for the Resolution of Complaints and Appeals

VFCO submitted its standards to the PEFC Council for approval in 2019. Scheme documentation includes standards and procedural documents governing standard setting and standard review procedures, investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals, notification of certification bodies, sustainable forest management requirements, requirements for bodies providing audit and certification services, logo usage rules, and chain of custody requirements. The Applicant Scheme includes provisions for individual and group certification.

5. STANDARD SETTING PROCEDURES

This chapter presents a detailed assessment of the standard setting procedures against PEFC ST 1001:2010, Standard Setting, for the development of the forest management standard. It contains a detailed assessment of the standard setting procedures compliance or non-compliance with the PEFC Council requirements as set out in PEFC ST 1001:2010.

Requirement 4.1 The standardising body has written procedures for standard-setting activities describing:

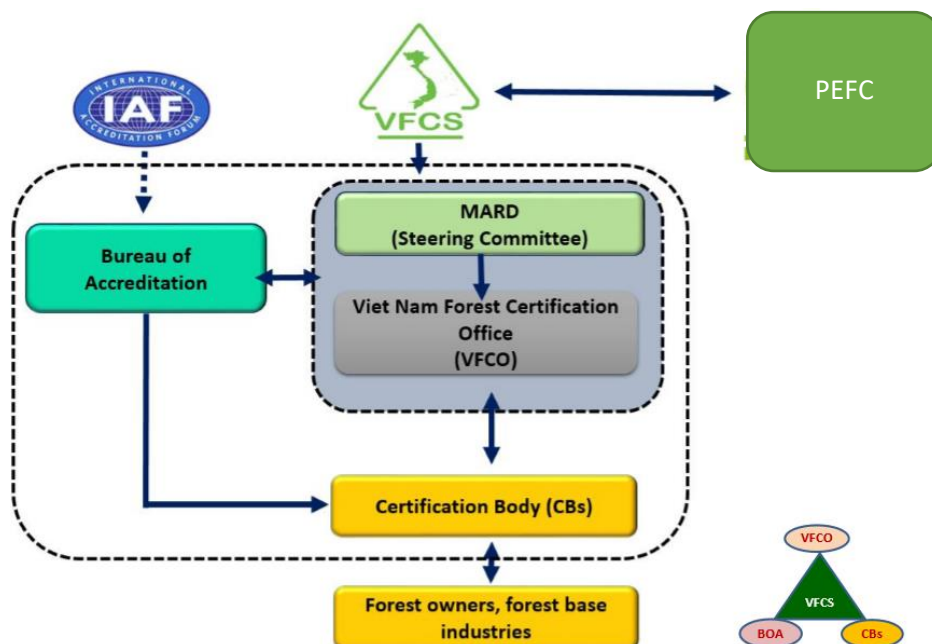
(a) its legal status and organisational structure, including a body responsible for consensus-building (refer to 4.4) and procedures for formal adoption of the standard (refer to 5.11),

The Standardising Body (Vietnam Forest Certification Office - VFCO) has its legal status and organisational structure described in VFCS GD 1001:2019.

VFCO was established by Prime Ministerial decree in October 2018, and operates under the auspices of the Vietnam Administration for Forests (VAF), which sits within the Vietnam Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). VFCO's chief responsibility is the formation and operation of the VFCS. VFCO under the auspices of VAF and MARD is the National Governing Body (NGB) for the scheme.

VFCO has a Steering Committee, which acts as the NGB's decision making body. The Steering Committee comprises "representatives of relevant agencies and units who are internal and external experts of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development."

The structure of the organisation is described in the chart below (see VFCS GD 1001:2019).



The body responsible for consensus building is the Standard Development Group (SDG).

The SDG is appointed by the Steering Committee, based on a system of self-nomination.

This is described in VFCS GD 1001:2019. The SDG is described at Chapter 4.2. The SDG comprises a minimum of 15 members for the SFM standard, and nine for the CoC standard.

Procedures for the formal adoption of the standard are described. The adoption of the standard by the VFCO is based on consensus from the SDG. VFCO adopts the standard as follows: “Final approvals: Information on the Standard Development Group submitting the final draft to VFCO based on their consensus, including time, locations, participants, content of the Standard Development Group’s discussion, methods and results to reach consensus, as well as the final draft will be available to public. The information that VFCO will officially approve the final draft, including the time, place, and attendees, and the results of discussions by VFCO will be publicly announced.”

(b) procedures for keeping documented information,

Procedures for keeping documented information are described at VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Section 4.7. They require that “VFCO will maintain for and manage all documents and records related to the standard-setting process. All documents and records will be stored and maintained for at least 5 years. VFCO has the ownership and manage all documents and records available to any organization and individual who requests to be viewed after having the permission of VFCO.”

(c) procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,

Procedures for the balanced representation of stakeholders on the Standard Development Group are described at VFCS ST 1002: 2019 Section 4.5. They state that VFCO will “Periodically review participating stakeholders to control their level of change and concerns to adjust and maintain the balanced representation of stakeholders.”

Section 4.5 also states that “Any stakeholder will not prevail in the standard-setting process.”

(d) the standard-setting process,

Procedures for the standard setting process is described at VFCS ST 1002: 2019 Section IV.

The standard setting process requires:

- A public announcement of the standard-setting process, which includes a description of the standard development process, timetable, objectives and scope;
- a feedback process for the standard development process, specifically an invitation to give comments and recommendations on the standard-setting process;
- appointment of the SDG;
- drafting procedures and process referred to as “first”, “public consultation” and “final” drafts;

- requirements for pilot testing;
- consensus mechanism requirements for final draft.

(e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and

Procedures for the mechanism for reaching consensus among the SDC are described at VFCS ST 1002: 2019 Section 4.6. Reaching consensus requires:

- a face-to face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, show of hands for a yes/no vote;
- a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote;
- an e-mail meeting;
- a combination of the above.

It is also states that “In case of an objection to any important part, the issue will be resolved by the following mechanisms”, which are:

- Discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue among members of the Standard Development Group in order to find a compromise;
- Directly negotiate with the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise;
- Use of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism.

(f) review and revision of standard(s)/normative document(s).

Procedures for the review and revision of standards and other normative documents are described at VFCS ST 1002:2019 Section 4.9: “The standards will regularly revise and update the new scientific knowledge and practical experience. The standards will be revised at least every 5 years.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 4.2: The standardising body shall make its standard-setting procedures publicly available and shall review its standard-setting procedures regularly. The review shall consider feedback from stakeholders.

The public availability of standard setting procedures, review of standard setting procedures and requirements for public feedback are stipulated at VFCS-ST 1002:2019 Section 4.4.1: “The Vietnam Administration of Forestry makes a public announcement on starting the standard-setting process, including a letter of invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and other media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions.”

The review of standard setting procedures are stipulated at the same section: “The Vietnam Administration of Forestry authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will review the standard-setting process”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

OBSERVATION: The procedures refer to the Vietnam Administration of Forestry rather than the VFCO. Although the VFCO operates under the auspices of the VAF, this should be clarified.

Requirement 4.3: Documented information shall be kept until completion of the next review or revision of the standard to which they refer. Otherwise the documented information must be kept for a minimum of five years after publication of the standard.

This is stipulated at VFCS ST 1002:2019 Section 4.7: “VFCO will maintain for and manage all documents and records related to the standard-setting process. All documents and records will be stored and maintained for at least 5 years. VFCO has the ownership and manage all documents and records available to any organization and individual who requests to be viewed after having the permission of VFCO.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 4.4 The standardising body shall establish a permanent or temporary working group/committee responsible for standard-setting activities.

VFCS ST 1002:2019 Section 4.2: “The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development establishes a Standard Development Group through public consultations with all stakeholders; discusses and selects members of the Standard Development Group based on nominations or self-nominations of all stakeholders involved.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

The working group/committee shall: (a) be accessible to materially and directly affected stakeholders,

VFCS ST 1002:2019 Section 4.2b: "The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development establishes a Standard Development Group through public consultations with all stakeholders; discusses and selects members of the Standard Development Group based on nominations or self-nominations of all stakeholders involved.”

(b) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard where single concerned interests shall not dominate nor be dominated in the process, and

VFCS ST 1002:2019 Section 4.2b: “The Standard Development Group shall cover the geographical scope of the standard and have a balanced representation and decision-making by related stakeholders in the fields of environment, society and economic sectors.”

(c) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that are materially affected by the standard, and those that can influence the implementation of the standard. The materially affected stakeholders shall represent a meaningful segment of the participants.

VFCS ST 1002:2019 Section 4.2b: "Members of the Standard Development Group who are: expertise and/or experience relevant to the subject matter of the standard; those that are directly materially affected by the standard; those that can influence the implementation of the standard."

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 4.5 The standardising body shall establish procedures for dealing with any substantive and procedural complaints relating to the standardising activities which are accessible to stakeholders. Upon receipt of the complaint, the standard-setting body shall: (a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant; (b) gather and verify all necessary information to validate the complaint, impartially and objectively evaluate the subject matter of the complaint, and make a decision upon the complaint, and (c) formally communicate the decision on the complaint and of the complaint handling process to the complainant.

Procedures for complaints are established at VFCS GD 1001:2019 Section 4.10: “VFCO will establish procedures to resolve any basic complaints and disputes related to standard development activities that are accessible to stakeholders. Contact points for complaints and disputes will be assigned. Contact information of contact points will be available to public. 1) All interested parties may submit a complaint regarding any aspect of the standard and related evidences in writing to the VFCO.”

Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint or appeal to the complainant is required at VFCS GD 1001:2019 4.10.2: “After receiving the complaints, the person in charge shall notify the complainants about the acceptance of the application and state if the complaint is accepted within 5 working days.”

Procedures for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint or appeal, evaluate the subject matter of the complaint or appeal impartially and objectively, and make a decision regarding the complaint or appeal are required at VFCS GD 1001:2019 4.10.3.

The formal communication of the decision is made to the complainant via the SDG; the communication describes the investigation process, decision making process.

There is further recourse to the scheme’s dispute resolution mechanism if required.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

4.6 The standardising body shall establish at least one contact point for enquiries and complaints relating to its standard-setting activities. The contact point shall be made easily available.

VFCS ST 1002:2019 Section 4.10 states: “VFCO will establish procedures to resolve any basic complaints and disputes related to standard development activities that are accessible to stakeholders. Contact points for complaints and disputes will be assigned. Contact information of contact points will be available to public.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS



6. STANDARD SETTING PROCESS

BACKGROUND

The standard setting process has been documented in part in the VFCS Standard Development report (VFCS-SD). The standard setting process comprised the steps below; the scheme documentation contains evidence recorded for each of these steps in the relevant Annexes in the document VFCS GD 1001:2019. These are referred to throughout the assessment of the standard setting process.

Annex	Title of Annex and link
4.2_1.1	VAFS Website - standard setting procedure announcement
4.2_1.2	SRI Website - Standard setting procedure announcement
4.4_2.1	List of SDG members approved by Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences
4.4_2.2	Decision on Standard Development Group approved by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
4.4_2.3	Decision No. 3454-2017 on Standard Development Group in EN
5.1_3.1	List of stakeholders in Vietnamese
5.1_3.2	List of stakeholders in English
5.5_1.2	Meeting Minutes of experts_ 7.9.2017
5.5_2.2	Meeting Minutes of experts _13.9.2017
5.5_3.2	Meeting Minutes of experts _20.9 2017
5.5_4.2	Meeting Minutes of experts_ 6.10.2017
5.5_5.2	Meeting Minutes of experts _13.10.2017
5.5_6.2	Meeting Minutes of experts_ 19.10.2017
5.5_7.2	Meeting Minutes of experts_ 5.11.2017
5.5_8.2	Meeting Minutes of experts _15.11.2017
5.5_9.2	Meeting Minutes of experts_ 20.11.2017
5.5_10.2	Meeting Minutes of experts _ 12.12.1017
5.5_11.2	Standard setting process and Meeting minutes on CoC Standard
5.6_1.1	Invitation Letter for the 1st consultation workshop in Hue City
5.6_1.2	Upload the draft CoC standard on VNFOREST website for public consultation

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5.6_1.3	VAFS website - 1st consultation workshop
5.6_1.4 to 1.11	Email Invitations to stakeholders for 1 st consultation workshop
5.6_1.12	Report of the 1st consultation workshop on FM and CoC standards
5.6_2.1	Invitation Letter of the 2nd consultation workshop
5.6_2.2	VAFS website - 2nd consultation workshop announcement
5.6_2.3 to 2.15	Email to stakeholders for 2 nd consultation workshop
5.6_2.16	Report of the 2nd consultation workshop on FM and CoC standards
5.6_3.1	Invitation Letter for 3rd consultation workshop issued by VNFOREST
5.6_3.2	VAFS website - 3rd consultation workshop
5.6_3.3 to 3.9	Email invitations to stakeholders for 3 rd consultation workshop
5.6_3.10	Report of the 3rd consultation workshop with FLEGT experts on FM and CoC standards
5.6_3.11	Report of Consultation workshop with VCA members
5.7	Report of field testing of FM Standard
5.8_2	Meeting of Minutes for the final draft for formal approval
5.11_2	The Circular No. 28_BNNPTNT_2018 on sustainable forest management

Requirement 5.1 The standardising body shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work.

Requirement 5.2 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged and key stakeholders. The standardising body shall address the constraints of their participation and proactively seek their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities.

Stakeholder identification processes have been documented. A total of 35 stakeholders were directly identified initially and invited to participate in the SDG. Identification included organization/affiliation and area of expertise. Disadvantaged stakeholders were also identified and participation was sought.

Invitations were sent to stakeholders for participation in the SDC on July 12 2017. Both email and telephone calls were used with confirmation of receipt. A list is compiled in Appendix 2.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.3 The standardising body shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and in suitable media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions. The announcement and invitation shall include: (a) information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable, (b) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process, (c) an invitation to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is understandable, (d) an invitation to comment on the scope and the standard-setting process, and (e) reference to publicly available standard-setting procedures.

A public announcement of the standard setting process was made on October 25 2017. The announcement contained identification of the scope of the standard, a justification, a description of the outcome, an operating plan for the SDC, and contact details; and a public announcement of the standard setting process (webpage announcement) [Appendix 4.2 1.1]

The announcement included information on participation in the process, i.e. contact details, information on future meetings, explicit information on submission of feedback and an overview of the standard setting procedures.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.4 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on comments received from the public announcement and establish a working group/committee or adjust the composition of an already existing working group/committee based on received nominations. The acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced

representation of the working group/committee and resources available for the standard-setting.

No feedback was received on the standard setting process, and therefore no review was undertaken.

The final composition of the SDC was 16 members, documented at Appendix 4.4. 2.2. The final composition was government (3), NGO (1), industry and industry groups (4), certification and auditing (2), researchers (2), academics (4).

Each of the members of the SDC has expertise relevant to, can influence implementation of or be affected by the standard. No stakeholders were considered to be disadvantaged.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.5 The work of the working group/committee shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where: (a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group/committee, (b) all members of the working group shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and submit comments to the working drafts, and (c) comments and views submitted by any member of the working group/committee shall be considered in an open and transparent way and their resolution and proposed changes shall be recorded.

Access was provided to all drafts for all meetings; contributions have been noted and minuted, as have responses, and any outcomes have been recorded.

The involvement of stakeholders in standard setting activities has been thoroughly documented, including attendance lists, minutes and draft revisions (see above).

Feedback on the draft standards has been recorded and noted from both written submissions from SDG participants and via comments at the SDG meetings.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.6 The standardising body shall organise a public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that: (a) the start and the end of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in suitable media, (b) the invitation of disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made by means that ensure that the information reaches its recipient and is understandable, (c) the enquiry draft is publicly available and accessible, (d) the public consultation is for at least 60 days, (e) all comments received are considered by the working group/committee in an objective manner, (f) a synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration, is publicly available, for example on a website.

Public consultation was organised on the enquiry draft.

The start and the end of the public consultation was not announced in a timely manner and in suitable media.

However, invitation of disadvantaged and key stakeholders took place. Process documents, the stakeholder survey and stakeholder consultations as part of the field assessment indicate that disadvantaged stakeholders were contacted and included in the public consultation.

The consultation period for the enquiry draft commenced on July 25 2017 with a meeting that was held in the city of Hue. The consultation meeting and period were atypical in that the day-long meeting was the main forum for feedback on the standard. However, participants were made aware that feedback would continue to be accepted on the inquiry draft in writing up until the next public consultation workshop, which was held on October 6 2017 in Ha Noi.

The details of the meeting, the consultation process, the forum provided, the inclusion of the participants and the appropriateness of the consultation modality were confirmed by multiple stakeholders in the stakeholder consultation for this report.

The consultation on the inquiry draft lasted for a total of 73 days.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: MINOR NON-CONFORMITY

Although the start and the end of the consultation periods were not announced in a timely manner, the consultation process did include a diverse group of stakeholders; this included disadvantaged stakeholders. Further, the field assessment and interviews indicated that a representative group of stakeholders felt they were adequately consulted. In other words, this non-conformity did not impact the integrity and credibility of the standard development process.

Requirement 5.7 The standardising body shall organise pilot testing of the new standards and the results of the pilot testing shall be considered by the working group/committee.

Pilot testing was organised at sites for large and small forest owners in Thua Thien Hue province.

The results of the pilot testing have been included in the scheme documentation. Individual meetings were organised for the pilot testing; the results of the pilot testing were put to the SDC for input into the final draft.

The results of the audit of the pilot testing were confirmed as part of the field assessment for this report.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.8 The decision of the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of a consensus. In order to reach a consensus the working group/committee can utilise the following alternative processes to establish whether there is opposition: (a) a face-to face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, show of hands for a yes/no vote; a statement on consensus from the Chair where there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal balloting process, etc., (b) a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, (c) an e-mail meeting where a request for agreement or objection is provided to members with the members providing a written response (a proxy for a vote), or (d) combinations thereof.

There was clear evidence of consensus according to VFCS's own procedures for the SDG. The final draft of the FM standard was agreed to at the SDG meeting in Hanoi in January 26 2018. Consensus was reached by a show of hands according to meeting minutes.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.9 In the case of a negative vote which represents sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests surrounding a substantive issue, the issue shall be resolved using the following mechanism(s): (a) discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group/committee in order to find a compromise, (b) direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise, (c) dispute resolution process.

A negative vote was not recorded.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.10 Documentation on the implementation of the standard-setting process shall be made publicly available.

Documentation on the implementation of standard setting process is available to stakeholders or interested parties on request, but do not appear to have been made available via the VFCS website through the publication of the development report.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.11 The standardising body shall formally approve the standards/normative documents based on evidence of consensus reached by the working group/committee.

The development report indicates that the VFCS approved the documents based on SDC consensus.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Requirement 5.12 The formally approved standards/normative documents shall be published in a timely manner and made publicly available.

The standards are available via the VFCS website. Print publication date July 2019.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

OBSERVATION: VFCS should ensure its website uploading procedures and web publication platforms are adequate.

7. FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

This section assesses of the forest certification standard(s) against PEFC ST 1003, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements.

The main forest management standard document is VFCS 1003:2019. Although the requirements appear to largely be met by the standard, there are a number of normative documents referred to in the standard that are significant, particularly in relation to forest planning and forest practices. They are:

Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT of the Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the Regulation on Sustainable Forest Management, and its predecessor which was issued in 2014. This is abbreviated as ‘Circular 28’ in this document.

Circular No. 29/2018/TT-BNNPTNT of the Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the Regulation on Silvicultural Techniques. This is abbreviated as Circular 29 in this document.

Law on Forestry No. 16/2017/QH14. This is abbreviated as Law on Forestry (2017).

As VFCS 1003:2019 notes, the standard was written to be harmonized with the 2014 document (itself a product of Vietnam’s VNTLAS – Vietnam Timber Legality Assurance Scheme) and PEFC’s requirements.

Circular 28 is referred to in the Standard as a key requirement of forest management planning; Circular 28 provides requirements implemented in VFCS 1003:2019 for inventory, forest management planning, management, monitoring and evaluation.

In this report, Principles, Criteria and Indicators I VFCS 1003:2019 will be abbreviated as (P, C and I) respectively followed by their number.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SFM STANDARDS

4.1 The requirements for sustainable forest management defined by regional, national or sub-national forest management standards shall:

a) include management and performance requirements that are applicable at the forest management unit level, or at another level as appropriate, to ensure that the intent of all requirements is achieved at the forest management unit level;

The management and performance requirements are contained in the Principles, Criteria and Indicators for the standard. There are 7 principles, 34 Criteria and 122 indicators defined in VFCS 1003:2019. The principles:

Principle 1: Compliance with national laws and related international treaties and conventions

Principle 2: Community relations and community and local/ ethnic peoples’ rights

Principle 3: Forest owners shall ensure the rights and working conditions for workers

Principle 4: Forest management, utilization and development

Principle 5: Environmental management and protection in forestry activities

Principle 6: Maintenance, conservation and enhancement of forest biodiversity

Principle 7: Forests are monitored and monitored according to sustainable forest management plans.

All criteria are highly prescriptive and use the word ‘shall’ in all cases, with the exception of C2.3, which states that ‘forest owners should give job ...’. Performance indicators (indicators) are similarly prescriptive and use ‘shall’ in all cases except two, where the prescriptive verb ‘identify’ is used.

b) be clear, objective-based and auditable;

The standards are clear: This standard contains requirements for forest management participants to achieve sustainable forest management from social, environmental and economic perspectives; objective-based via establishment of management objectives for all aspects of SFM; and auditable (see pilot testing).

The standard clearly states that there are requirements for sustainable forest management, and defines seven SFM requirements in the principles VFCS 1003:2019, which are noted above. The auditability is confirmed by the pilot testing undertaken. The standard requires that management plans must specify objectives falling under the seven principles defined.

c) apply to activities of all operators in the defined forest area who have a measurable impact on achieving compliance with the requirements;

VFCS ST 1003:2019 Section 2: Scope states:

“This standard provides requirements and indicator systems for voluntary forest management unit/forest owner who shall meet to implement sustainable (natural and/or plantation) forest management certification under the system of VFCS.”

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

VFCS ST 1003:2019 **Indicators 2.2.2; 2.5.6; 3.4.4; 4.6.5; 5.3.4; 5.3.5; 6.2.3; 6.3.2; 6.5.4; 6.6.2.** These require record keeping covering: disputes, complaint settlement, complaints and grievance, forest fires, all chemicals, type, dosage, time and place of using chemicals and chemical fertilizers; identified species; forest areas with ecological importance; provenance and utilization of exotic species; forest areas and land converted; all documents and payment records relating to forest activities; and illegal cases.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

CRITERION 1: MAINTENANCE AND APPROPRIATE ENHANCEMENT OF FOREST RESOURCES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL CARBON CYCLE

5.1.1 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. This shall be done by making full use of related services and tools that support land-use planning and nature conservation.

Although the 7 principles refer to the different aspects of forest management, they do not refer to forest management planning per se. The relevant aspects of forest management planning can be found at:

11.3.1. Shall have a sustainable forest management plan (based on the Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development);

The more relevant normative document for forest management planning is therefore the ‘Circular 28’ document, which is also referred to in the normative references for VFCS ST 1003:2019.

The document also refers to SFM plans as ‘SFM schemes’.

The documents provide guidance for planning for different types of forest: special use, protection, production and smallholders. The objectives for each plan in Circular 28 are as follows:

“a) Regarding environment: identification of the total forest area that is protected, forest coverage, degraded forest area in need of restoration; ecosystems, biodiversity, forest floral species, forest faunal species, indigenous species under protection, development and conservation of native trees species; reduction of forest fire, legal violation on forestry;

b) Regarding society: creation of jobs, increase income to labourers; stabilization of livelihood of people living in the buffer zone; improving awareness on sustainable forest management, step by step complete the infrastructure system;

c) Regarding economy: identification of sustainable finance source from PFES activities, ecotourism, leisure and recreation service, lease of forest environment, fee, charge, output of timber harvested from planted forest for research, scientific experiments, non-timber forest products, forest carbon reserve.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.1.2 Forest management shall comprise the cycle of inventory and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and shall include an appropriate assessment of the social, environmental and economic impacts of forest management operations. This shall form a basis for a cycle of continuous improvement to minimise or avoid negative impacts.

Forest management is covered by Principle 4 and 8 Criteria and 27 indicators within VFCS 1003:2019. However, as with forest management planning, guidance for forest management is required by

government regulations in Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The guidance document requires:

- Inventory, covering:
 - *“1. Assessment of natural, socio-economic conditions, status of national defense and security, forest ecosystem, biodiversity, historical, cultural, landscape relics:*
 - *a) Assessment of the land use status, forest ecosystem, biodiversity, historical, cultural, landscape relics within the boundary of the forest; assessment of the natural conditions regarding geographical places, terrain, hydrology and climate, soil and society, economy according to statistics;*
 - *b) Summary of characteristics of population, labourer, nations, per capita income year ...;*
 - *c) Summary, assessment of the status quo of infrastructure for transportation ...;*
 - *d) Summary, assessment of the status quo of land use of forest owners based on statistics or land inventory at commune level of the most recent year to the year when the sustainable forest management scheme ... ;*
 - *đ) Summary, assessment of the status quo of forest, forest reserve based on statistics, inventory and monitoring of forest resources ... ;*
 - *e) Assessment of diversity of main forest floral, faunal species; identification of forest floral and faunal species and their habitats; identification of degraded forest ecosystems in need of restoration, landscape areas in need of protection and compiled list of forest floral and faunal species ... “*
- Planning and implementation of the forest management plan (as above at 5.1.1);
- Monitoring and evaluation (following implementation, including a report on an annual basis;
- assessment, where the assessment is measured against the forest management plan on an annual basis.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.1.3 Inventory and mapping of forest resources shall be established and maintained, adequate to local and national conditions and in correspondence with the topics described in this document.

Forest owners are required to undertake forest inventory activities as part of forest management planning under the ‘Circular 28’ requirements. These cover the topics stated in the criteria and **Indicators 1.1.3; 2.1.2; 4.8.1; 5.2.1; 6.1.1; 6.2.1**, among others, as listed above at 5.1.2.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

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

VFCS 1003:2019 4.1 states that “All forestry practices shall be implemented as prescribed in the sustainable forest management plan.”

Management plans are required to be updated on an annual basis. They are based on legislation (Circular 28), which also stipulates use of existing land use plans” “a) Compiling the land use plan of forest owners based on the commune level land use plan.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.1.5 Management plans or their equivalents shall include at least a description of the current condition of the forest management unit, long-term objectives; and the average annual allowable cut, including its justification and, where relevant, the annually allowable exploitation of non-timber forest products.

The relevant regulation is Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT, which describes the forest management plan, and its contents. This includes submitted requirements for:

- “The current status of forest and land resources and results of forest management, protection and development, biodiversity conservation and production and business efficiency of forest owner (briefed description)”
- “Objectives of the Scheme”
- “Formulation of forest products harvesting plan: identification of area, type, output, location of forest product harvesting”.

The document also contains

- Methodology for calculating the annual allowable cut (Annex V).

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

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

This requirement is not stated in the VFCS ST 1003:2019. However, the summary of the forest management plan must be submitted to MARD as per requirements under Circular 28. It is understood that this requirement was part of the early drafts of the standard, but that this requirement was removed during the drafting process.

During the comment period VFCO has indicated that indicator 3.1 will be changed as follows:

- 3.1. Forest owners and/or management units shall have a sustainable forest management plan in accordance with legal regulation; A summary of the forest management plan or its

equivalent appropriate to the scope and scale of forest management, which contains information about the forest management measures to be applied, is publicly available.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: MINOR NON-CONFORMITY

5.1.7 Monitoring of forest resources and evaluation of their management shall be periodically performed, and results fed back into the planning process.

Principle 7 requires the development and implementation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This involves the development of indicators and appropriate allocation of resources for monitoring activity. Indicator 6.1.4 is explicit on the revision of existing plans based on monitoring and evaluation.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

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

Circular 28 states: “1. Forest owners are responsible for development, implementation of sustainable forest management scheme in accordance with provisions at point 1 Article 27 the Law on Forestry.”

Article 27 of the Law on Forestry states: “Responsibilities of developing and implementing sustainable forest management plans: a) Sustainable forest management plans shall be developed and implemented by forest owners.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.1.9 Forest management practices shall safeguard the quantity and quality of the forest resources in the medium and long term by balancing harvesting and growth rates, and by preferring techniques that minimise direct or indirect damage to forest, soil or water resources.

VFCS 1003:2019 indicators are as follows:

14.7.1. “*Shall be aware that harvested annual volume shall not exceed the increment of forest as defined in the sustainable forest management plan.*” [See above for 4.7.1 and related domestic regulations]

15.1.2. “*Shall have plan and carry out measures to mitigate adverse impacts on the environment before implementing forestry activities.*”

C5.2. “*Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.*”

15.2.2. “*Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;*”

15.2.3. *“Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;”*

15.2.4. *“Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;”*

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.1.10 Appropriate silvicultural measures shall be taken to maintain or reach a level of the growing stock that is economically, ecologically and socially desirable.

VFCS 1003:2019 C4.3. “Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan.”

14.3.1. *“Shall select tree species selected for planting matching with site conditions and objectives of sustainable forest management;”*

14.3.2. *“Shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for the ecological characteristics of tree species and different site conditions;”*

14.3.3. *“Shall apply technical measures including planting, tending, harvesting and replanting for specific tree species;”*

14.3.4. *“Shall apply appropriate site management for sustainable plantation management;”*

14.3.5. *Shall apply technical guidelines of promotion of natural regeneration, enrichment planting, maintenance and harvesting of natural forests for specific forest status and types.”*

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.1.11 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; 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.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C6.6. *“Forest owners shall not directly or indirectly convert natural forest and forest areas with ecological significances to forest plantation or other land use purposes.”*

I6.6.1. *“Shall not directly or indirectly convert natural forest and forest areas with ecological significances (including bare land) to other land use at any forms, except in the justifiable*

circumstances with the permission of the relevant authorities; planted forest areas converted from natural forests after December 31, 2010 (except the justifiable circumstances with the permission of the relevant authorities and states) will not be eligible to apply for sustainable forest management certification.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.1.12 Conversion of abandoned agricultural and treeless land into forest land shall be taken into consideration, whenever it can add economic, ecological, social and/or cultural value.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

15.2.5. “Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

CRITERION 2: MAINTENANCE OF FOREST ECOSYSTEM HEALTH AND VITALITY

5.2.1 Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and increase the health and vitality of forest ecosystems and to rehabilitate degraded forest ecosystems, whenever this is possible by silvicultural means.

The criteria and indicators in 6.4 conform with the requirements in terms of maintenance and increasing (“enhancing”) biodiversity values, as well as “natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting” in natural forests.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C6.4. “Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests.”

16.4.1. “Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation;”

16.4.2. “Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests;”

16.4.3. “Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people’s health, animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods;”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.2.2 Health and vitality of forests shall be periodically monitored, especially key biotic and abiotic factors that potentially affect health and vitality of forest ecosystems, such as pests, diseases, overgrazing and overstocking, fire, and damage caused by climatic factors, air pollutants or by forest management operations.

The relevant criteria and indicators in VFCS 1003:2019 are:

C7.2. Forest owners shall undertake Monitoring and Evaluation plan.

17.2.1. Shall have annual data including annual harvested volumes, NTFPs, changes in forest areas and the growth of forest plantation;

17.2.2. Shall have data of every 5- years including the growth of natural forests, natural regeneration and tree species composition;

17.2.3. Shall have data and reports on the protection or conservation of forests with ecological significance and threatened species;

17.2.4. Shall be activities relating to the outbreak of forest diseases and pests soil erosion and other risks.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.2.3 The monitoring and maintaining of health and vitality of forest ecosystems shall take into consideration the effects of naturally occurring fire, pests and other disturbances.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C7.2. Forest owners shall undertake Monitoring and Evaluation plan.

17.2.4. Shall be activities relating to the outbreak of forest diseases and pests soil erosion and other risks;

17.2.5. Shall be activities relating to monitoring the impacts of forestry activities on the environment and society;

5.2.4 Forest management plans or their equivalents shall specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation of and damages to forest ecosystems. Forest management planning shall make use of those policy instruments set up to support these activities.

Circular 28 stipulates that all forest management plans are required to undertake “*Formulation of the plan on management, protection, protection of forest ecosystems.*”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.2.5 Forest management practices shall make best use of natural structures and processes and use preventive biological measures wherever and as far as economically

feasible to maintain and enhance the health and vitality of forests. Adequate genetic, species and structural diversity shall be encouraged and/or maintained to enhance the stability, vitality and resistance capacity of the forests to adverse environmental factors and strengthen natural regulation mechanisms.

VFCS1003:2019 states:

C5.3. Forest owners shall strictly control the use of chemicals and fertilizers and ensure to be safe for the environment and people's health.

15.3.6. Forest owners shall limit use of chemical fertilizers and encourage use of organic and bio-fertilizers to improve the fertile of soil.

16.4.1. Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation;

16.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests;

16.4.3. Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people's health, animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods;

16.4.4. Shall have specific measures to minimize the negative impacts of cattle grazing on natural regeneration, growth rate and biodiversity of forests;

16.4.5. Shall reforest on bare land areas; they shall apply natural promoted regeneration or enrichment planting for natural forests.

16.5.1. Shall not introduce exotic and invasive species that negatively affect the environment;

16.5.2. Shall be aware that importing plants and animals, genetic resources and micro-organism shall be permitted by relevant authorities;

16.5.3. Where introducing exotic species, Forest owners shall have preventative measures to control and avoid their invasion.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.2.6 Lighting of fires shall be avoided and is only permitted if it is necessary for the achievement of the management goals of the forest management unit.

Regulations on prohibition of lighting fires are contained in a number of regulatory documents. These are as follows:

Decree 09/2006/NĐ-CP, 2016 on Regulations on Forest Fire Prevention and Fighting.

This decree places a number of requirements on fire prevention and management, specifically for forest owners. It requires forest owners to, inter alia:

- a) [] organize the implementation of regulations, internal rules, safety conditions and measures on forest fire prevention and fighting according to law provisions;*
- b) elaborate and promulgate regulations, rules, and measures on fire prevention and fighting within the forests under their management;*
- c) develop and organize the implementation of fire prevention and fighting plans, projects and plans for forest areas under their management;*

Further, the decree defines forest fire prevention measures as:

- 1 . Propagating, educating and disseminating knowledge about forest fire prevention and fighting throughout the society.*
- 2. Identifying key areas at risk of forest fire.*
- 3. Strict management of fire sources, heat sources, fire and heat generating equipment and tools in forests and forest edges.*
- 4. Applying solutions to reduce burning materials or reduce dryness of burning materials in forests.*
- 5. Application of measures to prevent spread of fire.*
- 6. Organize forest fire warning and early detection of forest fire spots.*
- 7. Construction of works and equipment of forest fire prevention and fighting means.*
- 8. Other fire prevention measures prescribed by law.*

Circular 29, Section 3, Article 11 states that any silvicultural measures for the burning cleared vegetation must be limited, and that any vegetation must be bundled and burned in groups under controlled conditions.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.2.7 Appropriate forest management practices such as reforestation and afforestation with tree species and provenances that are suited to the site conditions or the use of tending, harvesting and transport techniques that minimise tree and/or soil damages shall be applied. The spillage of oil during forest management operations or the indiscriminate disposal of waste on forest land shall be strictly avoided. Non-organic waste and litter shall be avoided, collected, stored in designated areas and removed in an environmentally-responsible manner.

Appropriate reforestation and afforestation is addressed in VFCS 1003:2019 as follows:

14.2.1. Shall comply that provenance trials and recognition of new seeds/varieties/clones shall be in line with national regulations and standards approved by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development;

14.2.2. Seedlings production shall comply with the regulations and national standards in relation to production and trade in forest nurseries, originals of seeds, seed provenances and technical guidelines for seedlings production;

14.2.3. Shall use quality seeds and seedlings with clear originals;

14.2.4. Forest owners are encouraged to use seeds, provenances, and clones released in the seed list by relevant authorities.

With regards to oil spillage and non-organic waste and litter, indicators 5.4.1, 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 state as follows:

C5.4. Forest owners shall control hazardous waste and ensure to be safe for the environment and people's health.

15.4.1. Shall limit hazardous wastes from forestry activities;

15.4.2. Shall manage and collect hazardous wastes and ensure that they will be stored in safe places in line with national regulations;

15.4.3. Shall ensure that all packages and hazardous wastes shall be treated accordingly.

Further, the following national laws and regulations require the regulation of hazardous wastes:

Law on Forests (2017) states that prohibited acts in forest areas includes: “Illegally discharging sewage or bringing toxic chemicals, explosives, flammable substances, tools or vehicles into forests; grazing cattle or livestock in strictly protected sub-zones of reserve forests or newly planted forests.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.2.8 The use of pesticides shall be minimised and appropriate silvicultural alternatives and other biological measures preferred.

VFCS 1003:2019 5.3. “Forest owners shall strictly control the use of chemicals and fertilizers and ensure to be safe for the environment and people's health.”

In the standard pesticides are classified as ‘chemicals’ in the definitions. The key difference here is between ‘minimise’ and ‘strictly control’ use of chemicals.

This has been noted as a translation error from the Vietnamese to English. VFCS has indicated that they have redrafted the text for the indicator for approval.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: MINOR NON-CONFORMITY

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

Vietnam has undertaken specific measures to phase out highly hazardous pesticides, including those considered as WHO Class 1A and 1B. This has been documented by the FAO on a number of occasions. See: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4362e.pdf>.

Specific regulatory prohibitions of Class 1A and 1B can be found at the following:

Law No. 41/2013/QH13 dated November 25, 2013, on plant protection and quarantine

Circular No. 21/2015/TT-BNNPTNT On management of plant protection drugs

Circular No. 03/2018 / TT-BNNPTNT promulgating the List of plant protection drugs permitted for use and banned from use in Vietnam

Circular No. 13/2018/TT-BNNPTNT amending and supplementing a number of contents in Circular No. 03/2018 / TT-BNNPTNT

Circular No. 10/2019/TT-BNNPTNT promulgating the List of plant protection drugs permitted for use and banned from use in Vietnam

Decision No. 501/2019/QĐ-BNN-BVTV on the removal of plant protection drugs containing the active ingredients CHLORPYRIFOS ETHYL and FIPRONIL from the list of plant protection drugs permitted for use in Vietnam.

Decree No. 10 / VBHN-BYT on Management of chemicals, insecticidal preparations, and extermination of household and medical use items

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.2.10 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.

VFCS 1003:2019

C4.1. Shall understand and comply with the regulations/provision of the treaties (e.g ILO, CBD 1992, POP 2001 – Stockholm convention, and CITES).

15.3.1. Shall use chemicals that they are compliance with legal requirements of Viet Nam's laws and international regulations;

Vietnam is a signatory to the Stockholm Convention.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

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

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

13.2.3. Shall provide practical trainings on how to use chemical substances safely to health for their employees;

13.2.4. Employees and those of contractors shall be trained on safe working practices in compliance with the laws and regulations.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.2.12 Where fertilisers are used, they shall be applied in a controlled manner and with due consideration for the environment.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

15.3.1. Shall use chemicals that they are compliance with legal requirements of Viet Nam’s laws and international regulations;

15.3.2. Shall ensure that all chemicals and materials shall be kept and stored in safe places for the environment and people’s health;

15.3.3. Shall have instructions for using chemicals in order to ensure safety for the environment and people’s health;

15.3.4. Shall keep and update the list of all chemicals (pesticide, herbicide, sterilization, anti-rodent prescriptions, and growth regulators) prohibited by Viet Nam’s laws and international regulations/conventions;

15.3.5. Shall record information about type, dosage, time and place of using chemicals and chemical fertilizers;

15.3.6. Forest owners shall limit use of chemical fertilizers and encourage use of organic and bio-fertilizers to improve the fertile of soil.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

CRITERION 3: MAINTENANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRODUCTIVE FUNCTIONS OF FORESTS (WOOD AND NON-WOOD)

5.3.1 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.

More appropriate and detailed references can be found in Circular 28, which requires the

“identification of sustainable finance source from PFES activities, ecotourism, leisure and recreation service, lease of forest environment, fee, charge, output of timber harvested from planted forest for research, scientific experiments, non-timber forest products, forest carbon reserve” in planning, and the calculation of timber output in Annex V of the document.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.3.2 Forest management planning shall aim to achieve sound economic performance taking into account any available market studies and possibilities for new markets and economic activities in connection with all relevant goods and services of forests.

As with above, the references refer to practices rather than planning, where Circular 28 appears to be more relevant:

“identification of sustainable finance source from PFES activities, ecotourism, leisure and recreation service, lease of forest environment, fee, charge, output of timber harvested from planted forest for research, scientific experiments, non-timber forest products, forest carbon reserve.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.3.3 Forest management plans or their equivalents shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area. Forest management planning shall make use of those policy instruments set up to support the production of commercial and non-commercial forest goods and services.

Circular 28 outlines planning for different types of forests (production, protection, special use, small holder), and within each of those identifies planning for other possible uses such as tourism and leisure.

The Circular also makes reference to Article 53 of the Law on Forestry and the Regulation on Forest Management, which details activities including “carry out scientific research and preserve historical – cultural relics, beliefs, places of scenic beauty associated with ecotourism; hospitality and entertainment”.

In addition, VFCS 1003:2019 4.4: Forest owners shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business to enhance forest benefits.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

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

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C4.4. Forest owners shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business to enhance forest benefits.

I4.4.1. Shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business based on the results of survey and market information on forest products such as timbers, logs, NTFPs and ecological services;

I4.4.2. Shall apply diversify various income sources from forest ecosystem services;

14.4.3. Shall be encouraged planting native, multi-purposes and NTFP's species with high values;

14.4.4. Shall advertise and introduce their forest products, NTFPs and forest ecosystem services to public.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.3.5 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.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan.

14.3.1. Shall select tree species selected for planting matching with site conditions and objectives of sustainable forest management;

14.3.2. Shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for the ecological characteristics of tree species and different site conditions;

14.3.3. Shall apply technical measures including planting, tending, harvesting and replanting for specific tree species;

14.3.4. Shall apply appropriate site management for sustainable plantation management;

14.3.5. Shall apply technical guidelines of promotion of natural regeneration, enrichment planting, maintenance and harvesting of natural forests for specific forest status and types.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.3.6 Harvesting levels of both wood and non-wood forest products shall not exceed a rate that can be sustained in the long term, and optimum use shall be made of the harvested forest products, with due regard to nutrient off-take.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

14.7.1: "[Forest owners] Shall be aware that harvested annual volume shall not exceed the increment of forest as defined in the sustainable forest management plan."

Further aspects of harvesting are addressed in Circular No. 29/2018/TT-BNNPTNT on Silviculture. This regulation is prescriptive regarding the care of production forests. The scope of the regulation covers both slow-growing and fast growing species under different soil conditions and growing conditions. Guidelines cover:

- thinning intensity, frequency and pruning techniques for different tree densities, canopies and species;

- forest care following thinning;
- density following thinning depending on MAI and species;
- application of fertilizer following harvesting and thinning, dependent on site conditions and species.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.3.7 Where it is the responsibility of the forest owner/manager and included in forest management, the exploitation of non-timber forest products, including hunting and fishing, shall be regulated, monitored and controlled.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C4.2. Forest owners shall undertake Monitoring and Evaluation plan.

I7.2.1. Shall have annual data including annual harvested volumes, NTFPs, changes in forest areas and the growth of forest plantation.

Regulation, monitoring and control of NTFPs is specified in the forest management planning, and specifically identified in both the development of forest management plans and their implementation.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.3.8 Adequate infrastructure such as roads, skid tracks or bridges shall be planned, established and maintained to ensure efficient delivery of goods and services while minimising negative impacts on the environment.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C4.8. Forest owners shall build and maintain technical infrastructures in order to minimize adverse impacts on environment.

I4.8.1. Shall build and maintain infrastructures including roads, skid tracks, bridges and skidding logs, logging areas in line with regulations; make sure that all the infrastructures shall be shown on maps;

I4.8.2. Shall be aware that all activities relating to construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructures will not cause potential negative impacts on environment. These activities shall be controlled and minimized.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

CRITERION 4: MAINTENANCE, CONSERVATION AND APPROPRIATE ENHANCEMENT OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN FOREST ECOSYSTEMS

5.4.1 Forest management planning shall aim to maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity on ecosystem, species and genetic levels and, where appropriate, diversity at landscape level.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C6.1. Forest owners shall identify and demarcate forest areas with ecological importance to be needed for the purposes of protection and conservation.

I6.1.1. Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, forest mapping and development of database and consult stakeholders about forest areas with ecological importance, including:

- a) Unique, rare and vulnerable forest ecosystems or typical forest ecosystems such as river estuary, wetland, and limestone forests;*
- b) Forest areas existing endemic species and their habitats being threatened;*
- c) Genetic resources are vulnerable and need to be protected;*
- d) Landscape areas with significant importance at national and international levels.*

I6.1.2. Shall make a planning of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological importance as described in a sustainable forest management plan.

I6.1.3. Shall make a planning of monitoring and evaluation of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological values.

C6.2. Forest owners shall protect fauna and flora in compliance with legal law.

I6.2.1. Shall consult with stakeholders to construct the list of species, mapping their distributions and habitats, and collecting all information of species to be protected as regulated by Viet Nam regulations and international conventions (not applicable to forest plantation managed and owned by CRN);

I6.2.2. Shall have measures to protect identified/recorded species and their habitats. These measures shall be available to the public;

I6.2.3. Shall update data and store profiles of identified species;

I6.2.4. Shall comply with the regulations and laws of Viet Nam and international conventions on raising, planting, harvesting, utilization and trade of plant and animal species;

I6.2.5. Shall control illegal hunting and harvesting activities.

I6.3.1. Shall have measures of protection and conservation for forest areas with ecological importance. These measures shall be available to the public;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.2 Forest management planning, inventory and mapping of forest resources shall identify, protect and/or conserve ecologically important forest areas containing significant concentrations of: a) protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems such as riparian areas and wetland biotopes; b) areas containing endemic species and habitats of threatened species, as defined in recognised reference lists; c) endangered

or protected genetic in situ resources; d) globally, regionally and nationally significant large landscape areas with natural distribution and abundance of naturally occurring species.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

16.1.1. Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, forest mapping and development of database and consult stakeholders about forest areas with ecological importance, including:

a) Unique, rare and vulnerable forest ecosystems or typical forest ecosystems such as river estuary, wetland, and limestone forests;

b) Forest areas existing endemic species and their habitats being threatened;

c) Genetic resources are vulnerable and need to be protected;

and international levels.

d) Landscape areas with significant importance at national

16.1.2. Shall make a planning of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological importance as described in a sustainable forest management plan.

16.1.3. Shall make a planning of monitoring and evaluation of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological values.

16.1.4. Shall update and revise the existing plans based on the results of monitoring and evaluation.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.3 Protected and endangered plant and animal species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures shall be taken for their protection and, where relevant, to increase their population.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C6.2. Forest owners shall protect fauna and flora in compliance with legal law.

16.2.4. Shall comply with the regulations and laws of Viet Nam and international conventions on raising, planting, harvesting, utilization and trade of plant and animal species;

16.2.5. Shall control illegal hunting and harvesting activities.

Article 38 of the Forestry Law (2017) states that:

Protection of forest plants and animals

1. Endangered and rare species of forest plants and animals shall be listed to be managed and protected.

2. The Government shall make the list and develop policies on management and protection of endangered and rare species of forest plants and animals; procedures for using endangered/rare/wild species of forest plants and animals provided in Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

3. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development shall specify procedures for using timber and non-timber forest products and forest animals, apart from the provision of Clause 2 this Article.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.4 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.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.

15.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;

15.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.5 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.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C6.4. Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests.

16.4.1. Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation;

16.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests;

16.4.3. Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people’s health,

animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.6 Afforestation and reforestation activities that contribute to the improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity shall be promoted.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C6.4. Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests.

I6.4.1. Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation;

I6.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests;

I6.4.5. Shall reforest on bare land areas; they shall apply natural promoted regeneration or enrichment planting for natural forests.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.7 Genetically-modified trees shall not be used.

VFCS 1003:2019

I6.4.3. Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people's health, animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.8 Forest management practices shall, where appropriate, promote a diversity of both horizontal and vertical structures such as uneven-aged stands and the diversity of species such as mixed stands. Where appropriate, the practices shall also aim to maintain and restore landscape diversity.

VFCS 1003:2019

I6.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests;

I6.4.5. Shall reforest on bare land areas; they shall apply natural promoted regeneration or enrichment planting for natural forests.

The documentation does not make reference to stands and structures. However, C&I 4.3 implies diversity of stands and structures, as appropriate.

C4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan.

I4.3.1. Shall select tree species selected for planting matching with site conditions and objectives of sustainable forest management;

I4.3.2. Shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for the ecological characteristics of tree species and different site conditions;

I4.3.3. Shall apply technical measures including planting, tending, harvesting and replanting for specific tree species;

I4.3.4. Shall apply appropriate site management for sustainable plantation management;

I4.3.5. Shall apply technical guidelines of promotion of natural regeneration, enrichment planting, maintenance and harvesting of natural forests for specific forest status and types.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

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

Traditional management systems are not referred to directly in the documentation. However, the following should be noted:

- It is generally understood in Vietnam that no traditional management systems have created valuable ecosystems (such as coppice);
- A number of literature reviews have noted that traditional forest management systems (and to a lesser extent community management systems) are not economically feasible for a country such as Vietnam, where incidence of rural poverty is high;²
- Government policy has and continues to support community forestry management systems, particularly under the Law on Forestry (2017), which provides for rights and responsibilities for communities in relation to the exploitation of forests, as well as explicit recognition of ‘holy forests’, i.e. forests that are recognized by a traditional group.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.10 Tending and harvesting operations shall be conducted in a way that does not cause lasting damage to ecosystems. Wherever possible, practical measures shall be taken to improve or maintain biological diversity.

² https://loggingoff.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/27.-Report_FG-lit-review_final-pdf.pdf

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan.

I4.3.3. Shall apply technical measures including planting, tending, harvesting and replanting for specific tree species;

I4.3.5. Shall apply technical guidelines of promotion of natural regeneration, enrichment planting, maintenance and harvesting of natural forests for specific forest status and types.

C4.7. Forest owners shall appropriately harvest forest products in order to maintain forest resources in long term.

I4.7.1. Shall be aware that harvested annual volume shall not exceed the increment of forest as defined in the sustainable forest management plan. The standard conforms to the requirements. The application of techniques suitable for the objectives of the sustainable forest management plan, and the overall planning objectives to maintain ecosystems and biodiversity means that this is implied.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.11 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.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C4.8. Forest owners shall build and maintain technical infrastructures in order to minimize adverse impacts on environment.

I4.8.1. Shall build and maintain infrastructures including roads, skid tracks, bridges and skidding logs, logging areas in line with regulations; make sure that all the infrastructures shall be shown on maps;

I4.8.2. Shall be aware that all activities relating to construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructures will not cause potential negative impacts on environment. These activities shall be controlled and minimized.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.12 With due regard to management objectives, measures shall be taken to balance the pressure of animal populations and grazing on forest regeneration and growth as well as on biodiversity.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C6.2. Forest owners shall protect fauna and flora in compliance with legal law.

16.2.2. Shall have measures to protect identified/recorded species and their habitats. These measures shall be available to the public;

C6.4. Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests.

16.4.4. Shall have specific measures to minimize the negative impacts of cattle grazing on natural regeneration, growth rate and biodiversity of forests;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.4.13 Standing and fallen dead wood, hollow trees, old groves and special rare tree species shall be left in quantities and distribution necessary to safeguard biological diversity, taking into account the potential effect on the health and stability of forests and on surrounding ecosystems.

The standard addresses hollow trees, old groves and special rare tree species and the safeguarding of biological diversity in C6.1:

“Forest owners shall identify and demarcate forest areas with ecological importance to be needed for the purposes of protection and conservation”,

and I6.1.1.

“Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, forest mapping and development of database and consult stakeholders about forest areas with ecological importance, including: a) Unique, rare and vulnerable forest ecosystems or typical forest ecosystems such as river estuary, wetland, and limestone forests; b) Forest areas existing endemic species and their habitats being threatened.”

In addition, there are references to prohibitions on the exploitation of standing or fallen dead wood and hollow trees as follows:

Law on Forest Protection and Development No. 29/2004/QH11: “it is allowed to exploit dead or diseased trees, trees standing in the areas with a density higher than that prescribed in the forest management regulation, except for endangered, precious and rare forest plant species banned from exploitation according to the Government’s stipulations on the regime of management and protection of endangered, precious and rare plant and animal species and the lists of such plant and animal species.”

This also applied to national parks, conservation areas, production forests and special use forests, stipulated in Law on Forestry No. 16/2017/QH14.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

CRITERION 5: MAINTENANCE AND APPROPRIATE ENHANCEMENT OF PROTECTIVE FUNCTIONS IN FOREST MANAGEMENT (NOTABLY SOIL AND WATER)

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

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.

15.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites;

15.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;

15.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

15.2.4. Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

15.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.5.2 Areas that fulfil specific and recognised protective functions for society shall be registered and mapped, and forest management plans or their equivalents shall take these areas into account.

VFCS 1003:2019 states

C5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.

15.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites;

15.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;

15.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.5.3 Special care shall be given to silvicultural operations on sensitive soils and erosion-prone areas as well as in areas where operations might lead to excessive erosion of soil

into watercourses. Inappropriate techniques such as deep soil tillage and use of unsuitable machinery shall be avoided in such areas. Special measures shall be taken to minimise the pressure of animal populations.

Soil and erosion are dealt with in the following indicators as VFCS 1003:2019 states, with special provision for mitigation.

C5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.

15.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites;

15.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;

15.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

15.2.4. Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

15.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.

Circular 29 on silviculture defines the appropriate techniques for silviculture, with due regard for appropriate hoeing, fertilization and planting techniques on different soils and slopes over 25 degrees.

With regards to the impact of animal populations, special measures to minimize any damage caused by animal populations are not addressed directly in the documentation. However, the Forestry Law (2017) defines “Prohibited acts in forestry activities” includes: “grazing, leading and releasing cattle and domestic animals into strictly protected sections of special-use forests or newly planted forests.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.5.4 Special care shall be given to forest management practices in forest areas with water protection functions to avoid adverse effects on the quality and quantity of water resources. Inappropriate use of chemicals or other harmful substances or inappropriate silvicultural practices influencing water quality in a harmful way shall be avoided.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.

15.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites;

15.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;

15.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

15.2.4. Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

15.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.

C5.3. Forest owners shall strictly control the use of chemicals and fertilizers and ensure to be safe for the environment and people's health.

15.3.1. Shall use chemicals that they are compliance with legal requirements of Viet Nam's laws and international regulations;

15.3.2. Shall ensure that all chemicals and materials shall be kept and stored in safe places for the environment and people's health;

15.3.3. Shall have instructions for using chemicals in order to ensure safety for the environment and people's health;

15.3.4. Shall keep and update the list of all chemicals (pesticide, herbicide, sterilization, anti-rodent prescriptions, and growth regulators) prohibited by Viet Nam's laws and international regulations/conventions;

15.3.5. Shall record information about type, dosage, time and place of using chemicals and chemical fertilizers;

15.3.6. Forest owners shall limit use of chemical fertilizers and encourage use of organic and bio-fertilizers to improve the fertile of soil.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.5.5 Construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure shall be carried out in a manner that minimises bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C4.8. Forest owners shall build and maintain technical infrastructures in order to minimize adverse impacts on environment.

I4.8.1. Shall build and maintain infrastructures including roads, skid tracks, bridges and skidding logs, logging areas in line with regulations; make sure that all the infrastructures shall be shown on maps;

14.8.2. Shall be aware that all activities relating to construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructures will not cause potential negative impacts on environment. These activities shall be controlled and minimized.

This is combined with:

C5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.

15.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites;

15.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;

15.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

15.2.4. Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;

15.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.

On road drainage facilities, the Law on Environmental Protection (LEP) no. 55/2014/QH13 has procedures in place for requiring proper drainage facilities for the construction of infrastructure, including roads; the technical requirements and specifications for road infrastructure are defined in Circular 01/2016 /TT-BXD.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

CRITERION 6: MAINTENANCE OF OTHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS AND CONDITIONS

5.6.1 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.

Circular 28 contains requirements for forest management planning in relation to economic functions, specifically:

“a) Regarding economics: intensive afforestation, improvement of productivity quality of planted forest; improvement of natural forest quality; area, timber output harvested from planted forest, timber output from salvaging harvesting, gleaning harvesting; value from PFES source, forest carbon storage and other services; c) Regarding society: creation of job, increase income for labourers, training, improve awareness on protection, development, use of forest and sustainable forest management; step by step complete the infrastructure system.”

and

“1) Formulation of the plan for supportive activities to residential communities and local people regarding varieties, technique, training, training on forest protection and development, sustainable forest management and infrastructure development.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.2 Forest management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the forest management area.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C2.5. Forest owners shall resolve complaints and disputes relating to negative impacts of forestry activities on local communities and people’s assets (soils, forests and other assets) and livelihood and health.

I2.5.1. Identify forestry activities of forest owners that do not cause the possible negative impacts of each forestry activity on land, forests and the life of local communities and local people in order to take preventive measures;

I2.5.2. Shall have measures to prevent adverse impacts on local communities and people;

I2.5.5. Shall maintain local communities’ infrastructures when using them for forestry activities and provide additional supports infrastructure to upgrade if applicable.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.3 Property rights and land tenure arrangements shall be clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. Likewise, legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land shall be clarified, recognised and respected.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.

I2.1.1. Shall respect all legal and/or customary land use rights of community and local people. Cooperate with the community, local people and stakeholders to identify areas related to their livelihood activities such as collecting NTFPs, providing water for production and lifestyle... on the map, in the field, a management plan is attached in the sustainable forest management plan;

I2.1.2. Shall agree with communities and local people on the boundaries of forests and forest land;

I2.1.3. Shall give favor conditions/priorities to communities and local people to carry out their legal activities on their land and forests.

C2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.

I2.4.1. Shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance on maps and sites, a management plan attached in sustainable forest management plan;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.4 Forest management activities shall be conducted in recognition of the established framework of legal, customary and traditional rights such as outlined in ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which shall not be infringed upon without the free, prior and informed consent of the holders of the rights, including the provision of compensation where applicable. Where the extent of rights is not yet resolved or is in dispute there are processes for just and fair resolution. In such cases forest managers shall, in the interim, provide meaningful opportunities for parties to be engaged in forest management decisions whilst respecting the processes and roles and responsibilities laid out in the policies and laws where the certification takes place.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C1.4. Forest owners shall comply with all the international treaties/conventions that Viet Nam is a signatory.

I1.4.1. Shall understand and comply with the regulations/provision of the treaties (e.g ILO, CBD 1992, POP 2001 – Stockholm convention, and CITES).

C2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.

I2.1.1. Shall respect all legal and/or customary land use rights of community and local people. Cooperate with the community, local people and stakeholders to identify areas related to their livelihood activities such as collecting NTFPs, providing water for production and lifestyle... on the map, in the field, a management plan is attached in the sustainable forest management plan;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.5 Adequate public access to forests for the purpose of recreation shall be provided taking into account respect for ownership rights and the rights of others, the effects on forest resources and ecosystems, as well as compatibility with other functions of the forest.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.

12.4.1. Shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance on maps and sites, a management plan attached in sustainable forest management plan;

12.4.2. Shall consult with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and develop measures for protection of forest areas with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and entertainment.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.6 Sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meeting the basic needs of local communities (e.g. health, subsistence) shall be protected or managed in a way that takes due regard of the significance of the site.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.

12.4.1. Shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance on maps and sites, a management plan attached in sustainable forest management plan;

12.4.2. Shall consult with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and develop measures for protection of forest areas with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and entertainment.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.7 Forest management operations shall take into account all socio-economic functions, especially the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests by maintaining for example varied forest structures, and by encouraging attractive trees, groves and other features such as colours, flowers and fruits. This shall be done, however, in a way and to an extent that does not lead to serious negative effects on forest resources, and forest land.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.

12.4.1. Shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance on maps and sites, a management plan attached in sustainable forest management plan;

C4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan.

14.3.1. Shall select tree species selected for planting matching with site conditions and objectives of sustainable forest management.

In addition, management planning in Circular 28 clearly requires that planning identify opportunities for leisure, tourism and recreation, among other activities. The aesthetic function associated with these activities, such as scenic beauty, which is referred to extensively in Law of Forestry (2017) indicates that this is implied, i.e. taken into account.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.8 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 as a precondition for all management planning and practices described in this standard.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C3.2. Forest owners shall ensure all safety working conditions for their employees in line with the laws.

13.2.1. Shall provide and guide on how to use safety tools and equipments for employees based on specific working conditions;

13.2.2. Shall provide trainings on how to safely use and store material and equipments that may cause incidence for their employees;

13.2.3. Shall provide practical trainings on how to use chemical substances safely to health for their employees;

13.2.4. Employees and those of contractors shall be trained on safe working practices in compliance with the laws and regulations.

C4.1. All forestry practices shall be implemented as prescribed in the sustainable forest management plan.

14.1.1. Forest owners shall ensure that forest management practices shall be implemented as described in sustainable forest management plan and annual plan;

14.1.2. If forestry activities are adjusted in the annual plan, then, forest owners shall ensure that the objectives of the sustainable forest management plan shall be assured;

C4.6. Forest owners shall implement measures for prevention and fighting of forest fire.

14.6.4. Shall carry out practical activities in relation to raising awareness of employees, local communities and people on forest fires;

C6.3. Forest owners shall protect or conserve forest areas with ecological importance and high conservation values.

16.3.4. Shall enhance the capacity of employees and raise awareness for local community on forest areas with ecological importance.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.9 Forest management practices shall make the best use of local forest-related experience and knowledge, such as those of local communities, forest owners, NGOs and local people.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.

12.4.2. Shall consult with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and develop measures for protection of forest areas with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and entertainment.

C6.1. Forest owners shall identify and demarcate forest areas with ecological importance to be needed for the purposes of protection and conservation.

16.1.1. Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, forest mapping and development of database and consult stakeholders about forest areas with ecological importance, including:

a) Unique, rare and vulnerable forest ecosystems or typical forest ecosystems such as river estuary, wetland, and limestone forests; b) Forest areas existing endemic species and their habitats being threatened; c) Genetic resources are vulnerable and need to be protected; d) Landscape areas with significant importance at national and international levels.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.10 Forest management shall provide for effective communication and consultation with local people and other stakeholders relating to sustainable forest management and shall provide appropriate mechanisms for resolving complaints and disputes relating to forest management between forest operators and local people.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.

12.1.1. Shall respect all legal and/or customary land use rights of community and local people. Cooperate with the community, local people and stakeholders to identify areas related to their livelihood activities such as collecting NTFPs, providing water for production and lifestyle... on the map, in the field, a management plan is attached in the sustainable forest management plan;

C2.5. Forest owners shall resolve complaints and disputes relating to negative impacts of forestry activities on local communities and people's assets (soils, forests and other assets) and livelihood and health.

12.5.3. Shall have the mechanisms and measures to resolve any complaints and disputes as well as compensate the lost and damages for local communities and people in line with the national laws;

12.5.4. Shall compensate the lost and damages for local communities and people in line with legal regulations or mutual agreements between two parties;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.11 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.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C3.1. Forest owners shall ensure fairness, rights and benefits of workers in line with the national laws.

13.1.1. Shall have a contract or recruitment decision for employees and comply with agreements with them or their representatives on the amount of money, wages and other social benefits expressed in the contract in line with national law;

13.1.2. Shall comply with the current laws and regulations on the use of adolescent, disabled and over-age workers ;

13.1.3. Shall not absolutely participate in or support the use of forced labor ;

13.1.4. Shall make sure gender equality in recruitment, training and payment.

C3.2. Forest owners shall ensure all safety working conditions for their employees in line with the laws.

13.2.1. Shall provide and guide on how to use safety tools and equipments for employees based on specific working conditions;

13.2.2. Shall provide trainings on how to safely use and store material and equipments that may cause incidence for their employees;

13.2.3. Shall provide practical trainings on how to use chemical substances safely to health for their employees;

13.2.4. Employees and those of contractors shall be trained on safe working practices in compliance with the laws and regulations.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.12 Working conditions shall be safe, and guidance and training in safe working practices shall be provided to all those assigned to a task in forest operations.

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C3.2. Forest owners shall ensure all safety working conditions for their employees in line with the laws.

13.2.1. Shall provide and guide on how to use safety tools and equipments for employees based on specific working conditions;

13.2.2. Shall provide trainings on how to safely use and store material and equipments that may cause incidence for their employees;

13.2.3. Shall provide practical trainings on how to use chemical substances safely to health for their employees;

13.2.4. Employees and those of contractors shall be trained on safe working practices in compliance with the laws and regulations.

C3.4. Forest owners shall have and maintain the mechanisms in terms of resolving complaints and compensate for employees in the case of their loss or damages

13.4.2. Shall implement preventive measures to damages, losses and/or risks of employees' health when practising forestry activities;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.13 Forest management shall comply with fundamental ILO conventions.

The standard requires the management operations to abide by all laws and international treaties that Vietnam is a party to. Vietnam has ratified 6 of 8 of the ILO fundamental conventions. It has not ratified conventions C87 and C105.

Compliance with these conventions is covered by VFCS 1003:2019:

“3.1.3. Shall not absolutely participate in or support the use of forced labor” and “3.3. Forest owners shall respect the rights of workers to participate in the trade union and other rights agreed between employers/employees and employers/forest owners in line with the laws. “

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

5.6.14 Forest management shall be based inter-alia on the results of scientific research. Forest management shall contribute to research activities and data collection needed for

sustainable forest management or support relevant research activities carried out by other organisations, as appropriate.

Article 96 of the Law on Forestry states that the State will support:

- “2. Research on forest ecosystems and value of forest environmental services.
3. Research on solutions to conservation of forest biodiversity and preparedness to climate change.
4. Research on reforming models of forestry production in accordance with the value chain and associated with sustainable forest management; sustainably combined forestry-agricultural-fishery models.
5. Transfer of technology and research results in forestry to forestry production, trade and management.”

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

CRITERION 7: COMPLIANCE WITH LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

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

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

Principle 1: Compliance with national laws and related international treaties and conventions

C1.1. Forest owners shall comply with the laws and regulations of Vietnam on land and forest use rights.

C1.2. Forest owners shall comply with the current laws of Vietnam on production and trading.

C1.3. Forest owners shall comply with Vietnam's current laws on forest management and protection and legal timbers.

C1.4. Forest owners shall comply with all the international treaties/conventions that Viet Nam is a signatory.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

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

VFCS 1003:2019 states:

C1.3. Forest owners shall comply with Vietnam's current laws on forest management and protection and legal timbers.

I1.3.2. Shall have measures to prevent any prohibited activities in the forestry sector; 1.3.3. Shall conduct monitoring to timely find out any illegal activities on the forest land;

I1.3.5. Shall work closely with relevant authorities to identify, report, control and prevent all illegal activities;

I1.3.6. Shall comply with the regulations on documentations, process and procedures of forest harvesting and product management, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

C1.4. Forest owners shall comply with all the international treaties/conventions that Viet Nam is a signatory.

I1.4.1. Shall understand and comply with the regulations/provision of the treaties (e.g ILO, CBD 1992, POP 2001 – Stockholm convention, and CITES).

C4.6. Forest owners shall implement measures for prevention and fighting of forest fire.

I4.6.1. Shall have a plan and monitor for prevention and protection against forest fires; 4.6.2. Shall have a system of prevention and protection against forest fire. it shall be installed and maintained according to the regulations;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

8. GROUP CERTIFICATION MODEL

GENERAL

The VFCS has adopted the PEFC ST 1002:2010 with a relatively small number of changes. The Group Forest Certification Model is based on the standard VFCS 1004:2019 Group Forest Standard.

The following is a summary of the assessment against the requirements.

The definitions used by the group model are in conformity with the terms presented in PEFC 1002:2010 Chapter 3. The definitions are contained in VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 4.

The group model:

- Requires non-conformities to addresses across other certification schemes (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.2 e);
- Defines requirements for group certification that ensure conformity is centrally administered, centrally reviewed and requires internal monitoring for all participants (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 g, k, l);
- Defines requirements for an annual internal monitoring programme that provides sufficient confidence in the conformity of the whole group organisation with the sustainable forest management standard (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 j, k, l)

Within the group model, defines functions and responsibilities for the group entity, with a number replicated from Chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010 as follows:

- to represent the group organisation in the certification process, including in communications and relationships with the certification body, submission of an application for certification, and contractual relationship with the certification body; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 b)
- to implement and maintain an effective management system covering all participants of the group; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 a)
- to establish connections with all participants based on a binding written agreement which shall include the participants' commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standard. (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 g)
- to establish written procedures for the management of the group organization (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 a)
- to establish written procedures for the acceptance of new participants of the group organisation. These acceptance procedures shall cover at least the verification of the applicant's information about contact details, clear identification of their forest property and its/their size(s); (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 d)
- to establish written procedures for the suspension and exclusion of participants who do not correct/close nonconformities. Group participants excluded from any certification group based on nonconformities cannot be accepted within 12 months after exclusion (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 e)
- to keep documented information of:

- i. the group entity and participants' conformity with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard, and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system,
 - ii. all participants, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/ their size(s),
 - iii. the certified area,
 - iv. the implementation of an internal monitoring programme, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 b)
- to provide all participants with a document confirming participation in the group forest certification (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 h);
 - to provide all participants with information and guidance required for the effective implementation and maintenance of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 i)
 - to operate an annual internal audit programme covering both group members and group entity; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 l)
 - to operate a management review of the group forest certification and acting on the results from the review; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 m)

The group model also defines the requirements for participants as follows:

- to provide the group entity with a binding written agreement, including a commitment on conformity with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system; group participants excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within 12 months after exclusion; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.2 a)
- to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system as well as with the requirements of the management system; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 c)
- to provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the group entity, or certification body for relevant data, documentation or other information; allowing access to the forest and other facilities, whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or otherwise related or with implications for the management system; (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 d)
- to implement relevant corrective and preventive actions established by the group entity. (VFCS ST 1004:2019 Section 6.1.1 f)

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

9. CHAIN OF CUSTODY STANDARD

GENERAL

Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme has fully adopted PEFC ST 2002:2013 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements as part of the VFCS Scheme.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

10. PROCEDURES FOR LOGO LICENSING

The VFCS standard for logo and licensing are contained in VFCS ST 1009:2019. This analysis assesses the standard against PEFC GD 1004:2009, Chapter 6.

COVERAGE OF THE PEFC LOGO USAGE LICENCE

6.1.1 The PEFC Logo usage licence shall be issued to an individual legal entity based on the requirements of PEFC ST 2001:2008.

VFCS ST 1009:2019 states that it is based on PEFC ST 2001:2008.

The VFCS GD 1009:2019 sets out the process for the issuance of VFCS/PEFC logo use licenses, hereafter “licenses”, by VFCS to ensure legally compliant use of the VFCS Logo and PEFC in accordance with the VFCS Logo usage rules – requirements and PEFC ST 2001:2008, PEFC logo usage rules – requirements, VFCS ST 1008:2019 for the organizations/individual owned VFCS certificate wishing to use VFCS/PEFC Logo.

Usage rights in VFCS ST 1009:2019 (Chapter 4.5 Ownership and PEFC Logo Usage Rights) are based on PEFC ST 2001:2008, with similar provisions for logo ownership, logo usage rights, rights to use ‘VFCS’ or ‘PEFC’ initials. Similarly, Chapter 5 (VFCS logo users classification) has similar classification provisions for usage groups: forest owners and managers, forest related industries and other organisations, with the same definitions.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

6.1.2 The PEFC Council and authorised bodies may issue a PEFC Logo usage multi-licence to a holder of a multi-site chain of custody certificate, which covers the whole or a part of the multisite organisation provided that: a) the central office and the sites are a part of a single legal entity or b) the central office and the sites are a part of a single company with a single management and organisational structure.

The documentation and procedures do not allow for multi-licenses for multi-site operations.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS/NOT APPLICABLE

6.2 ISSUANCE OF PEFC LOGO USAGE LICENCES

6.2.1 The licensing body shall have written procedures for the PEFC Logo licensing which ensure that: a) the PEFC Logo usage licence is based on a written contract between the licensing body and the PEFC Logo user

Licensing is based on the requirement of a contract, stipulated at VFCS 1009:2019 4.3 (b), which requires a contract between VFCS (the licensing body) and the logo user. A draft contract is provided in the documentation.

b) the PEFC logo user complies with the PEFC Logo usage rules (PEFC ST 2001:2008)

VFCS 1009:2019 states that the document ensures: “ensure legally compliant use of the VFCS Logo and PEFC in accordance with the VFCS Logo usage rules – requirements and PEFC ST 2001:2008, PEFC logo usage rules – requirements, VFCS ST 1008:2019 for the organizations/individual owned VFCS certificate wishing to use VFCS/PEFC Logo”.

Further, the contract stipulates that

“The logo user is obliged to use the VFCS/PEFC logo in accordance with the VFCS and PEFC Logo Use Rules and together with a registration number issued by the VFCO;” and that the PEFC Logo Use rules are defined as: “. The VFCS/PEFC Logo Use Rules - This is set of requirements for the use of the VFCS Logo defined in VFCS ST 1008:2019 and PEFC Logo defined in PEFC ST PEFC ST 2001:2008”.

c) the scope of the PEFC Logo usage (logo usage groups) is clearly defined,

Logo usage groups are clearly defined in VFCS ST 1008:2019 as

“5.1. Forest owners and managers (Usage group A)

Forest owners and managers with VFCS recognised forest management certificates and all eligible entities participating in a region or group with PEFC recognised certificate.

The following entities are covered by group A:

a) Any forest management units include in a group or regional certification (group of forest owners and managers);

b) Individual forest owners or managements are organizations, households, individuals and population communities;

c) Other entities participating in the regional or group forest certification (e.g. contractors, nursery,...).

5.2. Forest related industries (Usage group B)

Wood procurement organisations, wood manufacturers and wood processing industries, wood traders, distributors, retailers, etc. with VFCS recognised chain of custody certificate, including sites covered by VFCS recognised chain of custody certificates.

5.3. Other organization, individual users (Usage group C)

Organisations, individuals and other entities other than those classified under VFCS Logo usage groups A, B which are using the VFCS Logo off-product for promotional, propaganda and education purposes.

d) the PEFC Logo usage licence can be terminated by the licensing body in the case of the PEFC Logo user’s non adherence to the conditions of the PEFC logo usage rules (PEFC ST

2001:2008) or in the case of cancellation of the contract between the PEFC Council and the authorised body,

The contract provisions in VFCS ST 1009:2019 state that "The VFCO may revoke the contract temporarily with immediate effect while a suspicion of contravention of Article 3 of this contract or the VFCS/PEFC Logo Use Rules is being investigated" and that "Either party may terminate the contract with three-month prior notice by registered letter."

e) where unauthorised use has taken place, the PEFC Logo usage licence provides for contractual penalty of one fifth of the market value of the products to which the unauthorised logo use relates, unless the PEFC Logo user proves that such unauthorised use was unintentional. In the latter case, the penalty will be limited to 15,000 CHF.

The Logo Use contract states in Article 4 (Penalty):

1. The VFCO may impose, in case of user group B and C, a contractual penalty of a CHF amount being one-fifth the market value of the products to which unauthorised on- or off-product logo use relates, unless the VFCS/PEFC logo user proves that such unauthorised use was unintentional. In the latter case the penalty will be limited to 300,000,000 VND (Three hundred million Vietnamese Dong).

2. The VFCO has the right to alter the amount of penalty demanded for use of the VFCS/PEFC logo in contravention of the contract. The change shall come into effect in the contract between the VFCO and the logo user three months after the former has informed the latter, in writing, of the change.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

6.2.2 The licensing body shall have a mechanism for the investigation and enforcement of the compliance with PEFC Logo usage rules (PEFC ST 2001:2008) and shall take actions, including legal if necessary, to protect the PEFC Logo trademark.

The Logo Use Contract states in Article 6 (Contract Termination)

1. Either party may terminate the contract with three-month prior notice by registered letter;

2. The VFCO may revoke the contract temporarily with immediate effect while a suspicion of contravention of Article 3 of this contract or the VFCS/PEFC Logo Use Rules is being investigated;

3. The VFCO is not obliged to pay compensation for any costs or other damages which the temporary revocation or termination causes to the logo user.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

11. CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION ARRANGEMENTS

GENERAL

CERTIFICATION BODIES: COMPETENCE

Does the scheme documentation require that certification shall be carried out by impartial, independent third parties that cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making body, or in the forest management and are independent of the certified entity?

VFCS GD 1001:2019 Section 4.3.1

a) Certification bodies

The certification bodies operating in VFCS shall be a domestic, international or joint venture with the sufficient capacity and independent operation, independence of financial and human resources with any state or professional agencies acting on sustainable forest management and forest certification. In addition, the certification bodies cannot be participated in deciding on sustainable forest management standards.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that certification body for forest management certification shall fulfil requirements defined in ISO 17021 or ISO Guide 65?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

The certification body operating forest management certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall have a management system and operational capacity which meets the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015, Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015 on Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Requirements.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (CoC)

The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies carrying out forest certification shall have the technical competence in forest management on its economic, social and environmental impacts, and on the forest certification criteria?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

The certification body carrying out forest management certification shall meet the requirements of forest management, assessment of economic, social and environmental impacts on forest management and criteria for sustainable forest management.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies shall have a good understanding of the national PEFC system against which they carry out forest management certification?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

The certification body shall have a good understanding of the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme; sustainable forest management standard and other relevant documents against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

The certification body shall have a good understanding of the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme, Chain of Custody certification standard and other documents relevant to the process of operating the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies have the responsibility to use competent auditors and who have adequate technical know-how on the certification process and issues related to forest management certification?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

a) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have the knowledge corresponding to at least university education and at least 3 years experience with courses related to forestry, environment, biodiversity conservation;

b) For a first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditors within the last three years has performed forest management audits for at least four organizations under the leadership of a qualified auditor;

c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnam standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems;

d) Knowledge and understanding of the principles, criteria and indicators of the sustainable forest management standard VFCS ST 1003:2019 and group forest management standard, VFCS ST 1004:2019;

e) Understanding of Forestry Law, decrees, circulars and relevant documents of the Forestry Law.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

11. Auditors involved in the Certification activities

a) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have the knowledge corresponding to at least university education and at least 3 years experience with courses related to forest based and related industries, forest economy where the auditor(s) conducts chain of custody audits;

b) For a first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor within the last three years has performed chain of custody audits for at least four organisations under the leadership of a qualified auditor. The number of chains of custody audits in training can be reduced by two (02) audits for auditors that are qualified for ISO 9001 or 14001 auditing in the sector of forest based and related industries;

c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems;

d) The certification body shall ensure that auditors, in the last two years, have participated in an education programme in chain of custody of forest -based products that is recognised by the PEFC Council or the Vietnam Forest Certification Office;

e) The certification body shall ensure that auditors applicable international treaties and conventions relating to forest products trade (CITES) and Viet Nam specific forest governance and law enforcement system relevant to the harvestation, transportation, processing and consumption of timber and forest base products to ensure the legal management and traceability of timber and forest base products

f) The certification body shall ensure that auditors demonstrate ability to apply terminology, knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas of the chain of custody of forest- based products:

- Principles and requirements for each indicator, criteria and standards of chain of custody systems;*
- Process and application of management systems to manage input materials and output products for traceability of raw materials;*
- Information systems and technology for authorisation, security, distribution and control of documents, data and records;*
- Knowledge of using VFCS certified products in product labels and claims.*

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that the auditors must fulfil the general criteria of ISO 19011 for Quality Management Systems auditors or for Environmental Management Systems auditors?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnam standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems;

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnam standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation include additional qualification requirements for auditors carrying out forest management audits?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

e) Understanding of Forestry Law, decrees, circulars and relevant documents of the Forestry Law.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

f) The certification body shall ensure that auditors demonstrate ability to apply terminology, knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas of the chain of custody of forest-based products:

- *Information systems and technology for authorisation, security, distribution and control of documents, data and records;*
- *Knowledge of using VFCS certified products in product labels and claims.*

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies shall have established internal procedures for forest management certification?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

3. The Certification Body shall have internal procedures and guidelines for activities of forest management certification.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (CoC)

3. The Certification Body shall have internal procedures and guidelines for activities of chain of custody certification.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that applied certification procedures for forest management certification shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements defined in ISO 17021 or ISO Guide 65?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

2. The certification body operating forest management certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall have a management system and operational capacity which meets the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015, Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015 on Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Requirements.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

2. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that applied auditing procedures shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements of ISO 19011?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

11. Auditors involved in the certification activities

c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnam standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

11. Auditors involved in the Certification activities

c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems;

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that certification body shall inform the relevant PEFC National Governing Body about all issued forest management certificates and changes concerning the validity and scope of these certificates?

This requirement is present in the contract regarding notification.

VFCS GD 1007:2019 Annex III – Notification contract – Article 2

Article 2. Right and responsibility of Party B

7. Take responsibility to report the detailed information and status of certificates issued by certification body to VFCS.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that certification body shall carry out controls of PEFC logo usage if the certified entity is a PEFC logo user?

This requirement is present in the contract regarding notification.

VFCS GD 1007:2019 Annex III – Notification contract – Article 2

Article 2. Right and responsibility of Party B

3. Have the right to use VFCS Logo for promotion, advertisement and certification purpose in compliance with Logo VFCS usage rules (VFCS ST 1008:2009);

8. Have responsibility to support the certified companies, forest owners to register the using of Logo VFCS;

9. Have responsibility to check and monitor the using of Logo VFCS/PEFC of the certified companies, forest owners.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does a maximum period for surveillance audits defined by the scheme documentation not exceed more than one year?

VFCS GD 1001:2019:

Section 4.3 e) The validity of forest certification: Certifications of sustainable forest management, group forest management and chain of custody are valid for 05 years from the date of issue. Annually, the certification body is responsible for evaluating to maintain the certificate.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does a maximum period for assessment audit not exceed five years for forest management certifications?

VFCS GD 1001:2019:

Section 4.3 e) The validity of forest certification: Certifications of sustainable forest management, group forest management and chain of custody are valid for 05 years from the date of issue. Annually, the certification body is responsible for evaluating to maintain the certificate.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation include requirements for public availability of certification report summaries?

VFCS GD 1007:2019 Section V Annex III – Notification contract – Article 4

- 1. CB shall agree to publish their detailed information and data of certificates issued by CB on the VFCS website;*
- 2. The information that CB is providing to VFCO shall be informed to the FM and CoC certificate holders. This information (except for the revenue of certificate holders) will be published on the Website of VFCS and PEFC.*
- 3. The certification body is responsible to provide a summary of the audit report of FM and CoC certification to VFCO for announcement on the website.*
- 4. The information posted on the VFCS website regulated in bullet 1, 2 and 3 of this article is maintained even if this Contract expires and the two parties no longer cooperate.*

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation include requirements for usage of information from external parties as the audit evidence?

The scheme documentation as submitted does not include requirements for usage of information from external parties as audit evidence. However, VFCO has provided a draft of a revised requirement for the standard that addresses the issue. This was provided during the comment period. The draft text provided states that the sentence “This will include usage of information from external parties as the audit evidence” will be addressed in point 3 of Sections IV and V in the VFCS GD 1006:2019 in Vietnamese and English.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: MINOR NON-CONFORMITY

Does the scheme documentation include additional requirements for certification procedures?

ASSESSMENT DECISION: NOT APPLICABLE

Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies carrying out forest management certification shall be accredited by a national accreditation body?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

4. The certification body shall have a valid accreditation issued by Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)- Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, or other International accreditation bodies which are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for Accreditation.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

4. The certification body shall have a valid accreditation issued by Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)- Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, or other International accreditation bodies which are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for Accreditation.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that an accredited certificate shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body?

The scheme documentation does not require that an accredited certificate bears an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: MINOR NON-CONFORMITY

This is a non-conformity but does not affect the integrity of the system as it currently operates.

Does the scheme documentation require that the accreditation shall be issued by an accreditation body which is a part of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) umbrella or a member of IAF's special recognition regional groups and which implement procedures described in ISO 17011 and other documents recognised by the above mentioned organisations?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

4. The certification body shall have a valid accreditation issued by Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)- Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, or other International accreditation bodies which are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for Accreditation.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

4. The certification body shall have a valid accreditation issued by Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)- Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, or other International accreditation bodies which are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for Accreditation.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation require that certification body undertake forest management certification as “accredited certification” based on ISO 17021 or ISO Guide 65 and the relevant forest management standard(s) shall be covered by the accreditation scope?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

2. The certification body operating forest management certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall have a management system and operational capacity which meets the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015, Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015 on Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Requirements.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

2. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Does the scheme documentation include a mechanism for PEFC notification of certification bodies?

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section IV (FM)

8. The certification body shall be notified by the Vietnam Forest Certification Office through a notified contract.

VFCS GD 1006:2019 Section V (CoC)

8. The certification body shall be notified by the Vietnam Forest Certification Office.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Are the procedures for PEFC notification of certification bodies non-discriminatory?

The procedures do not contain any discriminatory measures such as those specified in PEFC GD 1004:2009 5.1 f

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Are procedures for the notification of certification bodies in place, which comply with chapter 5 of PEFC GD 1004:2009, Administration of PEFC scheme?

Procedures for notification of certification bodies are contained in VFCS-R-03.

VFCS 1007:2019 is assessed against the relevant clauses attributed to PEFC GD 1004:2009 Chapter 5 below.

5.1 a) The authorised body – VFCS -- is the PEFC National Governing Body operating within its country.

5.1 b) *The scope of the certification is defined in Appendix I, which clearly defines the type of certification for notification.*

5.1 c) *Article 3 stipulates contract termination, which can occur: “The notified contract is withdrawn in the following cases: The certification body does not meet the prescribed conditions;”*

5.1 d) *A template contract is provided at Appendix III*

5.1 e) *The notified body “Take(s) responsibility to report the detailed information and status of certificates issued by CB to VFCO;”*

5.1 f) *There are no discriminatory measures.*

5.2 *The notifying body has published a fee schedule. “The notification and development fees are regulated at Appendix IV of this document, if there is any change in fee rate, VFCO will inform CB in writing 6 months in advance.”*

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

Are procedures for the issuance of PEFC Logo usage licenses in place, which comply with chapter 6 of PEFC GD 1004:2009, Administration of PEFC scheme?

Procedures for the issuance of logos and licensing are stipulated in VFCS 1008:2019.

6.1.1 VFCS 1008:2019 Chapter 4 and 4.5. Ownership and PEFC Logo usage rights is based on Chapter 5 and the requirements of PEFC ST 2001:2008.

6.1.2 VFCS ST 1008:2019 does not allow for PEFC Logo usage multi-licenses.

6.2.1a) *“Organizations using the VFCS Logo for other purposes (off-product) must obtain consent from the VFCO through a contract on the right to use the VFCS Logo (Appendix II, Process of licensing the use of VFCS GD 1009: 2019).”*

6.2.1b) *“The logo user is obliged to use the VFCS/PEFC logo in accordance with the VFCS and PEFC Logo Use Rules and together with a registration number issued by the VFCO;”*

6.2.1c) The logo usage groups are in compliance with PEFC ST 2001:2008.

6.2.1d) *“The VFCO may revoke the contract temporarily with immediate effect while a suspicion of contravention of Article 3 of this contract or the VFCS/PEFC Logo Use Rules is being investigated;”*

6.2.1e) The VFCO may impose, in case of user group B and C, a contractual penalty of a CHF amount being one-fifth the market value of the products to which unauthorised on- or off-product logo use relates, unless the VFCS/PEFC logo user proves that such unauthorised use was unintentional. In the latter case the penalty will be limited to 300,000,000 VND (Three hundred million Vietnamese Dong).

- 6.2.2 Have a right to monitor and handling activities in case Party B do not to comply with the requirements of using the VFCS Logo defined in VFCS ST 1008:2019 and PEFC Logo defined in PEFC ST 2001:2008 .



12. ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

Are complaint and dispute procedures in place, which comply with chapter 8 of PEFC GD 1004:2009, Administration of PEFC scheme?

VFCS's procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals relating to the governance and administration of the scheme are stipulated at VFCS 1010:2019.

a) acknowledgement of the complaint to the complainant,

VFCS 1010:2019 5.3 a) When received the complaint/appeal document of request for complaint/appeal resolution, the Viet Nam Forest Certification Office shall classify the information and will notify the confirmation of the resolution or refusal to resolve the complaint/appeal.

b) gathering and verification of all necessary information, validation and impartial evaluation of the complaint, and decision making on the complaint,

VFCS 1010:2019 5.3 b) Organisations or persons named as responding parties shall have 20 working days, following the Secretariat's transmission to them of the dispute (and its supporting documents), to submit to the Secretariat their own response briefs (including the supporting documents and evidence not already presented by the complainant).

VFCS 1010:2019 5.3 c) The Resolution of appeals and complaints Committee shall convene to analyze, discuss all the information and evidences within the dispute in an objective and impartial manner, and make its decision on the dispute

c) formal communication of the decision on the complaint and the complaint handling process to the complainant and concerned parties,

VFCS 1010:2019 5.3 e) The Viet Nam Forest Certification Office will directly notify to the relevant parties of the results of complaint and appeals resolution results and public all information on the website of the Viet Nam Forest Certification System (vfcs.vnforest.org.vn).

d) appropriate corrective and preventive actions.

VFCS 1010:2019 6.2 VFCS responsible for monitoring the resolution, handling complaints and appeals process and supervising the related parties on the capacity and experience of organizations and individuals operating in the VFCS.

ASSESSMENT DECISION: CONFORMS

13. ANNEXES

ANNEX A: PEFC STANDARD AND SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

PART I: Standard and System Requirement Checklist for standard setting (PEFC ST 1001:2010)

Standardising Body				TEXT	COMMENTS	CONFORMS
4.1 The standardising body shall have written procedures for standard-setting activities describing:						
a) its status and structure, including a body responsible for consensus building (see 4.4) and for formal adoption of the standard (see 5.11),	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 3.3)	<p>3.3 The Vietnam Forest Certification Office is the focal point to develop standards for the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme.</p> <p>4.2 Standard Development Group (SDG) is responsible for setting the draft of standard system and activities of standard setting ... The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development establishes a Standard Development Group through public consultations with all stakeholders; discusses and selects members of the Standard Development Group based on nominations or self-nominations of all stakeholders involved. Standard Development Group has following responsibilities ... Submitting to VFCS the final draft for formal adoption based on consensus</p>	<p>The references aren't correct; there is no 3.3 in ST1002:2019, but there is in ST 1001: 2019. The documentation doesn't clearly state that the NGB (VFCO) establishes the body responsible for consensus building (Standard Development Group – SDG). This is instead described as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) as being the body that establishes the SDG.</p> <p>Although it is clear from ST1001:2019 that MARD establishes the VFCO via the Vietnam Forest Administration and Steering Committee, it needs to be clearer that it is in fact VFCO (operating under MARD) that establishes the SDG.</p> <p>The status and structure of the NGB are better described in ST1001:2019 Section 4.1:</p> <p>4.1. National Governing Body VFCO is national governing body, it acts under the Vietnam Administration of Forestry and gives suggestions and recommendations for this</p>	Y

					<p>organization to develop and operate VFCS.</p> <p>A National Governing Body operates and acts under the Steering Committee for sustainable forest management and forest certification (referred to as Steering Committee) in terms of the professional guidances. The Steering Committee consists of representatives of relevant agencies and units who are internal and external experts of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. VFCO is the focal point, it will coordinate the activities of sustainable forest management and forest certification following the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme.</p> <p>VFCO has main tasks as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To coordinate the activities of the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme; b) To consult and submit relevant documents in terms of the implementation of forest certification following VFCS for the VNForest to issue them; c) To cooperate with national and international agencies and organizations on the operation following VFCS; d) To give suggestions and recommendations in terms of complaints and dispute resolution procedures for the leaders of VNForest and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development during the operation of VFCS; 	
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<p>b) the record-keeping procedures,</p>	<p>Procedures</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.7)</p>	<p>"VFCO will maintain for and manage all documents and records related to the standard-setting process. All documents and records will be stored and maintained for at least 5 years. VFCO has the ownership and manage all documents and records available to any organization and individual who requests to be viewed after having the permission of VFCO."</p>	<p>The text conforms with the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>c) the procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,</p>	<p>Procedures</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.5)</p>	<p>The standard- setting process is a relevant-party participation and ensure the balanced representation of stakeholders. In order to identify affected stakeholders, environmental, social and economic impacts of the standard will be analyzed based on its impact objectives and scope. Group of stakeholders, especially key and disadvantaged stakeholders, will be identified by considering the level of influence to identify the way of participation, including: - Invite the relevant parties, especially key and disadvantaged stakeholders to participate in Standard Development Group; - Create equal opportunities for other stakeholders, such as government agencies, research and education argnizations, forest management units, forest planters and owners, forest product companies/enterprises, associations trade, environmental and social non-governmental organizations, unions, and other related organizations participating in the standard</p>	<p>The procedures adequately provide for a balanced representation of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Y</p>

				<p>development process and contributing their comments and recommendations. Periodically review participating stakeholders to control their level of change and concerns to adjust and maintain the balanced representation of stakeholders.</p> <p>Any stakeholder will not prevail in the standard-setting process. Participation and opinions of stakeholders will be evaluated and recorded in a transparent manner. All decisions will be made on a consensus basis.</p>		
d) the standard-setting process,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section IV)	<p>4.4. Standard Setting Process: Standard Setting Process will include the following steps: 4.4.1. Setting up The Vietnam Administration of Forestry makes a public announcement on starting the standard-setting process, including a letter of invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and other media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions. Announcement and invitation shall include: - Information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable; - A letter of an invitation sent to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches</p>	The standard-setting process is adequately described.	Y

				<p>intended recipients and in a format that is understandable; A letter of an invitation to give comments and recommendations on the standard-setting process and main information for stakeholders involved in the standard development process; - Information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process; - Reference to publicly available standard-setting process The Vietnam Administration of Forestry authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will review the standard-setting process, establish the Standard Development Group or adjust the members of Standard Development Group based on comments received from the relevant stakeholders after publicly announcement. The acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the Standard Development Group and resources available for the standard-setting. The list of members of Standard Development Group and their contact information shall be public. 4.4.2. Standards drafting Standard Development Group will be responsible for the standard-setting process and the drafts of Standards shall include at least three following versions: - The first draft: a draft shall be available to all members of the Standard Development Group;</p>		
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				<p>- The required draft: a draft for public consultation after a pilot testing; - The final draft: a final draft for official approval.</p> <p>4.4.3. Pilot testing Pilot testing, testing locations and plans will be determined based on specific conditions and aspects mentioned in the standard. After the pilot testing, the correction is made based on the results of the pilot testing.</p> <p>4.4.4. Public consultation A public consultation will be made to complete the Standards. During the consultation, a draft of standard shall be public announcement and ensure the participation of the key and disadvantaged stakeholders. The starting and ending time of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in the website of the Vietnam Administration of Forestry, and email sent to relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The public consultation is for at least 60 days. All comments and recommendations received are considered by the Standard Development Group in an objective manner. After public consultation, a synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration, is publicly available on the website of the Vietnam Administration of Forestry, and emails sent to relevant stakeholders.</p>		
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e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.6)	<p>4.6. Mechanism for reaching consensus</p> <p>To archive the consensus, the Standard Development Group may use one of the following ways to determine whether there is an objection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vote by words or raise their hands in meetings; the meeting chairman's statement on the issue of consensus without a word or raising a hand to protest; formal voting process; - Meeting over the phone and voting by words; - Send via email, in which all members of the Standard Development Group fully agree; - Combination of the above methods. <p>In case of an objection to any important part, the issue will be resolved by the following mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First of all, discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue among members of the Standard Development Group in order to find a compromise; - Secondly, directly negotiate with the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise; - Finally, carry out the Dispute Resolution Mechanism. 	The process for the mechanism for reaching consensus is adequately described.	Y
f) revision of standards/normative documents.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting	<p>4.9. Standard review and revision</p> <p>The standards will regularly revise and update the new scientific knowledge and practical experience.</p>	The process for revision of standards and normative documents is adequately described.	Y

			Procedures (Section 4.9)	The standards will be revised at least every 5 years.		
4.2 The standardising body shall make its standard-setting procedures publicly available and shall regularly review its standard-setting procedures including consideration of comments from stakeholders.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1)	<p>The Vietnam Administration of Forestry makes a public announcement on starting the standard-setting process, including a letter of invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and other media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions. Announcement and invitation shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable; - A letter of an invitation sent to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is understandable; - A letter of an invitation to give comments and recommendations on the standard-setting process and main information for stakeholders involved in the standard development process; - Information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process; - Reference to publicly available standard-setting process <p>The Vietnam Administration of Forestry authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will review the standard-setting</p>	<p>The procedures require that the standard setting procedures are made publicly available, and have requirements for regular review, and taking into consideration views from stakeholders.</p> <p>However, the procedures refer to the Vietnam Administration of Forestry rather than the VFCO. Although the VFCO operates under the auspices of the VAF, this should be clarified.</p>	Y

				<p>process, establish the Standard Development Group or adjust the members of Standard Development Group based on comments received from the relevant stakeholders after publicly announcement. The acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the Standard Development Group and resources available for the standard-setting.</p> <p>The list of members of Standard Development Group and their contact information shall be public.</p>		
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.2_1.1 and 4.2_1.2		Public announcements were made on October 25 2017 on the Vietnam Academy of Forest Sciences website and the Vietnam Silviculture Research Institute website covering the standard development procedures, with a link to documentation.	Y
4.3 The standardising body shall keep records relating to the standard-setting process providing evidence of compliance with the requirements of this document and the standardising body's own procedures. The records shall be kept for a minimum of five years and shall be available to interested parties upon request.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.7)	<p>VFCO will maintain for and manage all documents and records related to the standard-setting process. All documents and records will be stored and maintained for at least 5 years.</p> <p>VFCO has the ownership and manage all documents and records available to any organization and individual who requests to be viewed after having the permission of VFCO.</p>	The record-keeping procedures are adequate for the process documentation.	Y
	Process	YES	All annexes in Attachment 14_Standard setting process		The standard-setting process documentation is contained in the Annex as described.	Y

			development report and related documents in hardcopy are available at the Silviculture Research Institute, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences and Vietnam Forest Certification Office, Vietnam Administration of Forestry			
4.4 The standardising body shall establish a permanent or temporary working group/committee responsible for standard-setting activities.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2)	The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development establishes a Standard Development Group through public consultations with all stakeholders; discusses and selects members of the Standard Development Group based on nominations or self-nominations of all stakeholders involved.	As noted above, the documentation need to be clearer on the body that establishes the group responsible for standard-setting activities. Although it can be inferred that VFCS (under the auspices of MARD, VAF and Steering Committee) establishes the SDC, this needs to be clarified further.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.4_2.1; 4.4_2.2 and 4.4_2.3		The process documentation describes the establishment of the SDC under the auspices of MARD.	Y
4.4 The working group/committee shall:						
a) be accessible to materially and directly affected stakeholders,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2.b)	The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development establishes a Standard Development Group through public consultations with all stakeholders; discusses and selects members of the Standard Development Group based	The procedures adequately access for materially and directly affected stakeholders.	Y

				<p>on nominations or self-nominations of all stakeholders involved.</p> <p>Standard Development Group of the sustainable forest management standards are 13-15 members, and at least 9 members for the Chain of Custody Standard. The Standard Development Group shall cover the geographical scope of the standard and have a balanced representation and decision-making by related stakeholders in the fields of environment, society and economic sectors. Participation of key and disadvantaged stakeholders shall be ensured.</p> <p>Members of the Standard Development Group who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expertise and/or experience relevant to the subject matter of the standard; - those that are directly materially affected by the standard; - those that can influence the implementation of the standard. 		
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.4_2.1; 4.4_2.2 and 4.4_2.3		The process documents indicate that the SDC is available to directly and materially affected stakeholders. This was confirmed during stakeholder consultations.	Y
b) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard where single	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2. b and d)	The Standard Development Group shall cover the geographical scope of the standard and have a balanced representation and decision-making by related stakeholders in the fields of environment, society and economic sectors.	The procedures adequately provide for balanced representation of stakeholders.	

<p>concerned interests shall not dominate nor be dominated in the process, and</p>	<p>Process</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.4_2.1; 4.4_2.2 and 4.4_2.3</p>		<p>The SDC appears to have balanced representation among different interests. This was confirmed during stakeholder consultations.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>c) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that are materially affected by the standard, and those that can influence the implementation of the standard. The materially affected stakeholders shall represent a meaningful segment of the participants.</p>	<p>Procedures</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2. b)</p>	<p>Members of the Standard Development Group who are: - expertise and/or experience relevant to the subject matter of the standard; - those that are directly materially affected by the standard; - those that can influence the implementation of the standard.</p>	<p>The procedures adequately provide for the SDG to: have appropriate expertise; comprise materially affected stakeholders; comprise members that an influence the standard.</p>	<p>Y</p>
	<p>Process</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.4_2.1; 4.4_2.2 and 4.4_2.3</p>		<p>The materially affected stakeholders appear to represent a meaningful segment of participants, comprising forest owners/communities, and members of the timber sector.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>4.5 The standardising body shall establish procedures for dealing with any substantive and procedural complaints relating to the standardising activities which are accessible to stakeholders.</p>	<p>Procedures</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.10)</p>	<p>VFCO will establish procedures to resolve any basic complaints and disputes related to standard development activities that are accessible to stakeholders. Contact points for complaints and disputes will be assigned. Contact information of contact points will be available to public. 1) All interested parties may submit a complaint regarding any aspect of the standard and related evidences in writing to the VFCO. 2) After receiving the complaints, the person in charge shall notify the complainants about the acceptance of the application and state if the</p>	<p>The procedures for dealing with substantive and procedural complaints have been established.</p>	<p>Y</p>

				<p>complaint is accepted within 5 working days.</p> <p>3) Standard Development Group is responsible for handling all complaints and disputes related to the standard-setting process. During the processing, the Standard Development Group will collect and verify all necessary information to confirm with the complainant in a timely manner and handle it publicly, transparently, impartially and objective. The final decision to resolve the complaint shall be made based on consensus. Process of handling and approach as well as how to resolve complaints shall be notified to the complainants in a timely manner.</p> <p>4) The dispute solution mechanism of VFCS can be transferred to the complainant if there are objections to any decision in the process of developing the standard</p>		
	Process	N/A			There do not appear to have been any disputes or complaints during the standard-setting process. This was confirmed during stakeholder consultations.	Y
4.5 Upon receipt of the complaint, the standard-setting body shall:						
a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.10.(2))	2) After receiving the complaints, the person in charge shall notify the complainants about the acceptance of the application and state if the complaint is accepted within 5 working days.	The procedures provide for acknowledgement of the receipt of complaint.	Y
	Process	N/A			There do not appear to have been any disputes or complaints during the standard-setting process.	Y

b) gather and verify all necessary information to validate the complaint, impartially and objectively evaluate the subject matter of the complaint, and make a decision upon the complaint, and	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4. 10. 3))	3) Standard Development Group is responsible for handling all complaints and disputes related to the standard-setting process. During the processing, the Standard Development Group will collect and verify all necessary information to confirm with the complainant in a timely manner and handle it publicly, transparently, impartially and objective. The final decision to resolve the complaint shall be made based on consensus. Process of handling and approach as well as how to resolve complaints shall be notified to the complainants in a timely manner.	The procedures provide for: gathering, verification and validation; impartial evaluation; and decision making.	Y
	Process	N/A				Y
c) formally communicate the decision on the complaint and of the complaint handling process to the complainant.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.10 3) and 4))	During the processing, the Standard Development Group will collect and verify all necessary information to confirm with the complainant in a timely manner and handle it publicly, transparently, impartially and objective.	The procedures provide for formal communication of the complaint.	Y
	Process	N/A			There do not appear to have been any disputes or complaints during the standard-setting process.	Y.
4.6 The standardising body shall establish at least one contact point for enquiries and complaints relating to its standard-setting activities. The contact point shall be made easily available.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.10)	VFCO will establish procedures to resolve any basic complaints and disputes related to standard development activities that are accessible to stakeholders. Contact points for complaints and disputes will be assigned. Contact information of contact points will be available to public.	The procedures state that contact points will be assigned. Process documentation further indicates that contact points have been established.	Y
Standard-setting process						

5.1 The standardising body shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 3.3)	3.3. Standard Setting Body - The Vietnam Forest Certification Office is the focal point to develop standards for the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme. - The agencies involved in developing the standards are professional organisations on forestry at different levels (local and state), representatives of non-governmental organizations operating in the fields of environment, economy, society and related associations, businesses, forest owners, and other relevant organizations participating in the process of standards development and contributing their recommendations and comments.	The procedures require identification of relevant stakeholders, covering all related aspects of forests and forestry.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 5.1_3.1 and 5.1_3.2		The standardizing body identified a total of 34 stakeholder groups for consultation. This included forest owner groups, international NGOs, certification groups, international agencies, state agencies, business groups among others.	Y
5.2 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged and key stakeholders. The standardising body shall address the constraints of their participation and proactively seek their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2 (b); Section 4.5 and 4.6)	4.5 In order to identify affected stakeholders, environmental, social and economic impacts of the standard will be analyzed based on its impact objectives and scope. Group of stakeholders, especially key and disadvantaged stakeholders, will be identified by considering the level of influence to identify the way of participation, including: - Invite the relevant parties, especially key and disadvantaged stakeholders to participate in Standard Development Group;	The procedures provide for analysis of the impacts and subsequent identification of disadvantaged groups, and invitation of said groups to participate.	Y

	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 5.1_3.1 and 5.1_3.2		Identified disadvantaged groups include small-scale forest owners and small-scale farmer groups.	Y
5.3 The standardising body shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and in suitable media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1)	The Vietnam Administration of Forestry makes a public announcement on starting the standard-setting process, including a letter of invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and other media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions.	The procedures require a public announcement on the standard-setting process.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.2_1.1 and 4.2_1.2		Public announcements were made on October 25 2017 on the Vietnam Academy of Forest Sciences website and the Vietnam Silviculture Research Institute website containing an invitation for participation.	Y
5.3 The announcement and invitation shall include:						
a) information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard setting process and its timetable,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1)	Announcement and invitation shall include: - Information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable; - A letter of an invitation sent to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that	The procedures provide for "objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable"	Y

				ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is understandable;		
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.2_1.1 and 4.2_1.2		The announcement contains complete details of the standard setting process and its timetable.	Y
b) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1)	- Information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process;	The procedures require "Information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process."	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.2_1.1 and 4.2_1.2		The process documents provided information on participation, specifically email contacts for written comments.	Y
(c) an invitation to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is understandable,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1)	- A letter of an invitation sent to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is understandable;	The procedures require for an invitation for nomination of representatives to the committee, with a specific stipulation for disadvantaged stakeholders.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report		The process documents contain an invitation to stakeholders for nominations of representatives.	Y

			Annexes 4.2_1.1 and 4.2_1.2			
d) an invitation to comment on the scope and the standard-setting process, and	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1)	A letter of an invitation to give comments and recommendations on the standard-setting process and main information for stakeholders involved in the standard development process;	The procedures require a letter of invitation for comments on the standard-setting process.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.2_1.1 and 4.2_1.2		The announcement provides a specific invitation to comment on the scope and process.	
e) reference to publicly available standard-setting procedures.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1)	- Reference to publicly available standard-setting process	The procedures require reference to publicly available standard setting “process”, but this should be altered to ‘procedures’.	Y Editorial
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 4.2_1.1 and 4.2_1.2		The announcement provides a link to procedural documentation for standard setting	Y
5.4 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on comments received from the public announcement and establish a working group/committee or adjust the composition of an already existing working group/committee based on received nominations. The	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1, last Paragraph)	The Vietnam Administration of Forestry authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will review the standard-setting process, establish the Standard Development Group or adjust the members of Standard Development Group based on comments received from the relevant stakeholders after publicly announcement. The acceptance and refusal of	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y

acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group/committee and resources available for the standard-setting.				nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the Standard Development Group and resources available for the standard-setting. The list of members of Standard Development Group and their contact information shall be public.		
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 5.1_3.1 and 5.1_3.2		The process documentation does not refer to a specific review or adjustment of the SDC. However, stakeholders confirmed during the field visit that no feedback was received on the standard-setting process, and that the nominations for the SDG were satisfactory.	Y.
5.5 The work of the working group/committee shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where:						
a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group/committee,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2. d))	d) Working principles The Standard Development Group will work disclosurly and transparently, ensuring that: - The drafts shall provide to all members of the Standard Development Group;	The procedures conform to the requirements.	
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes in both Vietnamese and English from 5.5_1. to 5.5_11.		The process documents provide indicate that the working group members were provided with drafts of the documentation. The minutes of the various consultations and SDC meetings – some of which were with specific stakeholder groups – indicate that the drafts were provided prior to the meetings.	Y
b) all members of the working group shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019,	All members will have the opportunity to contribute to the development or	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y

contribute to the development or revision of the standard and submit comments to the working drafts, and			Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2. d))	revision of the standard and to provide comments on the draft;		
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes in both Vietnamese and English from 5.5_1. to 5.5_11.		The process documents – specifically meeting minutes – indicate that meaningful opportunities were provided to SDC members to submit comments on the working drafts.	Y
c) comments and views submitted by any member of the working group/committee shall be considered in an open and transparent way and their resolution and proposed changes shall be recorded.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2. d))	Opinions and views of any member of the Standard Development Group will be considered disclosurely and transparently; - Proposed solutions and amendments will be noted;	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes in both Vietnamese and English from 5.5_1. to 5.5_11.		The minutes of the SDC meetings and stakeholder meetings indicate that comments and views were received, and that proposed changes were recorded.	Y
5.6 The standardising body shall organise a public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that:						
a) the start and the end of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in suitable media,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.3.3; 4.4.1; and 4.4.4)	4.4.1 A public consutation will be made to complete the Standards. During the consultation, a draft of standard shall be public announcement and ensure the participation of the key and disadvantaged stakeholders. 4.4.4 The starting and ending time of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in the website of the Vietnam Administration of	The procedures generally conform with the requirements.	

				Forestry, and email sent to relevant stakeholders		
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes in both Vietnamese and English 5.6_1.1; 5.6_1.2; 5.6_1.3; 5.6_2.1; 5.6_2.2; 5.6_3.1; and 5.6_3.2		Announcements were not made on the VNForests website in a timely manner. However, the opening of the consultation on the enquiry draft was understood by all stakeholders and their participations in the inquiry draft workshop. The closure of the consultation period was also announced at the first workshop. Although this is a NC, it did not have a material impact on the public consultation process. There were no stakeholders that felt this resulted in their exclusion.	NC
b) the invitation of disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made by means that ensure that the information reaches its recipient and is understandable,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.1 and 4.4.4)	4.4.1 A public consultation will be made to complete the Standards. During the consultation, a draft of standard shall be public announcement and ensure the participation of the key and disadvantaged stakeholders. 4.4.4 The starting and ending time of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in the website of the Vietnam Administration of Forestry, and email sent to relevant stakeholders	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes from 5.6_1.1 to 5.6_1.11 Annexes from 5.6_2.1 to 5.6_2.15 Annexes from 5.6_3.1 to 5.6_3.9		Additional invitations to disadvantaged stakeholders were made via email to ensure the participation of those stakeholders.	Y

c) the enquiry draft is publicly available and accessible,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.4)	A public consultation will be made to complete the Standards. During the consultation, a draft of standard shall be public announcement and ensure the participation of the key and disadvantaged stakeholders.	This generally conforms but requires an editorial change for clarity.	Editorial change
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes in both Vietnamese and English 5.6_1.1; 5.6_1.2; 5.6_1.3; 5.6_2.1; 5.6_2.2; 5.6_3.1; and 5.6_3.2		Both the FM and CoC drafts were made publicly available and accessible; evidence of public accessibility of the FM standard has been confirmed via stakeholder consultations..	
d) the public consultation is for at least 60 days,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.4)	The public consultation is for at least 60 days.	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes in both Vietnamese and English 5.6_1.1; 5.6_1.2; 5.6_1.3; 5.6_2.1; 5.6_2.2; 5.6_3.1; and 5.6_3.2		The public consultation period commenced on July 25 and continued until October 6. This was announced via the publication of a notice on the VAF website (screenshot sighted).	Y
e) all comments received are considered by the working group/committee in an objective manner,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures	All comments and recommendations received are considered by the Standard Development Group in an objective manner.	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y

			(Section 4.4.4)			
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 5.6_1.12; 5.6_2.16; 5.6_3.10; and 5.6_3.11		The minutes for the stakeholder consultation meetings indicate that all comments were received and considered in an open and objective manner. It is not apparent that there were additional written comments provided. This has been confirmed by stakeholder consultation.	Y
(f) a synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration, is publicly available, for example on a website.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.4)	After public consultation, a synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration, is publicly available on the website of the Vietnam Administration of Forestry, and emails sent to relevant stakeholders.	The procedures conform with the requirements.	
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 5.6_1.12; 5.6_2.16; 5.6_3.10; and 5.6_3.11		The process documents indicate that public synopses of the meetings – and those who attended – were made publicly available.	Y
5.7 The standardising body shall organise pilot testing of the new standards and the results of the pilot testing shall be considered by the working group/committee.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.3)	Pilot testing, testing locations and plans will be determined based on specific conditions and aspects mentioned in the standard. After the pilot testing, the correction is made based on the results of the pilot testing.	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report		Pilot testing of the standard principally occurred at the site near Thua Thien Hue in central Viet Nam. A report summarizing the results of the pilot testing was completed in	Y

			Annex 5.7		December 2017, and considered by the SDC in the same month.	
5.8 The decision of the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of a consensus.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.2.(d); 4.4.5)	4.2 (d) The decisions of the Standard Development Group shall be based on a common consensus. 4.4.5. Official Approvals Standard Development Group will propose to the Vietnam Administration of Forestry and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to formally approve the final draft based on their consensus. VFCS will officially approve the standard based on verifying the Standard Development Group's consensus.	The procedures require the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval on the basis of consensus.	Y
	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 5.8_1 and 5.8_2		Meeting minutes indicate that the meeting regarding the final draft took place on January 26 2018, and that consensus was reached among the 22 participants.	Y
5.8 In order to reach a consensus the working group/committee can utilise the following alternative processes to establish whether there is opposition:						
a) a face-to face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, show of hands for a yes/no vote; a statement on consensus from the Chair where there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal balloting process, etc.,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.6)	To archive the consensus, the Standard Development Group may use one of the following ways to determine whether there is an objection: Vote by words or raise their hands in meetings; the meeting chairman's statement on the issue of consensus without a word or raising a hand to protest; formal voting process;	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y

	Process	YES	Attachment 14_Standard setting process development report Annexes 5.8_1 and 5.8_2		The meeting minutes indicate that the consensus was generated at a face-to-face meeting. Members voted by a show of hands.	Y
b) a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.6)	- Meeting over the phone and voting by words;	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y
	Process	NO			Consensus was generated via other means.	NA
c) an e-mail meeting where a request for agreement or objection is provided to members with the members providing a written response (a proxy for a vote), or	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.6)	- Send via email, in which all members of the Standard Development Group fully agree;	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y
	Process	NO			Consensus was generated via other means.	Y
d) combinations thereof.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.6)	- Combination of the above methods.	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y
	Process	NO			Combinations were not necessary.	NA
5.9 In the case of a negative vote which represents sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests surrounding a substantive issue, the issue shall be resolved using the following mechanism(s):						
a) discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group/committee in order to find a compromise,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.6)	In case of an objection to any important part, the issue will be resolved by the following mechanisms: - First of all, discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue among members of the Standard	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y

				Development Group in order to find a compromise;		
	Process	N/A			A negative vote was not recorded.	NA
b) direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise,	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.6)	Secondly, directly negotiate with the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise;	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y
	Process	N/A			A negative vote was not recorded.	NA
c) dispute resolution process.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.6)	Finally, carry out the Dispute Resolution Mechanism.	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y
	Process	N/A			A negative vote was not recorded.	Y
5.10 Documentation on the implementation of the standard-setting process shall be made publicly available.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.7)	VFCO will maintain for and manage all documents and records related to the standard-setting process. All documents and records will be stored and maintained for at least 5 years. VFCO has the ownership and manage all documents and records available to any organization and individual who requests to be viewed after having the permission of VFCO.	The procedures conform to the requirements.	Y
	Process	YES	All documents in hardcopies are available at VFCO, VFCS Website and will be provided for any request from public		It was confirmed during the field visit that all documentation is on file at the VFCO website and available on request via the contact points provided.	Y
5.11 The standardising body shall formally approve the	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS	Standard Development Group will propose to the Vietnam Administration	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y

standards/normative documents based on evidence of consensus reached by the working group/committee.			ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.5)	of Forestry and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to formally approve the final draft based on their consensus. VFCS will officially approve the standard based on verifying the Standard Development Group's consensus.		
	Process	YES	Annexes 5.11_1 and 5.11_2		The document "Bien ban hop dong thuan" (Meeting of Minutes for the final draft for formal approval) was sighted during the field assessment. It was confirmed with MARD that the evidence of consensus was the basis for approval.	TBC during field assessment.
5.12 The formally approved standards/normative documents shall be published in a timely manner and made publicly available.	Procedures	YES	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.4.5)	Standard Development Group will propose to the Vietnam Administration of Forestry and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to formally approve the final draft based on their consensus. VFCS will officially approve the standard based on verifying the Standard Development Group's consensus.	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y
	Process	YES	Annexes 5.11_1 and 5.11_2		The standards are publicly available at the VFCS office and have been published on the VFCS website.	Y
Revisions of standards/normative documents						
6.1 The standards/normative documents shall be reviewed and revised at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period. The procedures for the revision of the standards/normative documents shall follow those set out in chapter 5.	Process	N/A	Attachment 3_VFCS ST 1002: 2019, Standard Setting Procedures (Section 4.9)	The standards will regularly revise and update the new scientific knowledge and practical experience. The standards will be revised at least every 5 years.	The procedures conform with the requirements.	Y

<p>6.2 The revision shall define the application date and transition date of the revised standards/normative documents.</p>	<p>Process</p>	<p>N/A</p>				
<p>6.3 The application date shall not exceed a period of one year from the publication of the standard. This is needed for the endorsement of the revised standards/normative documents, introducing the changes, information dissemination and training.</p>	<p>Process</p>	<p>N/A</p>				
<p>6.4 The transition date shall not exceed a period of one year except in justified exceptional circumstances where the implementation of the revised standards/normative documents requires a longer period.</p>	<p>Process</p>	<p>N/A</p>				

PART II: Standard and System Requirement Checklist for Group FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION (PEFC ST 1002:2010)

Question	YES /NO*	Reference to system documentation			
General					
4.1 Does the forest certification scheme provide clear definitions for the following terms in conformity with the definitions of those terms presented in chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010:					
a) the group organisation,	YES	Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 4 – clause 4.12	A group of participants represented by the group entity for the purposes of implementation of the sustainable forest management standard and its certification. A binding written agreement shall be established between a participant and the group entity. The term “group organisation” is equivalent to the term “regional organisation” if the group is defined by regional boundaries or other terms chosen by the relevant forest certification scheme and complying with the content of this definition.	The definition is in conformity with the term presented in chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010.	Y
b) the group entity,	YES	Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 4 – clause 4.7	A legal entity that represents the participants, with overall responsibility for ensuring the conformity of forest management in the certified area to the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system. For this purpose the group entity is using a group management system.	The definition is in conformity with the term presented in chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010.	Y

			<p><i>Note:</i> The structure of the group entity should follow the operations, number of participants and other basic conditions for the group organisation. It may be represented by one person.</p>		
c) the participant,	YES	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST</p> <p>1004_2019_Group Forest Standard</p> <p>Section 4 – clause 4.16</p>	<p>A forest owner/manager covered by the group forest certificate, who has the ability to implement the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard in a certified area.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> The term “ability to implement the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard” requires the entity to have a long-term legal right, tenure right or traditional or customary tenure rights to manage the forest and would disqualify one-off contractors from becoming participants in group forest management certification.</p> <p>Where regional or national systems allow contractors without long term management rights for a specific forest area to participate in group forest certification, the system shall ensure that these contractors can only make PEFC claims for material originating from certified areas of participants or individually certified forest owners/managers with long term legal or tenure management rights.</p>	The definition is in conformity with the term presented in chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010.	Y
d) the certified area,	YES	Attachment 6_VFCS ST	<p>4.3 Certified area</p> <p>The forest area covered by a sustainable forest management system according to the</p>	The definition is in conformity with the term presented in chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010.	Y

		1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 4 – clause 4.3	PEFC Sustainable Forest Management Standard (PEFC ST 1003). In the group certification context the certified area is the sum of forest areas of the participants and covered by a group forest certificate.		
e) the group forest certificate, and	YES	Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 4 – clause 4.8	A document confirming that the group organisation complies with the requirements of a sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system.	The definition is in conformity with the term presented in chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010.	Y
f) the document confirming participation in group forest certification.	YES	Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 4 – clause 4.5	A document issued to a participant that refers to the group forest certificate and that confirms the participant as being covered by the scope of the group forest certification. <i>Note:</i> This document may be for instance a sub-certificate or a confirmation of participation.	The definition is in conformity with the term presented in chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010.	Y
4.1.2 In cases where a forest certification scheme allows an individual forest owner to be covered by additional group or individual forest management certifications, the scheme shall ensure that nonconformity by the	YES	Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest	6.1.2 Function and responsibilities of participants The standard requires that the following functions and responsibilities of the participants shall be specified: e) to inform the group entity about nonconformities	The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.12 (e) of PEFC ST 1002:2010	Y

<p>forest owner identified under one forest management certification scheme is addressed in any other forest management certification scheme that covers the forest owner.</p>		<p>Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.2 – bullet e</p>	<p>identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification;</p>		
<p>4.1.3 The forest certification scheme shall define requirements for group forest certification which ensure that participants' conformity with the sustainable forest management standard is centrally administered and is subject to central review and that all participants shall be subject to the internal monitoring programme.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet g,k,l</p>	<p>Group entities are required:</p> <p>g) to establish connections with all participants based on a binding written agreement which shall include the participants' commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standard. The group entity shall have a written contract or other written agreement with all participants covering the right of the group entity to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any participant from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the sustainable forest management standard;</p> <p>k) to operate an internal monitoring programme that provides for the evaluation of the participants' conformity with the certification requirements;</p> <p>l) to operate an annual internal audit programme covering both group members and group entity;</p> <p>m) to operate a management review of the group forest certification and acting on the results from the review;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 (e) of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>4.1.4 The forest certification scheme shall define requirements for an annual internal monitoring programme that provides sufficient confidence in the conformity of the whole group organisation with the sustainable forest management standard.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet i,k,l</p>	<p>i) to provide all participants with information and guidance required for the effective implementation and maintenance of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system;</p> <p>j) to address nonconformities reported from group members which were identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification and to ensure implementation with all group members;</p> <p>k) to operate an internal monitoring programme that provides for the evaluation of the participants' conformity with the certification requirements;</p> <p>l) to operate an annual internal audit programme covering both group members and group entity;</p> <p>m) to operate a management review of the group forest certification and acting on the results from the review;</p>	<p>Chapter 10 of VFCS ST 1004:2019 replicates the text of Chapter 9 of PEFC ST 1002: 2018.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>Functions and responsibilities of the group entity</p>			<p>TEXT</p>	<p>COMMENT</p>	<p>CONFORMS</p>
<p>4.2.1 The forest certification scheme shall define the following requirements for the function and responsibility of the group entity:</p>					
<p>a) To represent the group organisation in the certification process, including in communications and relationships</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST</p>	<p>b) to represent the group organisation in the certification process, including in communications and relationships with the certification body, submission of an</p>	<p>The definition is in conformity with the term presented in chapter 3 of PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>with the certification body, submission of an application for certification, and contractual relationship with the certification body;</p>		<p>1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet b</p>	<p>application for certification, and contractual relationship with the certification body;</p>		
<p>b) To provide a commitment on behalf of the whole group organisation to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet g</p>	<p>a) to implement and maintain an effective management system covering all participants of the group; g) to establish connections with all participants based on a binding written agreement which shall include the participants’ commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standard. The group entity shall have a written contract or other written agreement with all participants covering the right of the group entity to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any participant from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the sustainable forest management standard;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>c) To establish written procedures for the management of the group organisation;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard</p>	<p>c) to establish written procedures for the management of the group organisation;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>

		Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet c			
<p>d) To keep records of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the group entity and participants' conformity with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard, and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme, - all participants, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/their size(s), - the certified area, - the implementation of an internal monitoring programme, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken; 	YES	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST</p> <p>1004_2019_Group Forest Standard</p> <p>Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet f</p>	<p>d) to establish written procedures for the acceptance of new participants of the group organisation. These acceptance procedures shall cover at least the verification of the applicant's information about contact details, clear identification of their forest property and its/their size(s);</p> <p>e) to establish written procedures for the suspension and exclusion of participants who do not correct/close nonconformities. Group participants excluded from any certification group based on nonconformities cannot be accepted within 12 months after exclusion</p> <p>f) to keep documented information of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the group entity and participants' conformity with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard, and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system, ii. all participants, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/ their size(s), iii. the certified area, iv. the implementation of an internal monitoring programme, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken; 	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	Y

<p>e) To establish connections with all participants based on a written agreement which shall include the participants' commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standard. The group entity shall have a written contract or other written agreement with all participants covering the right of the group entity to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any participant from the scope of certification in the event of non-conformity with the sustainable forest management standard;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet g</p>	<p>g) to establish connections with all participants based on a binding written agreement which shall include the participants' commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standard. The group entity shall have a written contract or other written agreement with all participants covering the right of the group entity to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any participant from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the sustainable forest management standard;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>f) To provide participants with a document confirming participation in the group forest certification;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet d</p>	<p>h) to provide all participants with a document confirming participation in the group forest certification;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>g) To provide all participants with information and guidance required for the effective implementation of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet i</p>	<p>i) to provide all participants with information and guidance required for the effective implementation and maintenance of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>h) To operate an annual internal monitoring programme that provides for the evaluation of the participants' conformity with the certification requirements, and;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet l</p>	<p>l) to operate an annual internal audit programme covering both group members and group entity;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>i) To operate a review of conformity with the sustainable forest management standard, that includes reviewing the results of the internal monitoring programme and the certification body's evaluations and surveillance; corrective and preventive measures if required; and the evaluation of the effectiveness of corrective actions taken.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.1 – bullet f Section 10 – clause 10.4.1;10.4.2</p>	<p>m) to operate a management review of the group forest certification and acting on the results from the review;</p> <p>10.4.1 The standard requires that an annual management review shall at least include:</p> <p>a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;</p> <p>b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the group management system;</p> <p>c) the status of conformity with the sustainable forest management standard, that includes reviewing the results of the internal monitoring programme, the internal audit and the certification body's evaluations and surveillance;</p> <p>d) information on the group performance, including trends in: i. nonconformities and corrective actions; ii. monitoring and measurement results; iii. audit results;</p> <p>e) opportunities for continual improvement.</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>Function and responsibilities of participants</p>					

4.3.1 The forest certification scheme shall define the following requirements for the participants:					
<p>a) To provide the group entity with a written agreement, including a commitment on conformity with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.2 – bullet a</p>	<p>a) to provide the group entity with a binding written agreement, including a commitment on conformity with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system; group participants excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within 12 months after exclusion;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.2 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.2 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>b) To comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.2 – bullet c</p>	<p>c) to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system as well as with the requirements of the management system;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>c) To provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the group entity or certification body for relevant data, documentation or other information; allowing access to the forest and other facilities, whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or otherwise;</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.2 – bullet d</p>	<p>d) to provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the group entity, or certification body for relevant data, documentation or other information; allowing access to the forest and other facilities, whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or otherwise related or with implications for the management system;</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>d) To implement relevant corrective and preventive actions established by the group entity.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 6_VFCS ST 1004_2019_Group Forest Standard Section 6 – clause 6.1.2 – bullet f</p>	<p>f) to implement relevant corrective and preventive actions established by the group entity.</p>	<p>The scheme documentation is in conformity with Chapter 5.1.1 of PEFC ST 1002:2010. The requirements of Chapter 6.1.1 replicate those the requirements of 5.1.1 in PEFC ST 1002:2010.</p>	<p>Y</p>

PART III: Standard and System Requirement Checklist for SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (PEFC ST 1003:2010)

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation	TEXT	COMMENT	CONFORMS
General requirements for SFM standards					
4.1 The requirements for sustainable forest management defined by regional, national or sub-national forest management standards shall					
a) include management and performance requirements that are applicable at the forest management unit level, or at another level as appropriate, to ensure that the intent of all requirements is achieved at the forest management unit level.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Section 2: scope	The text states: “This standard provides requirements and indicator systems for voluntary forest management unit/forest owner who shall meet to implement sustainable (natural and/or plantation) forest management certification under the system of VNFCS. This standard provides forest certificate bodies with basis for auditing and assessing sustainable forest management according to Viet Nam Forest Certification Scheme (VNFCS).”	The management and performance requirements are contained in the Principles, Criteria and Indicators for the standard. There are 7 principles, 34 Criteria and 122 indicators. The principles Principle 1: Compliance with national laws and related international treaties and conventions Principle 2: Community relations and community and local/ ethnic peoples’ rights Principle 3: Forest owners shall ensure the rights and working conditions for workers Principle 4: Forest management, utilization and development Principle 5: Environmental management and protection in forestry activities Principle 6: Maintenance, conservation and enhancement of forest biodiversity	Y

				<p>Principle 7: Forests are monitored and monitored according to sustainable forest management plans</p> <p>All criteria are highly prescriptive and use the word 'shall' in all cases, with the exception of 2.3, which states that 'forest owners should give job ...'. Performance indicators (indicators) are similarly prescriptive and use 'shall' in all cases except two, where the prescriptive verb 'identify' is used.</p>	
b) be clear, objective-based and auditable.	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST</p> <p>1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>7 principles, 122 indicators – SFM standards</p>	[insert P/C/I text in final draft]	<p>The management and performance indicators are clear. They are organized under 7 principles, 34 Criteria and 122 indicators. The Criteria establish the objectives, and the indicators provide the performance requirements. As noted above, all indicators are highly prescriptive; the auditability of the indicators in all cases depends on the meeting of a single prescribed requirement, meaning they are auditable.</p> <p>The pilot testing undertaken in the scheme further establishes the auditability of the standards. [This will be further assessed during the stakeholder consultation].</p>	Y
c) apply to activities of all operators in the defined forest area who have a measurable impact on achieving compliance with the requirements.	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST</p> <p>1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Section 2: scope</p>	This standard provides requirements and indicator systems for voluntary forest management unit/forest owner who shall meet to implement sustainable (natural and/or plantation) forest management certification under the system of VNFCS.	An additional reference is as follows from I. "Introduction -- This standard specifies the requirements for sustainable forest management that forest owners shall implement to obtain forest	

			<p>This standard provides forest certificate bodies with basis for auditing and assessing sustainable forest management according to Viet Nam Forest Certification Scheme (VNFCS)</p>	<p>certification under the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme (VFCS). The standard is also the basis for Certification Bodies (CBs) to apply for assessing and issuing forest certifications against VFCS.”</p> <p>Forest owner is defined at IV Definitions as “May be an organization, household, individual or community that is allocated or leased out a forest by the State; allocated or leased out land for afforestation, forest”</p> <p>This is further defined by national law: Law No. 16/2017/QH14 dated November 15, 2017 by The National Assembly on Forestry</p>	
<p>d) require record-keeping that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the forest management standards.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Indicators; 2.2.2; 2.5.6; 3.4.4; 4.6.5; 5.3.4; 5.3.5; 6.2.3; 6.3.2; 6.5.4; 6.6.2</p>	<p>2.2.2. Shall archive all records on disputes for at least 5 years.</p> <p>2.5.6. Shall archive all compliant settlement records for at least 05 years.</p> <p>3.4.4. Shall record and archive all the records on complaints and grievance for at least 5 years.</p> <p>4.6.5. Forest fires (if happened) shall be kept for at least 05 years.</p> <p>5.3.4. Shall keep and update the list of all chemicals (pesticide, herbicide, sterilization, anti-rodent prescriptions, and growth regulators) prohibited by Viet Nam’s laws and international regulations/conventions;</p> <p>5.3.5. Shall record information about type, dosage, time and place of using chemicals and chemical fertilizers;</p>	<p>There are additional requirements in 1003_2019. These are:</p> <p>1.2.2. Shall file all documents and, payment records relating to their forest activities;</p> <p>1.3.4. Shall store files and report all the illegal cases that have solved for at least five years;</p> <p>1.3.6. Shall comply with the regulations on documentations, process and procedures of forest harvesting and product management, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.</p>	<p>Y</p>

			<p>6.2.3. Shall update data and store profiles of identified species;</p> <p>6.3.2. Shall update and store data and files of forest areas with ecological importance;</p> <p>6.5.4. Shall store documents and files relating to provenance and utilization of exotic species.</p> <p>6.6.2. Shall store documents/profiles in relation to the description and assessment of forest areas and land converted (if applicable).</p>		
Specific requirements for SFM standards					
Criterion 1: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle					
<p>5.1.1 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. This shall be done by making full use of related services and tools that support land-use planning and nature conservation.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Section 5: 7 principles</p>	[Insert 7 principles text]	<p>Although the 7 principles refer to the different aspects of forest management, they don't refer to forest management planning per se.</p> <p>The relevant aspects of forest management planning can be found at:</p> <p>1.3.1. Shall have a sustainable forest management plan (based on the Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development);</p> <p>The more relevant normative document for forest management planning is therefore the 'Circular No 28' document, which is also</p>	Y

				<p>referred to in the normative references for VFCS ST 1003:2019.</p> <p>That document has 7 principles in the document that are almost identical to the 7 principles in VFCS ST 1003:2019.</p> <p>The document also refers to SFM plans as 'SFM schemes'.</p> <p>The documents provide guidance for planning for different types of forest: special use, protection, production and smallholders. The objectives for each plan are as follows:</p> <p>"a) Regarding environment: identification of the total forest area that is protected, forest coverage, degraded forest area in need of restoration; ecosystems, biodiversity, forest floral species, forest faunal species, indigenous species under protection, development and conservation of native trees species; reduction of forest fire, legal violation on forestry;</p> <p>b) Regarding society: creation of jobs, increase income to labourers; stabilization of livelihood of people living in the buffer zone; improving awareness on sustainable forest management, step by step complete the infrastructure system;</p> <p>c) Regarding economy: identification of sustainable finance source from PFES activities, ecotourism, leisure and recreation service, lease of forest</p>	
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				environment, fee, charge, output of timber harvested from planted forest for research, scientific experiments, non-timber forest products, forest carbon reserve.	
5.1.2 Forest management shall comprise the cycle of inventory and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and shall include an appropriate assessment of the social, environmental and economic impacts of forest management operations. This shall form a basis for a cycle of continuous improvement to minimise or avoid negative impacts.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Section 5: 7 principles		<p>Forest management is covered by Principle 4 and 8 Criteria and 27 indicators within VFCS 1003_2019. However, as with forest management planning, guidance for forest management is required by government regulations in Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.</p> <p>The guidance document requires:</p> <p>Inventory:</p> <p>1. Assessment of natural, socio-economic conditions, status of national defense and security, forest ecosystem, biodiversity, historical, cultural, landscape relics:</p> <p>a) Assessment of the land use status, forest ecosystem, biodiversity, historical, cultural, landscape relics within the boundary of the forest; assessment of the natural conditions regarding geographical places, terrain, hydrology and climate, soil and society, economy according to statistics;</p> <p>b) Summary of characteristics of population, labourer, nations, per capita income year using Form 01</p>	Y

				<p>in Annex VII attached to this Circular;</p> <p>c) Summary, assessment of the status quo of infrastructure for transportation using Form 02 Annex VII attached to this Circular;</p> <p>d) Summary, assessment of the status quo of land use of forest owners based on statistics or land inventory at commune level of the most recent year to the year when the sustainable forest management scheme was formulated using Form 03 in the Annex attached to this Circular;</p> <p>đ) Summary, assessment of the status quo of forest, forest reserve based on statistics, inventory and monitoring of forest resources using Form 04 and Form 05 in Annex VII attached to this Circular;</p> <p>e) Assessment of diversity of main forest floral, faunal species; identification of forest floral and faunal species and their habitats; identification of degraded forest ecosystems in need of restoration, landscape areas in need of protection and compiled list of forest floral and faunal species using Form 06, 07, 08 and 09 of Annex VII attached to this Circular</p> <p>Planning (as noted above);</p> <p>Implementation of the forest management plan (as above);</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation (following implementation,</p>	
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				including a report on an annual basis; And assessment, where the assessment is measured against the forest management plan on an annual basis.	
5.1.3 Inventory and mapping of forest resources shall be established and maintained, adequate to local and national conditions and in correspondence with the topics described in this document.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Indicators: 1.1.3; 2.1.2; 4.8.1; 5.2.1; 6.1.1; 6.2.1	1.1.3. Boundaries on forest land and forests shall be clearly identified on maps and sites. 2.1.2. Shall agree with communities and local people on the boundaries of forests and forest land; 4.8.1. Shall build and maintain infrastructures including roads, skid tracks, bridges and skidding logs, logging areas in line with regulations; make sure that all the infrastructures shall be shown on maps; 5.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites; 6.1.1. Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, forest mapping and development of database and consult stakeholders about forest areas with ecological importance, including: a) Unique, rare and vulnerable forest ecosystems or typical forest ecosystems such as river estuary, wetland, and limestone forests;	Forest owners are required to undertake forest inventory activities as part of forest management planning under the 'Circular 28' requirements. These cover the topics stated in the criteria and indicators 1.1.3; 2.1.2; 4.8.1; 5.2.1; 6.1.1; 6.2.1, among others. More specifically, the inventory and mapping requirements in Circular 28 covers: "1. Assessment of natural, socio-economic conditions, status of national defense and security, forest ecosystem, biodiversity, historical, cultural, landscape relics: a) Assessment of the land use status, forest ecosystem, biodiversity, historical, cultural, landscape relics within the boundary of the forest; assessment of the natural conditions regarding geographical places, terrain, hydrology and climate, soil and society, economy according to statistics; b) Summary of characteristics of population, labourer, nations, per capita income / year using Form 01 in Annex VII attached to this Circular;	Y

			<p>b) Forest areas existing endemic species and their habitats being threatened;</p> <p>c) Genetic resources are vulnerable and need to be protected;</p> <p>d) Landscape areas with significant importance at national and international levels.</p> <p>6.2.1. Shall consult with stakeholders to construct the list of species, mapping their distributions and habitats, and collecting all information of species to be protected as regulated by Viet Nam regulations and international conventions (not applicable to forest plantation managed and owned by CRN);</p>	<p>c) Summary, assessment of the status quo of infrastructure for transportation using Form 02 Annex VII attached to this Circular;</p> <p>d) Summary, assessment of the status quo of land use of forest owners based on statistics or land inventory at commune level of the most recent year to the year when the sustainable forest management scheme was formulated using Form 03 in the Annex attached to this Circular; đ) Summary, assessment of the status quo of forest, forest reserve based on statistics, inventory and monitoring of forest resources using Form 04 and Form 05 in Annex VII attached to this Circular; e) Assessment of diversity of main forest floral, faunal species; identification of forest floral and faunal species and their habitats; identification of degraded forest ecosystems in need of restoration, landscape areas in need of protection and compiled list of forest floral and faunal species using Form 06, 07, 08 and 09 of Annex VII attached to this Circular.”</p>	
<p>5.1.4 Management plans or their equivalents, appropriate to the size and use of the forest area, shall be elaborated and periodically updated. They shall be based on legislation as well as existing land-use plans, and adequately cover the forest resources.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Section 5: principle 1; 4 and 5</p>	<p>4.1. All forestry practices shall be implemented as prescribed in the sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>4.1.1. Forest owners shall ensure that forest management practices shall be implemented as described in sustainable forest management plan and annual plan;</p> <p>4.1.2. If forestry activities are adjusted in the annual plan, then, forest owners shall ensure that the objectives of the</p>	<p>Management plans are required to be updated on an annual basis. They are based on legislation (Circular 28), which also stipulates use of existing land use plans” “a) Compiling the land use plan of forest owners based on the commune level land use plan using Form 10 of Annex VII attached to this Circular.”</p>	<p>Y</p>

			<p>sustainable forest management plan shall be assured;</p> <p>4.1.3. Forest owners shall ensure that adjustment of sustainable forest management plan shall be recorded and archived for at least 05 years.</p>	<p>As noted above, management plans are particularly comprehensive, covering all forest resources.</p>	
<p>5.1.5 Management plans or their equivalents shall include at least a description of the current condition of the forest management unit, long-term objectives; and the average annual allowable cut, including its justification and, where relevant, the annually allowable exploitation of non-timber forest products.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Indicators: 1.3.1; 4.7.1; 6.1.2</p>	<p>1.3.1. Shall have a sustainable forest management plan based on the current legal regulations;</p> <p>4.7.1. Shall be aware that harvested annual volume shall not exceed the increment of forest as defined in the sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>6.1.2. Shall make a planning of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological importance as described in a sustainable forest management plan.</p>	<p>The relevant regulation is Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT, which describes the forest management plan, and its contents. This includes submitted requirements for:</p> <p>“The current status of forest and land resources and results of forest management, protection and development, biodiversity conservation and production and business efficiency of forest owner (briefed description)”</p> <p>“Objectives of the Scheme”</p> <p>“Formulation of forest products harvesting plan: identification of area, type, output, location of forest product harvesting”.</p> <p>The document also contains Methodology for calculating the annual allowable cut;</p>	Y
<p>5.1.6 A summary of the forest management plan or its equivalent appropriate to the scope and scale of forest management, which contains information about the forest management measures to be applied, is publicly available. The summary may exclude confidential business and personal information and other information made confidential by national legislation or for the</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Indicators: 1.3.1</p>	<p>1.3.1. Shall have a sustainable forest management plan based on the current legal regulations;</p>	<p>This requirement is not stated in the VFCS ST 1003:2019. However, the summary of the forest management plan must be submitted to MARD as per requirements under Circular 28.</p> <p>VFCO has noted this and will amend the standard accordingly.</p>	Minor NC

protection of cultural sites or sensitive natural resource features.					
5.1.7 Monitoring of forest resources and evaluation of their management shall be periodically performed, and results fed back into the planning process.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria: 4.1 Indicator: 6.1.4 Principle: 7	4.1. All forestry practices shall be implemented as prescribed in the sustainable forest management plan. 6.1.4. Shall update and revise the existing plans based on the results of monitoring and evaluation. Principle 7: Forests are monitored and monitored according to sustainable forest management plans	There is a typo in the Principle 7. Principle 7 requires the development and implementation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This involves the development of indicators and appropriate allocation of resources for monitoring activity. Indicator 6.1.4 is explicit on the revision of existing plans based on monitoring and evaluation.	Y
5.1.8 Responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria: 1.2 and 2.1	1.2. Forest owners shall comply with the current laws of Vietnam on production and trading. 2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.	Circular 28 states: "1. Forest owners are responsible for development, implementation of sustainable forest management scheme in accordance with provisions at point 1 Article 27 the Law on Forestry."	Y
5.1.9 Forest management practices shall safeguard the quantity and quality of the forest resources in the medium and long term by balancing harvesting and growth rates, and by preferring techniques that minimise direct or indirect damage to forest, soil or water resources.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Indicators: 4.7.1; 5.1.2 Criteria: 5.2	4.7.1. Shall be aware that harvested annual volume shall not exceed the increment of forest as defined in the sustainable forest management plan. [See above for 4.7.1 and related domestic regulations] 5.1.2. Shall have plan and carry out measures to mitigate adverse impacts on the environment before implementing forestry activities. 5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities. 5.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on	The forest management standard conforms to the requirements.	

			<p>the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;</p> <p>5.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p> <p>5.2.4. Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p>		
<p>5.1.10 Appropriate silvicultural measures shall be taken to maintain or reach a level of the growing stock that is economically, ecologically and socially desirable.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria: 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 4.7</p>	<p>4.2. Forest owners shall produce and use seedlings in line with the national regulations and laws.</p> <p>4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>4.3.1. Shall select tree species selected for planting matching with site conditions and objectives of sustainable forest management;</p> <p>4.3.2. Shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for the ecological characteristics of tree species and different site conditions;</p> <p>4.3.3. Shall apply technical measures including planting, tending, harvesting and replanting for specific tree species;</p> <p>4.3.4. Shall apply appropriate site management for sustainable plantation management;</p> <p>4.3.5. Shall apply technical guidelines of promotion of natural regeneration, enrichment planting, maintenance and harvesting of natural forests for specific forest status and types.</p>	<p>The criteria and indicators of 4.3 are much more relevant; given that the forest management plan specifies social, economic and ecological objectives, and that "identification of silvicultural methodology" is required in the management plan under Circular 28.</p>	

			<p>4.4. Forest owners shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business to enhance forest benefits.</p> <p>4.5. Forest owners shall have measures to prevent and minimize outbreaks of pests, and diseases.</p> <p>4.6. Forest owners shall implement measures for prevention and fighting of forest fire.</p>		
<p>5.1.11 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:</p> <p>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</p> <p>b) entails a small proportion of forest type; and</p> <p>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</p> <p>d) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria: 6.6</p> <p>Indicators: 6.6.1</p>	<p>6.6. Forest owners shall not directly or indirectly convert natural forest and forest areas with ecological significances to forest plantation or other land use purposes.</p> <p>6.6.1. Shall not directly or indirectly convert natural forest and forest areas with ecological significances (including bare land) to other land use at any forms, except in the justifiable circumstances with the permission of the relevant authorities; planted forest areas converted from natural forests after December 31, 2010 (except the justifiable circumstances with the permission of the relevant authorities and states) will not be eligible to apply for sustainable forest management certification.</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y
<p>5.1.12 Conversion of abandoned agricultural and treeless land into forest land shall be taken into consideration, whenever it can add economic, ecological, social and/or cultural value.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria 5.2</p> <p>Indicator 5.2.5</p>	<p>5.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.</p>	The standard conforms with the requirements.	Y

<p>5.2.1 Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and increase the health and vitality of forest ecosystems and to rehabilitate degraded forest ecosystems, whenever this is possible by silvicultural means.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Indicators: 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.2 Criteria: 6.3; 6.4</p>	<p>6.1.2. Shall make a planning of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological importance as described in a sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>6.1.3. Shall make a planning of monitoring and evaluation of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological values.</p> <p>6.2.2. Shall have measures to protect identified/recorded species and their habitats. These measures shall be available to the public;</p> <p>6.3. Forest owners shall protect or conserve Forest areas with ecological importance and high conservation values.</p> <p>6.4. Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests.</p> <p>6.4.1. Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation;</p> <p>6.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests;</p> <p>6.4.3. Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people's health, animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods;</p>	<p>The criteria and indicators in 6.4 conform with the requirements in terms of maintenance and increasing ("enhancing") biodiversity values, as well as "natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting" in natural forests.</p>	<p>Y</p>
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Criterion 2: Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality					
<p>5.2.2 Health and vitality of forests shall be periodically monitored, especially key biotic and abiotic factors that potentially affect health and vitality of forest ecosystems, such as pests, diseases, overgrazing and overstocking, fire, and damage caused by climatic factors, air pollutants or by forest management operations.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 1.3: 1.3.2; 1.3.3; 1.3.5; 4.5: 4.5.1-4.5.3; 4.6: 4.6.1-4.6.4; 5.1: 5.1.1; 5.1.2; 6.4: 6.4.3; 6.4.4; 6.5: 6.5.1-6.5.3</p>	<p>4.5.1. Shall comply with technical measures to prevent and minimize outbreaks of pests, and diseases according to national regulations and standards; 4.5.2. Shall have plan and implement management measures to protect and prevent outbreaks of pests, and diseases based on silvicultural, biological and chemical measures; encourage the application of environmentally friendly biological management measures; 4.5.5. Shall immediately report forest outbreak of pests, and diseases to local authority. 4.6.1. Shall have a plan and monitor for prevention and protection against forest fires; 4.6.2. Shall have a system of prevention and protection against forest fire. it shall be installed and maintained according to the regulations; 4.6.3. Shall report to and cooperate with professional forestry agencies and local authorities in order to control forest fires; 4.6.4. Shall carry out practical activities in relation to raising awareness of employees, local communities and people on forest fires; 5.1.1. Shall evaluate and analyse negative impacts of forest management activities which could affect environment; 5.1.2. Shall have plan and carry out measures to mitigate adverse impacts on</p>	<p>The more appropriate reference here is "7.2. Forest owners shall undertake Monitoring and Evaluation plan. This includes: 7.2.1. Shall have annual data including annual harvested volumes, NTFPs, changes in forest areas and the growth of forest plantation; 7.2.2. Shall have data of every 5-years including the growth of natural forests, natural regeneration and tree species composition; 7.2.3. Shall have data and reports on the protection or conservation of forests with ecological significance and threatened species; 7.2.4. Shall be activities relating to the outbreak of forest diseases and pests soil erosion and other risks." The standard conforms with the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

			<p>the environment before implementing forestry activities.</p> <p>6.4.3. Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people's health, animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods;</p> <p>6.4.4. Shall have specific measures to minimize the negative impacts of cattle grazing on natural regeneration, growth rate and biodiversity of forests;</p> <p>6.5.1. Shall not introduce exotic and invasive species that negatively affect the environment;</p> <p>6.5.2. Shall be aware that importing plants and animals, genetic resources and micro-organism shall be permitted by relevant authorities;</p> <p>6.5.3. Where introducing exotic species, Forest owners shall have preventative measures to control and avoid their invasion;</p>		
<p>5.2.3 The monitoring and maintaining of health and vitality of forest ecosystems shall take into consideration the effects of naturally occurring fire, pests and other disturbances.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.5: 4.5.1-4.5.3; 4.6: 4.6.1-4.6.5 7.2: 7.2.4; 7.2.5</p>	<p>7.2. Forest owners shall undertake Monitoring and Evaluation plan.</p> <p>7.2.4. Shall be activities relating to the outbreak of forest diseases and pests soil erosion and other risks;</p> <p>7.2.5. Shall be activities relating to monitoring the impacts of forestry activities on the environment and society;</p>	<p>The standard conforms with the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>5.2.4 Forest management plans or their equivalents shall specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation of and damages to forest ecosystems. Forest management planning shall make use of those policy instruments set up to support these activities.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 2.1: 2.1.3; 2.3: 2.3.1 Principle: 3</p>		<p>The text references provided don't appear to have any relevance here. The more appropriate references are in Circular 28, all forest management plans are required to "Formulation of the plan on management, protection, protection of forest ecosystems."</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>5.2.5 Forest management practices shall make best use of natural structures and processes and use preventive biological measures wherever and as far as economically feasible to maintain and enhance the health and vitality of forests. Adequate genetic, species and structural diversity shall be encouraged and/or maintained to enhance the stability, vitality and resistance capacity of the forests to adverse environmental factors and strengthen natural regulation mechanisms.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 5.3: 5.3.6; 6.4: 6.4.1-6.4.5; 6.5: 6.5.1-6.5.3</p>	<p>5.3. Forest owners shall strictly control the use of chemicals and fertilizers and ensure to be safe for the environment and people's health. 5.3.6. Forest owners shall limit use of chemical fertilizers and encourage use of organic and bio-fertilizers to improve the fertile of soil. 6.4.1. Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation; 6.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests; 6.4.3. Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people's health, animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods; 6.4.4. Shall have specific measures to minimize the negative impacts of cattle</p>	<p>The standard conforms with the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

			<p>grazing on natural regeneration, growth rate and biodiversity of forests;</p> <p>6.4.5. Shall reforest on bare land areas; they shall apply natural promoted regeneration or enrichment planting for natural forests.</p> <p>6.5.1. Shall not introduce exotic and invasive species that negatively affect the environment;</p> <p>6.5.2. Shall be aware that importing plants and animals, genetic resources and micro-organism shall be permitted by relevant authorities;</p> <p>6.5.3. Where introducing exotic species, Forest owners shall have preventative measures to control and avoid their invasion;</p>		
<p>5.2.6 Lighting of fires shall be avoided and is only permitted if it is necessary for the achievement of the management goals of the forest management unit.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>4.6: 4.6.1-4.6.5</p>	<p>4.6.1. Shall have a plan and monitor for prevention and protection against forest fires;</p> <p>4.6.2. Shall have a system of prevention and protection against forest fire. it shall be installed and maintained according to the regulations;</p> <p>4.6.3. Shall report to and cooperate with professional forestry agencies and local authorities in order to control forest fires;</p> <p>4.6.4. Shall carry out practical activities in relation to raising awareness of employees, local communities and people on forest fires;</p> <p>4.6.5. Forest fires (if happened) shall be kept for at least 05 years.</p>	<p>Vietnam’s Law on Forestry (2017) appears to indicate that it is only permissible for the lighting of fires “in or close to forests to clear off hills or fields to prepare land for afforestation”.</p> <p>However, there are further clarifications on prohibitions on forest fires in Vietnam’s laws and regulations; refer to main body of report for details.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>5.2.7 Appropriate forest management practices such as reforestation and afforestation with tree species and provenances that are suited to the site conditions or the use of tending, harvesting and transport techniques that minimise tree and/or soil damages shall be applied. The spillage of oil during forest management operations or the indiscriminate disposal of waste on forest land shall be strictly avoided. Non-organic waste and litter shall be avoided, collected, stored in designated areas and removed in an environmentally-responsible manner.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.2: 4.2.1-4.2.5</p>	<p>4.2.1. Shall comply that provenance trials and recognition of new seeds/varieties/clones shall be in line with national regulations and standards approved by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development;</p> <p>4.2.2. Seedlings production shall comply with the regulations and national standards in relation to production and trade in forest nurseries, originals of seeds, seed provenances and technical guidelines for seedlings production;</p> <p>4.2.3. Shall use quality seeds and seedlings with clear originals;</p> <p>4.2.4. Forest owners are encouraged to use seeds, provenances, and clones released in the seed list by relevant authorities;</p> <p>4.2.5. Shall comply with regulations of importing and exporting seeds.</p>	<p>The standard conforms with the requirements.</p> <p>Oil spillage is not addressed. However, the definition of 'prohibited activities' which refers to Law No. 16/2017/QH14 dated November 15, 2017 by The National Assembly on Forestry would appear to cover this, combined with 1.3.2. Shall have measures to prevent any prohibited activities in the forestry sector;</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>5.2.8 The use of pesticides shall be minimised and appropriate silvicultural alternatives and other biological measures preferred.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.3: 4.3.1-4.3.5; 5.3: 5.3.2; 5.4: 5.4.1-5.4.3</p>	<p>4.3.5. Shall apply technical guidelines of promotion of natural regeneration, enrichment planting, maintenance and harvesting of natural forests for specific forest status and types.</p> <p>5.3. Forest owners shall strictly control the use of chemicals and fertilizers and ensure to be safe for the environment and people's health.</p> <p>5.3.4. Shall keep and update the list of all chemicals (pesticide, herbicide, sterilization, anti-rodent prescriptions, and growth regulators) prohibited by Viet Nam's laws and international regulations/conventions;</p>	<p>In the standard pesticides are classified as 'chemicals' in the definitions. The key difference here is between 'minimise' and 'strictly control' use of chemicals.</p> <p>It has been noted that this is a translation error; VFCO has prepared a draft amendment to the document accordingly.</p>	<p>Minor NC</p>

5.2.9 The WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 1.4 4.5: 4.5.1; 5.3: 5.3.1; 5.3.1; 5.3.4	1.4.1. Shall understand and comply with the regulations/provision of the treaties (e.g ILO, CBD 1992, POP 2001 – Stockholm convention, and CITES). 5.3.1. Shall use chemicals that they are compliance with legal requirements of Viet Nam's laws and international regulations;	Vietnam has undertaken specific measures to phase out highly hazardous pesticides, including those considered as WHO Class 1A and 1B. This has been documented by the FAO on a number of occasions. See: http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4362e.pdf	Y
5.2.10 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.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 5.3: 5.3.1; 5.3.4		These references are more appropriate: 4.1. Shall understand and comply with the regulations/provision of the treaties (e.g ILO, CBD 1992, POP 2001 – Stockholm convention, and CITES). 5.3.1. Shall use chemicals that they are compliance with legal requirements of Viet Nam's laws and international regulations; Vietnam is a signatory to the Stockholm Convention.	Y
5.2.11 The use of pesticides shall follow the instructions given by the pesticide producer and be implemented with proper equipment and training.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 3.2: 3.2.3; 3.2.4	3.2.3. Shall provide practical trainings on how to use chemical substances safely to health for their employees; 3.2.4. Employees and those of contractors shall be trained on safe working practices in compliance with the laws and regulations.	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y
5.2.12 Where fertilisers are used, they shall be applied in a controlled manner and with due consideration for the environment.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators:	5.3.1. Shall use chemicals that they are compliance with legal requirements of Viet Nam's laws and international regulations; 5.3.2. Shall ensure that all chemicals and materials shall be kept and stored in safe	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y

		5.3: 5.3.1-5.3.5;	<p>places for the environment and people's health;</p> <p>5.3.3. Shall have instructions for using chemicals in order to ensure safety for the environment and people's health;</p> <p>5.3.4. Shall keep and update the list of all chemicals (pesticide, herbicide, sterilization, anti-rodent prescriptions, and growth regulators) prohibited by Viet Nam's laws and international regulations/conventions;</p> <p>5.3.5. Shall record information about type, dosage, time and place of using chemicals and chemical fertilizers;</p> <p>5.3.6. Forest owners shall limit use of chemical fertilizers and encourage use of organic and bio-fertilizers to improve the fertile of soil.</p>		
Criterion 3: Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood)					
5.3.1 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.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.4: 4.4.1-4.4.4; 4.7: 4.7.1	<p>4.7. Forest owners shall appropriately harvest forest products in order to maintain forest resources in long term.</p> <p>4.7.1. Shall be aware that harvested annual volume shall not exceed the increment of forest as defined in the sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>4.4.1. Shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business based on the results of survey and market information on forest products such as timbers, logs, NTFPs and ecological services;</p>	Although 4.7 and 4.7.1 refer to planning, most of the references provided refer to practices rather than planning. More appropriate and detailed references can be found in Circular 28, which requires the "identification of sustainable finance source from PFES activities, ecotourism, leisure and recreation service, lease of forest environment, fee, charge, output of timber harvested from planted forest for research, scientific experiments, non-timber forest products, forest carbon reserve" in planning, and the	Y

			<p>4.4.2. Shall apply diversify various income sources from forest ecosystem services;</p> <p>4.4.3. Shall be encouraged planting native, multi-purposes and NTFP's species with high values;</p> <p>4.4.4. Shall advertise and introduce their forest products, NTFPs and forest ecosystem services to public.</p>	<p>calculation of timber output in Annex V of the document.</p>	
<p>5.3.2 Forest management planning shall aim to achieve sound economic performance taking into account any available market studies and possibilities for new markets and economic activities in connection with all relevant goods and services of forests.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.4: 4.4.1-4.4.4</p>	<p>4.4. Forest owners shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business to enhance forest benefits.</p> <p>4.4.1. Shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business based on the results of survey and market information on forest products such as timbers, logs, NTFPs and ecological services;</p> <p>4.4.2. Shall apply diversify various income sources from forest ecosystem services;</p> <p>4.4.3. Shall be encouraged planting native, multi-purposes and NTFP's species with high values;</p> <p>4.4.4. Shall advertise and introduce their forest products, NTFPs and forest ecosystem services to public.</p>	<p>As with above, the references refer to practices rather than planning, where Circular 28 appears to be more relevant: "identification of sustainable finance source from PFES activities, ecotourism, leisure and recreation service, lease of forest environment, fee, charge, output of timber harvested from planted forest for research, scientific experiments, non-timber forest products, forest carbon reserve"</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>5.3.3 Forest management plans or their equivalents shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area. Forest management planning shall make use of those policy instruments set up to support the production of commercial and non-commercial forest goods and services.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 5.2: 5.2.1; 5.2.2; 5.2.4</p>		<p>The references provided do not appear to be related to planning. The more appropriate reference would appear to be in Circular 28, which outlines planning for different types of forests (production, protection, special use, small holder), and within each of those identifies planning for</p>	<p>Y</p>

				<p>other possible uses such as tourism and leisure.</p> <p>The Circular also makes reference to Article 53 of the Law on Forestry and the Regulation on Forest Management, which details activities including “carry out scientific research and preserve historical – cultural relics, beliefs, places of scenic beauty associated with ecotourism; hospitality and entertainment”</p> <p>4.4. Forest owners shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business to enhance forest benefits.</p>	
<p>5.3.4 Forest management practices shall maintain and improve the forest resources and encourage a diversified output of goods and services over the long term.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>4.4: 4.4.1-4.4.4</p>	<p>4.4. Forest owners shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business to enhance forest benefits.</p> <p>4.4.1. Shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business based on the results of survey and market information on forest products such as timbers, logs, NTFPs and ecological services;</p> <p>4.4.2. Shall apply diversify various income sources from forest ecosystem services;</p> <p>4.4.3. Shall be encouraged planting native, multi-purposes and NTFP's species with high values;</p> <p>4.4.4. Shall advertise and introduce their forest products, NTFPs and forest ecosystem services to public.</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>5.3.5 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.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.3: 4.3.1-4.3.5; 4.7: 4.7.1</p>	<p>4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan. 4.3.1. Shall select tree species selected for planting matching with site conditions and objectives of sustainable forest management; 4.3.2. Shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for the ecological characteristics of tree species and different site conditions; 4.3.3. Shall apply technical measures including planting, tending, harvesting and replanting for specific tree species; 4.3.4. Shall apply appropriate site management for sustainable plantation management; 4.3.5. Shall apply technical guidelines of promotion of natural regeneration, enrichment planting, maintenance and harvesting of natural forests for specific forest status and types.</p>	<p>4.3.5 is the most appropriate reference and addresses most directly.</p>	
<p>5.3.6 Harvesting levels of both wood and nonwood forest products shall not exceed a rate that can be sustained in the long term, and optimum use shall be made of the harvested forest products, with due regard to nutrient off-take.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.7: 4.7.1</p>	<p>4.7.1. Shall be aware that harvested annual volume shall not exceed the increment of forest as defined in the sustainable forest management plan.</p>	<p>Circular 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT addresses the harvesting levels in more detail (Annex 5), but does not address nutrient offtake in any detail. Rather, this is dealt with in detail in Circular 29 on Silvicultural techniques.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>5.3.7 Where it is the responsibility of the forest owner/manager and included in forest management, the exploitation of non-timber forest products, including hunting and fishing, shall be regulated, monitored and controlled.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 7.2: 7.2.1</p>	<p>7.2. Forest owners shall undertake Monitoring and Evaluation plan. 7.2.1. Shall have annual data including annual harvested volumes, NTFPs, changes in forest areas and the growth of forest plantation;</p>	<p>This addresses monitoring, but it does not address regulation or control. This is found in Circular 28.</p>	<p>Minor NC</p>

<p>5.3.8 Adequate infrastructure such as roads, skid tracks or bridges shall be planned, established and maintained to ensure efficient delivery of goods and services while minimising negative impacts on the environment.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.8: 4.8.1; 4.8.2</p>	<p>4.8. Forest owners shall build and maintain technical infrastructures in order to minimize adverse impacts on environment. 4.8.1. Shall build and maintain infrastructures including roads, skid tracks, bridges and skidding logs, logging areas in line with regulations; make sure that all the infrastructures shall be shown on maps; 4.8.2. Shall be aware that all activities relating to construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructures will not cause potential negative impacts on environment. These activities shall be controlled and minimized.</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>Criterion 4: Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems</p>					
<p>5.4.1 Forest management planning shall aim to maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity on ecosystem, species and genetic levels and, where appropriate, diversity at landscape level.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.1: 6.1.1-6.1.3 6.2: 6.2.1-6.2.5 6.3: 6.3.1</p>	<p>6.1. Forest owners shall identify and demarcate forest areas with ecological importance to be needed for the purposes of protection and conservation. 6.1.1. Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, forest mapping and development of database and consult stakeholders about forest areas with ecological importance, including: a) Unique, rare and vulnerable forest ecosystems or typical forest ecosystems such as river estuary, wetland, and limestone forests;</p>	<p>The relevant references to planning are: “6.1.2. Shall make a planning of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological importance as described in a sustainable forest management plan. 6.1.3. Shall make a planning of monitoring and evaluation of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological values” The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

			<p>b) Forest areas existing endemic species and their habitats being threatened;</p> <p>c) Genetic resources are vulnerable and need to be protected;</p> <p>d) Landscape areas with significant importance at national and international levels.</p> <p>6.1.2. Shall make a planning of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological importance as described in a sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>6.1.3. Shall make a planning of monitoring and evaluation of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological values.</p> <p>6.2. Forest owners shall protect fauna and flora in compliance with legal law.</p> <p>6.2.1. Shall consult with stakeholders to construct the list of species, mapping their distributions and habitats, and collecting all information of species to be protected as regulated by Viet Nam regulations and international conventions (not applicable to forest plantation managed and owned by CRN);</p> <p>6.2.2. Shall have measures to protect identified/recorded species and their habitats. These measures shall be available to the public;</p> <p>6.2.3. Shall update data and store profiles of identified species;</p> <p>6.2.4. Shall comply with the regulations and laws of Viet Nam and international conventions on raising, planting, harvesting, utilization and trade of plant and animal species;</p>		
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<p>5.4.2 Forest management planning, inventory and mapping of forest resources shall identify, protect and/or conserve ecologically important forest areas containing significant concentrations of:</p> <p>a) protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems such as riparian areas and wetland biotopes;</p> <p>b) areas containing endemic species and habitats of threatened species, as defined in recognised reference lists;</p> <p>c) endangered or protected genetic <i>in situ</i> resources; and taking into account</p> <p>d) globally, regionally and nationally significant large landscape areas with natural distribution and abundance of naturally occurring species.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>6.1: 6.1.1-6.1.4</p>	<p>6.1.1. Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, forest mapping and development of database and consult stakeholders about forest areas with ecological importance, including:</p> <p>a) Unique, rare and vulnerable forest ecosystems or typical forest ecosystems such as river estuary, wetland, and limestone forests;</p> <p>b) Forest areas existing endemic species and their habitats being threatened;</p> <p>c) Genetic resources are vulnerable and need to be protected; and international levels.</p> <p>d) Landscape areas with significant importance at national</p> <p>6.1.2. Shall make a planning of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological importance as described in a sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>6.1.3. Shall make a planning of monitoring and evaluation of protection and conservation for forest areas with significant ecological values.</p> <p>6.1.4. Shall update and revise the existing plans based on the results of monitoring and evaluation.</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y

<p>5.4.3 Protected and endangered plant and animal species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures shall be taken for their protection and, where relevant, to increase their population.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.2: 6.2.4; 6.2.5</p>	<p>6.2. Forest owners shall protect fauna and flora in compliance with legal law. 6.2.4. Shall comply with the regulations and laws of Viet Nam and international conventions on raising, planting, harvesting, utilization and trade of plant and animal species; 6.2.5. Shall control illegal hunting and harvesting activities.</p>	<p>Article 38 of the Forestry Law (2017) states that: Protection of forest plants and animals 1. Endangered and rare species of forest plants and animals shall be listed to be managed and protected. 2. The Government shall make the list and develop policies on management and protection of endangered and rare species of forest plants and animals; procedures for using endangered/rare/wild species of forest plants and animals provided in Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). 3. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development shall specify procedures for using timber and non-timber forest products and forest animals, apart from the provision of Clause 2 this Article.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>5.4.4 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.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 5.2: 5.2.2; 5.2.5; 6.4: 6.4.1; 6.4.2</p>	<p>5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities. 5.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection; 5.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>5.4.5 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.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.4: 6.4.1-6.4.3</p>	<p>6.4. Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests. 6.4.1. Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation; 6.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests; 6.4.3. Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people's health, animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods;</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	
<p>5.4.6 Afforestation and reforestation activities that contribute to the improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity shall be promoted.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.4: 6.4.1; 6.4.2</p>	<p>6.4. Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests. 6.4.1. Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation; 6.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests; Also:</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

			6.4.5. Shall reforest on bare land areas; they shall apply natural promoted regeneration or enrichment planting for natural forests.		
5.4.7 Genetically-modified trees shall not be used.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.4: 6.4.3	6.4.3. Shall not use genetically modified tree species in planting. Remember that only using when sufficient scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that their impacts on people's health, animals and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than that of being created by traditional breeding methods;	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y
5.4.8 Forest management practices shall, where appropriate, promote a diversity of both horizontal and vertical structures such as uneven-aged stands and the diversity of species such as mixed stands. Where appropriate, the practices shall also aim to maintain and restore landscape diversity.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.4: 6.4.2; 6.4.5; 6.6: 6.6.1	6.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests; 6.4.5. Shall reforest on bare land areas; they shall apply natural promoted regeneration or enrichment planting for natural forests.	The standard and other documents to not appear to contain any references to diverse structures directly; however, there are multiple stipulations for variation in age and species type.	Y
5.4.9 Traditional management systems that have created valuable ecosystems, such as coppice, on appropriate sites shall be supported, when economically feasible.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.3: 6.3.1-6.3.4 6.4: 6.4.1-6.4.5	6.3.1. Shall have measures of protection and conservation for forest areas with ecological importance. These measures shall be available to the public; 6.3.2. Shall update and store data and files of forest areas with ecological importance; 6.3.3. Shall comply with the regulations and laws of Viet Nam and international conventions/regulations on the protection and conservation of forest areas with ecological importance; 6.3.4. Shall enhance the capacity of employees and raise awareness for local community on forest areas with ecological importance.	The text referred to does not address the requirement directly. However, in the consultant's view, there are no valuable ecosystems that have been created by traditional management systems; similarly traditional management systems themselves are not economically feasible according to an extensive literature review noted in the main report above.	Y

<p>5.4.10 Tending and harvesting operations shall be conducted in a way that does not cause lasting damage to ecosystems. Wherever possible, practical measures shall be taken to improve or maintain biological diversity.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>4.3: 4.3.3; 4.3.5; 4.7: 4.7.1</p>	<p>4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>4.3.3. Shall apply technical measures including planting, tending, harvesting and replanting for specific tree species;</p> <p>4.3.5. Shall apply technical guidelines of promotion of natural regeneration, enrichment planting, maintenance and harvesting of natural forests for specific forest status and types.</p> <p>4.7. Forest owners shall appropriately harvest forest products in order to maintain forest resources in long term.</p> <p>4.7.1. Shall be aware that harvested annual volume shall not exceed the increment of forest as defined in the sustainable forest management plan.</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements. The application of techniques suitable for the objectives of the sustainable forest management plan, and the overall planning objectives to maintain ecosystems and biodiversity means that this is implied.</p>	Y
<p>5.4.11 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.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>4.8: 4.8.1; 4.8.2</p>	<p>4.8. Forest owners shall build and maintain technical infrastructures in order to minimize adverse impacts on environment.</p> <p>4.8.1. Shall build and maintain infrastructures including roads, skid tracks, bridges and skidding logs, logging areas in line with regulations; make sure that all the infrastructures shall be shown on maps;</p> <p>4.8.2. Shall be aware that all activities relating to construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructures will not cause potential negative impacts on environment. These activities shall be controlled and minimized.</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	Y

<p>5.4.12 With due regard to management objectives, measures shall be taken to balance the pressure of animal populations and grazing on forest regeneration and growth as well as on biodiversity.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.2: 6.2.2; 6.4: 6.4.4</p>	<p>6.2. Forest owners shall protect fauna and flora in compliance with legal law. 6.2.2. Shall have measures to protect identified/recorded species and their habitats. These measures shall be available to the public; 6.4. Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests. 6.4.4. Shall have specific measures to minimize the negative impacts of cattle grazing on natural regeneration, growth rate and biodiversity of forests;</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>5.4.13 Standing and fallen dead wood, hollow trees, old groves and special rare tree species shall be left in quantities and distribution necessary to safeguard biological diversity, taking into account the potential effect on the health and stability of forests and on surrounding ecosystems.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 6.2: 6.2.1; 6.2.2; 6.3: 6.3.1; 6.4: 6.4.1; 6.4.2; 6.4.4</p>	<p>6.2. Forest owners shall protect fauna and flora in compliance with legal law. 6.2.1. Shall consult with stakeholders to construct the list of species, mapping their distributions and habitats, and collecting all information of species to be protected as regulated by Viet Nam regulations and international conventions (not applicable to forest plantation managed and owned by CRN); 6.2.2. Shall have measures to protect identified/recorded species and their habitats. These measures shall be available to the public; 6.3. Forest owners shall protect or conserve forest areas with ecological importance and high conservation values. 6.3.1. Shall have measures of protection and conservation for forest areas with</p>		

			<p>ecological importance. These measures shall be available to the public;</p> <p>6.4. Forest owners shall undertake measures to maintain and enhance the ecological values and the biodiversity of forests.</p> <p>6.4.1. Shall apply natural promoted regeneration and enrichment planting for natural forests; they shall be aware that native tree species shall be prioritized in forest restoration, enrichment planting, and reforestation;</p> <p>6.4.2. Planting mixed tree species shall be prioritized to enhance biodiversity and sustainability of forests;</p> <p>6.4.4. Shall have specific measures to minimize the negative impacts of cattle grazing on natural regeneration, growth rate and biodiversity of forests;</p>		
Criterion 5: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)					
Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation			
5.5.1 Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance protective functions of forests for society, such as protection of infrastructure, protection from soil erosion, protection of water resources and from adverse impacts of water such as floods or avalanches.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 5.2: 5.2.1-5.2.5	<p>5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.</p> <p>5.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y

			<p>agriculture production areas on maps and sites;</p> <p>5.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;</p> <p>5.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p> <p>5.2.4. Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p> <p>5.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.</p>		
<p>5.5.2 Areas that fulfil specific and recognised protective functions for society shall be registered and mapped, and forest management plans or their equivalents shall take these areas into account.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators: 5.2: 5.2.1-5.2.3</p>	<p>5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.</p> <p>5.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites;</p> <p>5.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;</p> <p>5.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	Y

<p>5.5.3 Special care shall be given to silvicultural operations on sensitive soils and erosion-prone areas as well as in areas where operations might lead to excessive erosion of soil into watercourses. Inappropriate techniques such as deep soil tillage and use of unsuitable machinery shall be avoided in such areas. Special measures shall be taken to minimise the pressure of animal populations.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.3: 4.3.2-4.3.4 5.2: 5.2.1-5.2.5</p>	<p>4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan</p> <p>4.3.2. Shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for the ecological characteristics of tree species and different site conditions;</p> <p>4.3.3. Shall apply technical measures including planting, tending, harvesting and replanting for specific tree species;</p> <p>4.3.4. Shall apply appropriate site management for sustainable plantation management;</p> <p>5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.</p> <p>5.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites;</p> <p>5.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;</p> <p>5.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p> <p>5.2.4. Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p>	<p>The standard generally conforms to the requirements. However, "inappropriate techniques" are not considered. Similarly, special measures for animal populations are also not addressed directly.</p> <p>However, this is dealt with via Forestry Law 2017 on prohibited activities within forests; inappropriate techniques are also dealt with via specific guidelines for silvicultural techniques in Circular 29.</p>	<p>Minor NC</p>
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			<p>5.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.</p>		
<p>5.5.4 Special care shall be given to forest management practices in forest areas with water protection functions to avoid adverse effects on the quality and quantity of water resources.</p> <p>Inappropriate use of chemicals or other harmful substances or inappropriate silvicultural practices influencing water quality in a harmful way shall be avoided.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>5.2: 5.2.1-5.2.5</p> <p>5.3: 5.3.1-5.3.6</p>	<p>5.2. Forest owners shall carry out measures to protect soil and water sources during the implementation of forestry activities.</p> <p>5.2.1. Shall identify areas with the functions of soil and water protection such as buffer zones for rivers, streams, lakes, wetland, steep areas, and agriculture production areas on maps and sites;</p> <p>5.2.2. Shall have plans and measures to protect and restore vegetation cover on the identified areas with the functions of soil and water resources protection;</p> <p>5.2.3. Shall identify and analyse possible negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p> <p>5.2.4. Shall have plans and carry out measures to mitigate negative impacts of forestry activities on soil and water resources;</p> <p>5.2.5. Shall give priority to planting and restoring forests on bare lands, land prone to soil erosion by applying suitable soil conservation techniques.</p> <p>5.3. Forest owners shall strictly control the use of chemicals and fertilizers and ensure to be safe for the environment and people's health.</p> <p>5.3.1. Shall use chemicals that they are compliance with legal requirements of</p>	<p>The standards conform to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

			<p>Viet Nam’s laws and international regulations;</p> <p>5.3.2. Shall ensure that all chemicals and materials shall be kept and stored in safe places for the environment and people’s health;</p> <p>5.3.3. Shall have instructions for using chemicals in order to ensure safety for the environment and people’s health;</p> <p>5.3.4. Shall keep and update the list of all chemicals (pesticide, herbicide, sterilization, anti-rodent prescriptions, and growth regulators) prohibited by Viet Nam’s laws and international regulations/conventions;</p> <p>5.3.5. Shall record information about type, dosage, time and place of using chemicals and chemical fertilizers;</p> <p>5.3.6. Forest owners shall limit use of chemical fertilizers and encourage use of organic and bio-fertilizers to improve the fertile of soil.</p>		
<p>5.5.5 Construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure shall be carried out in a manner that minimises bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 4.8: 4.8.1; 4.8.2</p>	<p>4.8. Forest owners shall build and maintain technical infrastructures in order to minimize adverse impacts on environment.</p> <p>4.8.1. Shall build and maintain infrastructures including roads, skid tracks, bridges and skidding logs, logging areas in line with regulations; make sure that all the infrastructures shall be shown on maps;</p> <p>4.8.2. Shall be aware that all activities relating to construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructures will not cause potential negative impacts on</p>	<p>Although the standard implies minimising of adverse impacts, it does not directly address “bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained.”</p> <p>However, this is addressed via stipualtions on erosion in Criteria 5; it is further addressed in national regulations on infrastruvture</p>	<p>Y</p>

			environment. These activities shall be controlled and minimized.	development – see assessment report above	
Criterion 6: Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions					
5.6.1 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.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 2.1: 2.1.1; 2.1.3; 2.3: 2.3.1 4.4: 4.4.1; 4.4.2	<p>2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.</p> <p>2.1.1. Shall respect all legal and/or customary land use rights of community and local people. Cooperate with the community, local people and stakeholders to identify areas related to their livelihood activities such as collecting NTFPs, providing water for production and lifestyle... on the map, in the field, a management plan is attached in the sustainable forest management plan;</p> <p>2.1.3. Shall give favor conditions/priorities to communities and local people to carry out their legal activities on their land and forests.</p> <p>2.3. Forest owners should give job opportunities and enhance livelihood for communities and local people.</p> <p>2.3.1. Shall give priorities to communities and local people to participate in forest activities and the improvement of their livelihood.</p> <p>4.4. Forest owners shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business to enhance forest benefits.</p> <p>4.4.1. Shall diversify forestry activities in relation to production and business based on the results of survey and</p>	<p>Circular 28 contains requirements for forest management planning in relation to economic functions, specifically:</p> <p>a) Regarding economics: intensive afforestation, improvement of productivity quality of planted forest; improvement of natural forest quality; area, timber output harvested from planted forest, timber output from salvaging harvesting, gleaning harvesting; value from PFES source, forest carbon storage and other services;</p> <p>c) Regarding society: creation of job, increase income for labourers, training, improve awareness on protection, development, use of forest and sustainable forest management; step by step complete the infrastructure system.”</p> <p>and</p> <p>“l) Formulation of the plan for supportive activities to residential communities and local people regarding varieties, technique, training, training on forest protection and development, sustainable forest management and infrastructure development;</p>	Y

			<p>market information on forest products such as timbers, logs, NTFPs and ecological services;</p> <p>4.4.2. Shall apply diversify various income sources from forest ecosystem services;</p>		
<p>5.6.2 Forest management shall promote the longterm health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the forest management area.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators: 2.5: 2.5.1; 2.5.2; 2.5.5</p>	<p>2.5. Forest owners shall resolve complaints and disputes relating to negative impacts of forestry activities on local communities and people’s assets (soils, forests and other assets) and livelihood and health.</p> <p>2.5.1. Identify forestry activities of forest owners that do not cause the possible negative impacts of each forestry activity on land, forests and the life of local communities and local people in order to take preventive measures;</p> <p>2.5.2. Shall have measures to prevent adverse impacts on local communities and people;</p> <p>2.5.5. Shall maintain local communities’ infrastructures when using them for forestry activities and provide additional supports infrastructure to upgrade if applicable;</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	Y
<p>5.6.3 Property rights and land tenure arrangements shall be clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. Likewise, legal, customary and</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p>	<p>2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	Y

<p>traditional rights related to the forest land shall be clarified, recognised and respected.</p>		<p>Criteria and Indicators: 2.1: 2.1.1-2.1.3 2.4: 2.4.1</p>	<p>community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.</p> <p>2.1.1. Shall respect all legal and/or customary land use rights of community and local people. Cooperate with the community, local people and stakeholders to identify areas related to their livelihood activities such as collecting NTFPs, providing water for production and lifestyle... on the map, in the field, a management plan is attached in the sustainable forest management plan;</p> <p>2.1.2. Shall agree with communities and local people on the boundaries of forests and forest land;</p> <p>2.1.3. Shall give favor conditions/priorities to communities and local people to carry out their legal activities on their land and forests.</p> <p>2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.</p> <p>2.4.1. Shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance on maps and sites, a management plan attached in sustainable forest management plan;</p>		
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<p>5.6.4 Forest management activities shall be conducted in recognition of the established framework of legal, customary and traditional rights such as outlined in ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which shall not be infringed upon without the free, prior and informed consent of the holders of the rights, including the provision of compensation where applicable. Where the extent of rights is not yet resolved or is in dispute there are processes for just and fair resolution. In such cases forest managers shall, in the interim, provide meaningful opportunities for parties to be engaged in forest management decisions whilst respecting the processes and roles and responsibilities laid out in the policies and laws where the certification takes place.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>1.4: 1.4.1</p> <p>2.1: 2.1.1</p>	<p>1.4. Forest owners shall comply with all the international treaties/conventions that Viet Nam is a signatory.</p> <p>1.4.1. Shall understand and comply with the regulations/provision of the treaties (e.g ILO, CBD 1992, POP 2001 – Stockholm convention, and CITES).</p> <p>2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.</p> <p>2.1.1. Shall respect all legal and/or customary land use rights of community and local people. Cooperate with the community, local people and stakeholders to identify areas related to their livelihood activities such as collecting NTFPs, providing water for production and lifestyle... on the map, in the field, a management plan is attached in the sustainable forest management plan;</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y
<p>5.6.5 Adequate public access to forests for the purpose of recreation shall be provided taking into account respect for ownership rights and the rights of others, the effects on forest resources and ecosystems, as well as compatibility with other functions of the forest.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>2.4: 2.4.1; 2.4.2</p>	<p>2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.</p> <p>2.4.1. Shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance on maps and sites, a management plan</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y

			<p>attached in sustainable forest management plan;</p> <p>2.4.2. Shall consult with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and develop measures for protection of forest areas with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and entertainment.</p>		
<p>5.6.6 Sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meeting the basic needs of local communities (e.g. health, subsistence) shall be protected or managed in a way that takes due regard of the significance of the site.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators: 2.4: 2.4.1; 2.4.2</p>	<p>2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.</p> <p>2.4.1. Shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance on maps and sites, a management plan attached in sustainable forest management plan;</p> <p>2.4.2. Shall consult with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and develop measures for protection of forest areas with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and entertainment.</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>5.6.7 Forest management operations shall take into account all socio-economic functions, especially the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests by maintaining for example varied forest structures, and by encouraging attractive trees, groves and other features such as colours, flowers and fruits. This shall be done, however, in a way and to an extent that does not lead to serious negative effects on forest resources, and forest land.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 2.4: 2.4.1 4.3: 4.3.1</p>	<p>2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.</p> <p>2.4.1. Shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance on maps and sites, a management plan attached in sustainable forest management plan;</p> <p>4.3. Forest owners shall apply silviculture techniques which are suitable for objectives of sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>4.3.1. Shall select tree species selected for planting matching with site conditions and objectives of sustainable forest management;</p>	<p>Management planning in Circular 28 clearly requires that planning identify opportunities for leisure, tourism and recreation, among other activities The aesthetic function associated with these activities, such as scenic duty, which is referred to extensively in Law of Forestry (2017) indicates that this is implied.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>5.6.8 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 as a precondition for all management planning and practices described in this standard.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 3.2: 3.2.1-3.2.4 4.1: 4.1.1; 4.1.2 4.6: 4.6.4</p>	<p>3.2. Forest owners shall ensure all safety working conditions for their employees in line with the laws.</p> <p>3.2.1. Shall provide and guide on how to use safety tools and equipments for employees based on specific working conditions;</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

		<p>6.3: 6.3.4</p>	<p>3.2.2. Shall provide trainings on how to safely use and store material and equipments that may cause incidence for their employees;</p> <p>3.2.3. Shall provide practical trainings on how to use chemical substances safely to health for their employees;</p> <p>3.2.4. Employees and those of contractors shall be trained on safe working practices in compliance with the laws and regulations.</p> <p>4.1. All forestry practices shall be implemented as prescribed in the sustainable forest management plan.</p> <p>4.1.1. Forest owners shall ensure that forest management practices shall be implemented as described in sustainable forest management plan and annual plan;</p> <p>4.1.2. If forestry activities are adjusted in the annual plan, then, forest owners shall ensure that the objectives of the sustainable forest management plan shall be assured;</p> <p>4.6. Forest owners shall implement measures for prevention and fighting of forest fire.</p> <p>4.6.4. Shall carry out practical activities in relation to raising awareness of employees, local communities and people on forest fires;</p> <p>6.3. Forest owners shall protect or conserve forest areas with ecological importance and high conservation values.</p> <p>6.3.4. Shall enhance the capacity of employees and raise awareness for local</p>		
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			community on forest areas with ecological importance.		
5.6.9 Forest management practices shall make the best use of local forest-related experience and knowledge, such as those of local communities, forest owners, NGOs and local people.	YES	Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 2.4: 2.4.2 6.1: 6.1.1	<p>2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.</p> <p>2.4.2. Shall consult with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify and develop measures for protection of forest areas with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and entertainment.</p> <p>6.1. Forest owners shall identify and demarcate forest areas with ecological importance to be needed for the purposes of protection and conservation.</p> <p>6.1.1. Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, forest mapping and development of database and consult stakeholders about forest areas with ecological importance, including:</p> <p>a) Unique, rare and vulnerable forest ecosystems or typical forest ecosystems such as river estuary, wetland, and limestone forests; b) Forest areas existing endemic species and their habitats being threatened; c) Genetic</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements.	Y

			<p>resources are vulnerable and need to be protected; d) Landscape areas with significant importance at national and international levels.</p>		
<p>5.6.10 Forest management shall provide for effective communication and consultation with local people and other stakeholders relating to sustainable forest management and shall provide appropriate mechanisms for resolving complaints and disputes relating to forest management between forest operators and local people.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 2.1 : 2.1.1 2.5: 2.5.3; 2.5.4</p>	<p>2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.</p> <p>2.1.1. Shall respect all legal and/or customary land use rights of community and local people. Cooperate with the community, local people and stakeholders to identify areas related to their livelihood activities such as collecting NTFPs, providing water for production and lifestyle... on the map, in the field, a management plan is attached in the sustainable forest management plan;</p> <p>2.5. Forest owners shall resolve complaints and disputes relating to negative impacts of forestry activities on local communities and people's assets (soils, forests and other assets) and livelihood and health.</p> <p>2.5.3. Shall have the mechanisms and measures to resolve any complaints and disputes as well as compensate the lost and damages for local communities and people in line with the national laws;</p> <p>2.5.4. Shall compensate the lost and damages for local communities and people in line with legal regulations or mutual agreements between two parties;</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>

<p>5.6.11 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.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 3.1: 3.1.1-3.1.4 3.2: 3.2.1-3.2.4</p>	<p>3.1. Forest owners shall ensure fairness, rights and benefits of workers in line with the national laws.</p> <p>3.1.1. Shall have a contract or recruitment decision for employees and comply with agreements with them or their representatives on the amount of money, wages and other social benefits expressed in the contract in line with national law;</p> <p>3.1.2. Shall comply with the current laws and regulations on the use of adolescent, disabled and over-age workers ;</p> <p>3.1.3. Shall not absolutely participate in or support the use of forced labor ;</p> <p>3.1.4. Shall make sure gender equality in recruitment, training and payment.</p> <p>3.2. Forest owners shall ensure all safety working conditions for their employees in line with the laws.</p> <p>3.2.1. Shall provide and guide on how to use safety tools and equipments for employees based on specific working conditions;</p> <p>3.2.2. Shall provide trainings on how to safely use and store material and equipments that may cause incidence for their employees;</p> <p>3.2.3. Shall provide practical trainings on how to use chemical substances safely to health for their employees;</p> <p>3.2.4. Employees and those of contractors shall be trained on safe working practices in compliance with the laws and regulations.</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>
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<p>5.6.12 Working conditions shall be safe, and guidance and training in safe working practices shall be provided to all those assigned to a task in forest operations.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 3.2: 3.2.1-3.2.4 3.4: 3.4.2</p>	<p>3.2. Forest owners shall ensure all safety working conditions for their employees in line with the laws. 3.2.1. Shall provide and guide on how to use safety tools and equipments for employees based on specific working conditions; 3.2.2. Shall provide trainings on how to safely use and store material and equipments that may cause incidence for their employees; 3.2.3. Shall provide practical trainings on how to use chemical substances safely to health for their employees; 3.2.4. Employees and those of contractors shall be trained on safe working practices in compliance with the laws and regulations. 3.4. Forest owners shall have and maintain the mechanisms in terms of resolving complaints and compensate for employees in the case of their loss or damages 3.4.2. Shall implement preventive measures to damages, losses and/or risks of employees' health when practising forestry activities;</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>5.6.13 Forest management shall comply with fundamental ILO conventions.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard Criteria and Indicators: 1.4 : 1.4.1</p>		<p>Vietnam has ratified 6 of 8 of the ILO fundamental conventions. It has not ratified conventions C87 and C105. Compliance with these conventions is covered by:</p>	

				<p>“3.1.3. Shall not absolutely participate in or support the use of forced labor”</p> <p>And</p> <p>“3.3. Forest owners shall respect the rights of workers to participate in the trade union and other rights agreed between employers/employees and employers/forest owners in line with the laws. “</p>	
<p>5.6.14 Forest management shall be based interalia on the results of scientific research. Forest management shall contribute to research activities and data collection needed for sustainable forest management or support relevant research activities carried out by other organisations, as appropriate.</p>	YES	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>4.2: 4.2.2</p> <p>4.3: 4.3.1-4.3.5</p> <p>7.2: 7.2.2</p>	<p>4.2. Forest owners shall produce and use seedlings in line with the national regulations and laws.</p> <p>4.2.2. Seedlings production shall comply with the regulations and national standards in relation to production and trade in forest nurseries, originals of seeds, seed provenances and technical guidelines for seedlings production;</p>	<p>Article 96 of the Law on Forestry states that the State will support:</p> <p>“2. Research on forest ecosystems and value of forest environmental services.</p> <p>3. Research on solutions to conservation of forest biodiversity and preparedness to climate change.</p> <p>4. Research on reforming models of forestry production in accordance with the value chain and associated with sustainable forest management; sustainably combined forestry-agricultural-fishery models.</p> <p>5. Transfer of technology and research results in forestry to forestry production, trade and management.”</p>	Y
	<p>Criterion 7: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)</p>				

<p>5.7.1 Forest management shall comply with legislation applicable to forest management issues including forest management practices; nature and environmental protection; protected and endangered species; property, tenure and land-use rights for indigenous people; health, labour and safety issues; and the payment of royalties and taxes.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Principle 1 Criteria 1.1 – 1.4</p> <p>Principle 2 Criteria 2.1;2.3;2.4;2.5</p> <p>Principle 3 Criteria 3.1 – 3.4</p>	<p>Principle 1: Compliance with national laws and related international treaties and conventions</p> <p>1.1. Forest owners shall comply with the laws and regulations of Vietnam on land and forest use rights.</p> <p>1.2. Forest owners shall comply with the current laws of Vietnam on production and trading.</p> <p>1.3. Forest owners shall comply with Vietnam's current laws on forest management and protection and legal timbers.</p> <p>1.4. Forest owners shall comply with all the international treaties/conventions that Viet Nam is a signatory.</p> <p>Principle 2: Community relations and community and local/ ethnic peoples' rights</p> <p>2.1. Forest owners shall recognise the legal and/or customary rights of community and local/ethnic peoples to their forests and forest land.</p> <p>2.3. Forest owners should give job opportunities and enhance livelihood for communities and local people.</p> <p>2.4. Forest owners in terms of their forest land and forests shall clearly identify and demarcate significant sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meet the basic needs of communities and local people.</p> <p>2.5. Forest owners shall resolve complaints and disputes relating to</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements.</p>	<p>Y</p>
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			<p>negative impacts of forestry activities on local communities and</p> <p>people's assets (soils, forests and other assets) and livelihood and health.</p> <p>Principle 3: Forest owners shall ensure the rights and working conditions for workers</p> <p>3.1. Forest owners shall ensure fairness, rights and benefits of workers in line with the national laws.</p> <p>3.2. Forest owners shall ensure all safety working conditions for their employees in line with the laws.</p> <p>3.3. Forest owners shall respect the rights of workers to participate in the trade union and other rights agreed between employers/employees and employers/forest owners in line with the laws.</p> <p>3.4. Forest owners shall have and maintain the mechanisms in terms of resolving complaints and compensate for employees in the case of their loss or damages</p>		
<p>5.7.2 Forest management shall provide for adequate protection of the forest from unauthorised activities such as illegal logging, illegal land use, illegally initiated fires, and other illegal activities.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Attachment 5_VFCS ST 1003_2019_FM Standard</p> <p>Criteria and Indicators:</p> <p>1.3: 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.3.5, 1.3.6</p> <p>1.4: 1.4.1</p> <p>4.6: 4.6.1, 4.6.2</p>	<p>1.3. Forest owners shall comply with Vietnam's current laws on forest management and protection and legal timbers.</p> <p>1.3.2. Shall have measures to prevent any prohibited activities in the forestry sector; 1.3.3. Shall conduct monitoring to timely find out any illegal activities on the forest land;</p> <p>1.3.5. Shall work closely with relevant authorities to identify, report, control and prevent all illegal activities;</p>	<p>The standard conforms to the requirements</p>	<p>Y</p>

			<p>1.3.6. Shall comply with the regulations on documentations, process and procedures of forest harvesting and product management, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.</p> <p>1.4. Forest owners shall comply with all the international treaties/conventions that Viet Nam is a signatory.</p> <p>1.4.1. Shall understand and comply with the regulations/provision of the treaties (e.g ILO, CBD 1992, POP 2001 – Stockholm convention, and CITES).</p> <p>4.6. Forest owners shall implement measures for prevention and fighting of forest fire.</p> <p>4.6.1. Shall have a plan and monitor for prevention and protection against forest fires; 4.6.2. Shall have a system of prevention and protection against forest fire. it shall be installed and maintained according to the regulations;</p>		
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PART IV: Standard and System Requirement Checklist for certification and accreditation procedures (Annex 6)

No.	Question	Reference to PEFC Council PROCEDURES	YES /NO*	Reference to scheme documentation			
Certification Bodies							
1.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification shall be carried out by impartial, independent third parties that cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making body, or in the forest management and are independent of the certified entity?	Annex 6, 3.1	YES	Attachment 2_VFCS GD 1001_2019_ Description of the Scheme and Operation Section 4.3.1	<p>4.3 Forest certification</p> <p>a) Certification bodies</p> <p>The certification bodies operating in VFCS shall be a domestic, international or joint venture with the sufficient capacity and independent operation, independence of financial and human resources with any state or professional agencies acting on sustainable forest management and forest certification. In addition, the certification bodies cannot be participated in deciding on sustainable forest management standards.</p> <p>The certification bodies shall meet the requirements represented in the Decree No. 107/2016/ND-CP dated July 1, 2016 of the Vietnamese Government on prescribing conditions for provision of conformity assessment services.</p> <p>VFCO will have a notified contract signed with Certification Bodies acting in the forest certification against VFCS (detailed</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

					in document name Notification of Certification Bodies for Forest Management Certification and Chain of Custody in Vietnam against the requirements of VFCS, VFCS GD 1007: 2019).		
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2.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body for forest management certification or chain of custody certification against a scheme specific chain of custody standard shall fulfil requirements defined in ISO 17021 or ISO Guide 65?	Annex 6, 3.1	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 2 Section V – point 2	2. The certification body operating forest management certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall have a management system and operational capacity which meets the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015, Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015 on Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Requirements. 2. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
3.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body chain of custody certification against Annex 4 shall fulfil requirements defined in ISO Guide 65?	Annex 6, 3.1	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section V – point 2	2. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

4.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies carrying out forest certification shall have the technical competence in forest management on its economic, social and environmental impacts, and on the forest certification criteria?	Annex 6, 3.1	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirement for Certification Bodies Section V – point 9	9. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification shall have the technical competence in forest-based product procurement and processing, material flows in different stages of processing and trading.	Should be Section IV Point 9 9. The certification body carrying out forest management certification shall meet the requirements of forest management, assessment of economic, social and environmental impacts on forest management and criteria for sustainable forest management.	Y
5.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies carrying out C-o-C certifications shall have technical competence in forest based products procurement and processing and material flows in different stages of processing and trading?	Annex 6, 3.1	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 9	9. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification shall have the technical competence in forest-based product procurement and processing, material flows in different stages of processing and trading.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

6.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies shall have a good understanding of the national PEFC system against which they carry out forest management or C-o-C certifications?	Annex 6, 3.1	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 10 Section V – point 10	10. The certification body shall have a good understanding of the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme; sustainable forest management standard and other relevant documents against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme. 10. The certification body shall have a good understanding of the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme, Chain of Custody certification standard and other documents relevant to the process of operating the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
7.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies have the responsibility to use competent auditors and who have adequate technical know-how on the certification process and issues related to forest management or chain of custody certification?	Annex 6, 3.2	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 11 Section V – point 11	11. Auditors involved in the certification activities a) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have the knowledge corresponding to at least university education and at least 3 years experience with courses related to forestry, environment, biodiversity conservation; b) For a first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditors within the last three years has performed forest management audits for at least four organizations under the leadership of a qualified auditor; c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

				<p>19011 or Vietnam standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems;</p> <p>d) Knowledge and understanding of the principles, criteria and indicators of the sustainable forest management standard VFCS ST 1003:2019 and group forest management standard, VFCS ST 1004:2019;</p> <p>e) Understanding of Forestry Law, decrees, circulars and relevant documents of the Forestry Law.</p> <p>11. Auditors involved in the Certification activities</p> <p>a) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have the knowledge corresponding to at least university education and at least 3 years experience with courses related to forest based and related industries, forest economy where the auditor(s) conducts chain of custody audits;</p> <p>b) For a first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor within the last three years has performed chain of custody audits for at least four organisations under the leadership of a qualified auditor. The number of chains of custody audits in</p>	
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				<p>training can be reduced by two (02) audits for auditors that are qualified for ISO 9001 or 14001 auditing in the sector of forest based and related industries;</p> <p>c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems;</p> <p>d) The certification body shall ensure that auditors, in the last two years, have participated in an education programme in chain of custody of forest -based products that is recognised by the PEFC Council or the Vietnam Forest Certification Office;</p> <p>e) The certification body shall ensure that auditors applicable international treaties and conventions relating to forest products trade (CITES) and Viet Nam specific forest governance and law enforcement system relevant to the harvestation, transportation, processing and consumption of timber and forest base products to ensure the legal management and traceability of timber and forest base products</p> <p>f) The certification body shall ensure that auditors demonstrate ability to apply terminology, knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas of the</p>		
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					<p>chain of custody of forest- based products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principles and requirements for each indicator, criteria and standards of chain of custody systems; - Process and application of management systems to manage input materials and output products for traceability of raw materials; - Information systems and technology for authorisation, security, distribution and control of documents, data and records; - Knowledge of using VFCS certified products in product labels and claims. 		
8.	Does the scheme documentation require that the auditors must fulfil the general criteria of ISO 19011 for Quality Management Systems auditors or for Environmental Management Systems auditors?	Annex 6, 3.2	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 11 – bullet b Section V – point 11 – bullet b	<p>11. Auditors involved in the certification activities</p> <p>b) For a first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditors within the last three years has performed forest management audits for at least four organizations under the leadership of a qualified auditor;</p> <p>11. Auditors involved in the Certification activities</p> <p>b) For a first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor within the last three years has</p>	Should be bullet c) for both FM and CoC c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnam standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems; The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

					performed chain of custody audits for at least four organisations under the leadership of a qualified auditor. The number of chains of custody audits in training can be reduced by two (02) audits for auditors that are qualified for ISO 9001 or 14001 auditing in the sector of forest based and related industries;		
9.	Does the scheme documentation include additional qualification requirements for auditors carrying out forest management or chain of custody audits? [*1]	Annex 6, 3.2	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 11 – bullet d and e Section V – point 11 – bullet f	11. Auditors involved in the certification activities d) Knowledge and understanding of the principles, criteria and indicators of the sustainable forest management standard VFCS ST 1003:2019 and group forest management standard, VFCS ST 1004:2019; e) Understanding of Forestry Law, decrees, circulars and relevant documents of the Forestry Law. 11. Auditors involved in the Certification activities	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

				<p>f) The certification body shall ensure that auditors demonstrate ability to apply terminology, knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas of the chain of custody of forest- based products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principles and requirements for each indicator, criteria and standards of chain of custody systems; - Process and application of management systems to manage input materials and output products for traceability of raw materials; - Information systems and technology for authorisation, security, distribution and control of documents, data and records; - Knowledge of using VFCS certified products in product labels and claims. 		
<p>Certification procedures</p>						

10.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies shall have established internal procedures for forest management and/or chain of custody certification?	Annex 6, 4	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 3 Section V – point 3	3. The Certification Body shall have internal procedures and guidelines for activities of forest management certification. 3. The Certification Body shall have internal procedures and guidelines for activities of chain of custody certification.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
11.	Does the scheme documentation require that applied certification procedures for forest management certification or chain of custody certification against a scheme specific chain of custody standard shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements defined in ISO 17021 or ISO Guide 65?	Annex 6, 4	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 2 Section V – point 2	2. The certification body operating forest management certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall have a management system and operational capacity which meets the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015, Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015 on Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Requirements. 2. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065:	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

					2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.		
12.	Does the scheme documentation require that applied certification procedures for chain of custody certification against Annex 4 shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements defined in ISO Guide 65?	Annex 6, 4	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section V – point 2	2. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.		

13.	Does the scheme documentation require that applied auditing procedures shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements of ISO 19011?	Annex 6, 4	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 11 – bullet c Section V – point 11 – bullet c	11. Auditors involved in the certification activities c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnam standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems 11. Auditors involved in the Certification activities c) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems;	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
14.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body shall inform the relevant PEFC National Governing Body about all issued forest management and chain of custody certificates and changes concerning the validity and scope of these certificates?	Annex 6, 4	YES	Attachment 9_VFCS GD 1007_2019_Notification Procedures for Certification Bodies Annex III – Notification contract – Article 2	Article 2. Right and responsibility of Party B 7. Take responsibility to report the detailed information and status of certificates issued by CB to VFCS;	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

15.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body shall carry out controls of PEFC logo usage if the certified entity is a PEFC logo user?	Annex 6, 4	YES	<p>Attachment 9_VFCS GD</p> <p>1007_2019_Notification</p> <p>Procedures for Certification Bodies</p> <p>Annex III – Notification contract – Clause 9 – Article 2</p>	<p>Article 2. Right and responsibility of Party B</p> <p>3. Have the right to use VFCS Logo for promotion, advertisement and certification purpose in compliance with Logo VFCS usage rules (VFCS ST 1008:2009);</p> <p>8. Have responsibility to support the certified companies, forest owners to register the using of Logo VFCS;</p> <p>9. Have responsibility to check and monitor the using of Logo VFCS/PEFC of the certified companies, forest owners;</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
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16.	Does a maximum period for surveillance audits defined by the scheme documentation not exceed more than one year?	Annex 6, 4	NO	<p>Attachment 9_VFCS GD</p> <p>1007_2019_Notification</p> <p>Procedures for Certification Bodies</p> <p>Section V</p> <p>MoU has been signed between VFCS and BoA. On behalf of the VFCS, the BoA will monitor CB annually based on their internal procedures.</p>		<p>The MoU needs to be attached.</p> <p>This is not the correct reference. Requirements for maximum audit periods are found at:</p> <p>VFCS GD 1001:2019: Section 4.3 e) The validity of forest certification: Certifications of sustainable forest management, group forest management and chain of custody are valid for 05 years from the date of issue. Annually, the certification body is responsible for evaluating to maintain the certificate.</p>	Y
17	Does a maximum period for assessment audit not exceed five years for both forest management and chain of custody certifications?	Annex 6, 4	YES	<p>Attachment 9_VFCS GD</p> <p>1007_2019_Notification</p> <p>Procedures for Certification Bodies</p> <p>Annex III – Notification contract - Article 6</p>	<p>Article 6. The Validity of Contract</p> <p>- The contract between VFCS and the CB is valid for 5 years.</p> <p>- The contract enters into force when it has been signed by both parties.</p>	<p>This is not the correct reference. Requirements for maximum audit periods are found at:</p> <p>VFCS GD 1001:2019: Section 4.3 e) The validity of forest certification: Certifications of sustainable forest management, group forest management and chain of custody are valid for 05 years from the date of issue. Annually, the certification body is responsible for evaluating to maintain the certificate.</p>	Y

18	Does the scheme documentation include requirements for public availability of certification report summaries?	Annex 6, 4	YES	Attachment 9_VFCS GD 1007_2019_Notification Procedures for Certification Bodies Section V Annex III – Notification contract – Article 4	<p>Article 4. Confidentiality</p> <p>1. CB shall agree to publish their detailed information and data of certificates issued by CB on the VFCS website;</p> <p>2. The information that CB is providing to VFCS shall be informed to the FM and CoC certificate holders. This information (except for the revenue of certificate holders) will be published on the Website of VFCS and PEFC.</p> <p>3. The certification body is responsible to provide a summary of the audit report of FM and CoC certification to VFCS for announcement on the website.</p> <p>4. The information posted on the VFCS website regulated in bullet 1, 2 and 3 of this article is maintained even if this Contract expires and the two parties no longer cooperate.</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
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19	Does the scheme documentation include requirements for usage of information from external parties as the audit evidence?	Annex 6, 4	NO	<p>In the Attachment</p> <p>12_VFCS GD 1010 2019_VFCS Procedures for the Revolutions of Appeals and Complaints identifies that the resolution procedures are applicable to the following complaints and appeals against VFCS, as follows:</p> <p>a) Regulations in operating the VFCS related to requirements for the accreditation bodies, certification bodies and other organizations, individuals;</p> <p>b) VFCS Logo Usage rules;</p> <p>c) The standardsetting process for sustainable forest management and chain of custody standard against VFCS;</p> <p>d) Information security regulations in</p> <p>the certification bodies</p>		The scheme documentation does not include requirements for usage of information from external parties as audit evidence.	N
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			<p>notification contracts, VFCS Logo Use contracts.</p> <p>e) Activities between all stakeholders against VFCS;</p> <p>However, VFCSO will be based on the internal procedures of CB as described at Section IV and V, bullets 3 in terms of usage of information from external parties as the audit evidence.</p>			
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20.	Does the scheme documentation include additional requirements for certification procedures? [1]	Annex 6, 4	NO				NA
Accreditation procedures							
21.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies carrying out forest management and/or chain of custody certification shall be accredited by a national accreditation body?	Annex 6, 5	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 4 Section V – point 4	4. The certification body shall have a valid accreditation issued by Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)-Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, or other International accreditation bodies which are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for Accreditation. 4. The certification body shall have a valid accreditation issued by Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)-Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, or other International accreditation bodies which are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for Accreditation.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

22.	Does the scheme documentation require that an accredited certificate shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body?	Annex 6, 5	NO	Based on Accreditation Body		VFCS has underlined that a CB requires the valid accreditation of the appropriate bodies; and we therefore consider that this is a minor non-conformity.	Minor NC
23.	Does the scheme documentation require that the accreditation shall be issued by an accreditation body which is a part of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) umbrella or a member of IAF's special recognition regional groups and which implement procedures described in ISO 17011 and other documents recognised by the above mentioned organisations?	Annex 6, 5	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 4 Section V – point 4	4. The certification body shall have a valid accreditation issued by Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)-Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, or other International accreditation bodies which are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for Accreditation. 4. The certification body shall have a valid accreditation issued by Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)-Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, or other International accreditation bodies which are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for Accreditation.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y

24.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body undertake forest management or/and chain of custody certification against a scheme specific chain of custody standard as “accredited certification” based on ISO 17021 or ISO Guide 65 and the relevant forest management or chain of custody standard(s) shall be covered by the accreditation scope?	Annex 6, 5	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirements for Certification Bodies Section IV – point 2 Section V – point 2	<p>2. The certification body operating forest management certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall have a management system and operational capacity which meets the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015, Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015 on Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Requirements.</p> <p>2. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.</p>	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
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25.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body undertake chain of custody certification against Annex 4 as “accredited certification” based on ISO Guide 65?	Annex 6, 5	YES	VFCS ST 1006 -2019 Section V – point 2	2. The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme shall be management system and operational capacity which meet the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065: 2013 or Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17065:2013.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
26.	Does the scheme documentation include a mechanism for PEFC notification of certification bodies?	Annex 6, 6	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirement for Certification Bodies Notification process	Section IV 8. The certification body shall be notified by the Vietnam Forest Certification Office through a notified contract. Section V 8. The certification body shall be notified by the Vietnam Forest Certification Office.	The standard conforms to the requirements	Y
27.	Are the procedures for PEFC notification of certification bodies non-discriminatory?	Annex 6, 6	YES	Attachment 8_VFCS GD 1006_2019_ Requirement for Certification Bodies Section 4.3.1	This reference appears to be incorrect	Notification is non-discriminatory.	Y

PART V: Standard and System Requirement Checklist for system specific Chain of custody standards – COMPLIANCE WITH PEFC ST PEFC 2002:2013

Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme has fully adopted PEFC ST 2002:2013 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements as part of the VFCS Scheme. Therefore, this part of the assessment is not applicable.

PART VI: Standard and System Requirement Checklist for scheme administration requirements

No	Question	Reference to PEFC GD 1004:2009	YES / NO*	Reference to application documents	TEXT	COMMENT	CONFORMS
PEFC Notification of certification bodies							
1.	Are procedures for the notification of certification bodies in place, which comply with chapter 5 of PEFC GD 1004:2009, Administration of PEFC scheme?	Chapter 5	YES		<p>5.1 The notifying body shall have written procedures for the PEFC notification which ensure that:</p> <p>a) the PEFC notified certification body is meeting the PEFC Council’s and PEFC endorsed scheme’s requirements for certification bodies,</p> <p><i>The authorised body – VFCO -- is the PEFC National Governing Body operating within its country.</i></p> <p>b) the scope of the PEFC notification, i.e. type of certification (forest management or chain of custody certification), certification standards and the country covered by the notification, is clearly defined,</p> <p><i>The scope of the certification is defined in Appendix I, which clearly defines the type of certification for notification.</i></p> <p>c) the PEFC notification may be terminated by the notifying body in the case of the certification body’s non adherence to the conditions of the PEFC notification or in the case of the cancellation of the contract between the PEFC Council and the authorised body,</p>		Y

				<p><i>Article 3 stipulates contract termination, which can occur: "The notified contract is withdrawn in the following cases: The certification body does not meet the prescribed conditions;"</i></p> <p>d) the PEFC notification is based on a written contract between the notifying body and the PEFC notified certification body,</p> <p><i>A template contract is provided at Appendix III</i></p> <p>e) the PEFC notified certification body provides the notifying body with information on certified entities as required by the PEFC Registration System,</p> <p><i>The notified body "Take(s) responsibility to report the detailed information and status of certificates issued by CB to VFCA;"</i></p> <p>f) the PEFC notification does not include any discriminatory measures, such as the certification body's country of origin, affiliation to an association, etc.</p> <p><i>There are no discriminatory measures.</i></p> <p>5.2 The notifying body may charge a fee for the PEFC notification. The authorised body shall inform the PEFC Council about the level of its PEFC notification fees, when requested.</p> <p><i>The notifying body has published a fee schedule. "The notification and development fees are regulated at Appendix IV of this document, if there is any change in fee rate, VFCA will inform CB in writing 6 months in advance."</i></p>		
<p>PEFC Logo usage licensing</p>						

<p>2.</p>	<p>Are procedures for the issuance of PEFC Logo usage licenses in place, which comply with chapter 6 of PEFC GD 1004:2009, Administration of PEFC scheme?</p>	<p>Chapter 6</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>6.1.1 The PEFC Logo usage licence shall be issued to an individual legal entity based on the requirements of PEFC ST 2001:2008.</p> <p><i>Chapter 4 and 4.5. Ownership and PEFC Logo usage rights is based on Chapter 5 and the requirements of PEFC ST 2001:2008.</i></p> <p>6.1.2 The PEFC Council and authorised bodies may issue a PEFC Logo usage multi-licence to a holder of a multi-site chain of custody certificate, which covers the whole or a part of the multisite organisation provided that:</p> <p>a) the central office and the sites are a part of a single legal entity or b) the central office and the sites are a part of a single company with a single management and organisational structure.</p> <p><i>VFCS ST 1008:2019 does not allow for PEFC Logo usage multi-licenses.</i></p> <p>6.2 Issuance of PEFC Logo usage licences</p> <p>6.2.1 The licensing body shall have written procedures for the PEFC Logo licensing which ensure that:</p> <p>a) the PEFC Logo usage licence is based on a written contract between the licensing body and the PEFC Logo user,</p> <p><i>“Organizations using the VFCS Logo for other purposes (off-product) must obtain consent from the VFCS through a contract on the right to use the VFCS Logo (Appendix II, Process of licensing the use of VFCS GD 1009: 2019).”</i></p> <p>b) the PEFC logo user complies with the PEFC Logo usage rules (PEFC ST 2001:2008),</p> <p><i>“The logo user is obliged to use the VFCS/PEFC logo in accordance with the VFCS and PEFC Logo Use Rules and together with a registration number issued by the VFCS;”</i></p> <p>c) the scope of the PEFC Logo usage (logo usage groups) is clearly defined,</p>	<p>Y</p>
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				<p><i>The logo usage groups are in compliance with PEFC ST 2001:2008.</i></p> <p>d) the PEFC Logo usage licence can be terminated by the licensing body in the case of the PEFC Logo user's non adherence to the conditions of the PEFC logo usage rules (PEFC ST 2001:2008) or in the case of cancellation of the contract between the PEFC Council and the authorised body,</p> <p><i>The VFCO may revoke the contract temporarily with immediate effect while a suspicion of contravention of Article 3 of this contract or the VFCS/PEFC Logo Use Rules is being investigated;</i></p> <p>e) where unauthorised use has taken place, the PEFC Logo usage licence provides for contractual penalty of one fifth of the market value of the products to which the unauthorised logo use relates, unless the PEFC Logo user proves that such unauthorised use was unintentional. In the latter case, the penalty will be limited to 15,000 CHF.</p> <p><i>The VFCO may impose, in case of user group B and C, a contractual penalty of a CHF amount being one-fifth the market value of the products to which unauthorised on- or off-product logo use relates, unless the VFCS/PEFC logo user proves that such unauthorised use was unintentional. In the latter case the penalty will be limited to 300,000,000 VND (Three hundred million Vietnamese Dong).</i></p> <p>6.2.2 The licensing body shall have a mechanism for the investigation and enforcement of the compliance with PEFC Logo usage rules (PEFC ST 2001:2008) and shall take actions, including legal if necessary, to protect the PEFC Logo trademark.</p> <p><i>Have a right to monitor and handling activities in case Party B do not to comply with the requirements of using the VFCS Logo defined in VFCS ST 1008:2019 and PEFC Logo defined in PEFC ST 2001:2008 .</i></p>		
<p>Complaints and dispute procedures</p>						

<p>3.</p>	<p>Are complaint and dispute procedures go usage licenses in place, which comply with chapter 6 of PEFC GD 1004:2009, Administration of PEFC scheme?</p>		<p>YES</p>	<p>8.1 The PEFC Council and the authorised bodies shall have written procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the governance and administration of the PEFC scheme.</p> <p>8.2 Upon receipt of the complaint, the procedures shall provide for:</p> <p>a) acknowledgement of the complaint to the complainant,</p> <p><i>5.3 a) When received the complaint/appeal document of request for complaint/appeal resolution, the Viet Nam Forest Certification Office shall classify the information and will notify the confirmation of the resolution or refusal to resolve the complaint/appeal.</i></p> <p>b) gathering and verification of all necessary information, validation and impartial evaluation of the complaint, and decision making on the complaint,</p> <p><i>5.3 b) Organisations or persons named as responding parties shall have 20 working days, following the Secretariat's transmission to them of the dispute (and its supporting documents), to submit to the Secretariat their own response briefs(including the supporting documents and evidence not already presented by the complain ant).</i></p> <p><i>5.3 c)The Resolution of appeals and complaints Committee shall convene to analyze, discuss all the information and evidences within the dispute in an objective and impartial manner, and make its decision on the dispute</i></p> <p>c) formal communication of the decision on the complaint and the complaint handling process to the complainant and concerned parties,</p> <p><i>5.3 e) The Viet Nam Forest Certification Office will directly notify to the relevent parties of the results of complaint and appeals resolution results and public all information on the website of the Viet Nam Forest Certification System (vfcs.vnforest.org.vn).</i></p> <p>d) appropriate corrective and preventive actions.</p>	<p>Y</p>
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					<p><i>6.2 VFCO responsible for monitoring the resolution, handling complaints and appeals process and supervising the related parties on the capacity and experience of organizations and individuals operating in the VFCS.</i></p>	
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ANNEX B. RESULTS OF STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

The following stakeholder survey was sent to a total of 55 recipients (via email) that were a part of the standard development process.

VFCS STAKEHOLDER SURVEY AND CONSULTATION

Consultation

ITS Global will visit Hanoi from January 13 to January 17 to consult with stakeholders on the VFCS standard development.

We would like to speak to all stakeholders that participated in the VFCS development. Please email k.hegarty@itsglobal.net to arrange a time and location.

We will conduct consultations in English. Please inform us if you require translation services.

Survey

In 2019 the Vietnam Forest Certification Office (VFCO) submitted the VFCS standards to the PEFC (Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Standards) for endorsement.

PEFC requires that the VFCS standards conform with PEFC international standards and guidelines.

PEFC have commissioned - ITS Global - to complete the conformity assessment. ITS Global must complete a survey of stakeholders as part of this assessment. ITS Global would appreciate comments based on the following questionnaire.

Respondents may remain anonymous if preferred. The deadline for returning comments is December 24, 2019.

Additional comments can also be submitted to Khalil Hegarty at k.hegarty@itsglobal.net.

Questions

1. Name, organisation and postal address
2. Describe your relationship with VFCO.
3. When were you invited to participate in the VFCS standard development?
4. Were all stakeholders able to participate and contribute to the VFCS development?
5. Did VFCS provide you with the information you needed to contribute to the scheme development and revision?
6. Was the development and revision process well planned and structured?
7. Were your views appropriately considered during the development and revision process?
8. Was a consensus reached in the development of the certification criteria?
9. Did the participating stakeholders represent the range of interests in forest management in your country? If not, which other interests groups do you think should have participated?
10. Do you believe any specific aspects of the scheme deserve further consideration?

VFCS KHẢO SÁT VÀ TƯ VẤN CÁC BÊN LIÊN QUAN

Tư vấn

ITS Global sẽ đến Hà Nội từ ngày 13 tháng 1 đến ngày 17 tháng 1 để tham khảo ý kiến của các bên liên quan về phát triển tiêu chuẩn VFCS.

Chúng tôi xin trao đổi với tất cả các bên liên quan đã tham gia vào sự phát triển của VFCS. Vui lòng gửi email tới k.hegarty@itsglobal.net để sắp xếp thời gian và địa điểm.

Tham vấn bằng tiếng Anh. Xin vui lòng cho chúng tôi biết nếu bạn cần dịch vụ dịch thuật.

Khảo sát

Năm 2019, Văn phòng Chứng nhận Lâm nghiệp Việt Nam (VFCO) đã nộp các tiêu chuẩn VFCS cho PEFC (Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Standards) để chứng thực.

PEFC yêu cầu các tiêu chuẩn VFCS tuân thủ các tiêu chuẩn và hướng dẫn quốc tế PEFC.

PEFC đã ủy quyền ITS Global để hoàn thành việc đánh giá sự phù hợp.

ITS Global phải hoàn thành một cuộc khảo sát của các bên liên quan như là một phần của đánh giá này.

ITS Global muốn câu trả lời của bạn từ bảng câu hỏi sau đây.

Người trả lời có thể vẫn ẩn danh nếu được ưu tiên. Hạn chót trả lại bình luận là ngày 24 tháng 12 năm 2019.

Nhận xét bổ sung cũng có thể được gửi đến Khalil Hegarty tại k.hegarty@itsglobal.net.

Câu hỏi

1. Tên, tổ chức và địa chỉ bưu chính
2. Mô tả mối quan hệ của bạn với VFCO.
3. Khi nào bạn được mời tham gia phát triển tiêu chuẩn VFCS?
4. Tất cả các bên liên quan có thể tham gia và đóng góp vào sự phát triển của VFCS không?
5. VFCS có cung cấp cho bạn những thông tin cần thiết để đóng góp vào việc xây dựng và sửa đổi chương trình không?
6. Quá trình phát triển và sửa đổi đã được lên kế hoạch và có cấu trúc tốt không?
7. Quan điểm của bạn có được cân nhắc một cách thích hợp trong quá trình phát triển và sửa đổi không?
8. Đã đạt được sự đồng thuận trong việc phát triển các tiêu chí chứng nhận?
9. Các bên liên quan tham gia có đại diện cho phạm vi lợi ích trong quản lý rừng ở nước bạn không? Nếu không, bạn nghĩ các nhóm sở thích nào khác nên tham gia?
10. Bạn có tin rằng bất kỳ khía cạnh cụ thể nào của chương trình này xứng đáng được xem xét thêm?

SURVEY RESPONSE

As noted above, a total of 55 recipients were contacted with the survey. A total of 13 responses were received (24 per cent).

The answers to the survey were surprisingly uniform. All confirmed that they had been invited to participate in the standard development, with dates that matched those expressed in the standard development report.

All responders answered positively to questions 4 to 9.

Regarding question 10, most respondents did not think there were other aspects of the scheme that needed to be considered further, with the exception of the following two answers.

“Further consideration should be given to the criteria and indicators in Principle 5: Maintaining and improving the ecological and environmental function of forests and Principle 8: Protection of forests of ecological importance and multi-management biological form”

“I believe that the Certification Body of the system needs to further consideration.”

In addition, a number of responders indicated that because the system was not fully operational needs for consideration of other areas would be required in the future. Most were non-specific, with the exception of the following:

“I think there will be a need for future revision following emerging requirements, for example, it should consider environmental services provided by ecosystems (water regulation, soil erosion control, carbon sequestration etc.) And other cultural values. Most important is that the standards should promote sustainability in forest management practices and business”.

ANNEX C: RESULTS OF INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION

No responses were received for the international consultation process.

ANNEX D. INTERNAL REVIEW COMMENTS

06 August 2020

PEFC International Secretariat's "Internal Review" comments on ITS Global's report "Conformity assessment of the Vietnam Forest Certification Office Scheme for Sustainable Forest Management against the PEFC Council Requirements Final Draft Report | February 2020"

#	Report chapter / page	Type of comment (comment; question; editorial)	Assessor's report statement	Secretariat's comment	Assessor's response
1	3; p.8	Editorial	"VFCS submitted its standards to the PEFC Council for approval in June 2017"	The date is September 2019.	This was a typological error and has been corrected.
2	5; p.13	Comment	-	Please make sure the PEFC Logo is used properly, so with the licence number.	To ensure the logo is not being used incorrectly, the logo has been removed and replaced with a text box representing PEFC.
3	Annex A, 5.4 p.104	Comment	TBC during field assessment	Specify whether this has been clarified and the result	CONFORMS: The text has been replaced with text based on stakeholder interviews from the field assessment as follows: "The process documentation does not refer to a specific review or adjustment of the SDC. However, stakeholders confirmed during the field visit that no feedback was received on the standard-setting process, and that the nominations for the SDG were satisfactory."
4	Annex A, 5.5 d p.111	Comment	TBC during field assessment	Specify whether this has been clarified and the result	CONFORMS: The text has been replaced with the following: "The public consultation period

#	Report chapter / page	Type of comment (comment; question; editorial)	Assessor's report statement	Secretariat's comment	Assessor's response
					commenced on June 15 and continued until August 15. This was announced via the publication of a notice on the VAF website (screenshot sighted)."
5	Annex A, 5.10 p.118	Comment	TBC during field visit	Specify whether this has been clarified and the result	It was confirmed during the field visit that all documentation is on file at the VFCO website and available on request via the contact points provided.
6	Annex A, 5.11 p.119	Comment	TBC during field assessment	Specify whether this has been clarified and the result	CONFORMS: Text has been replaced with: "It was confirmed during the field visit that all documentation is on file at the VFCO website and available on request via the contact points provided."
7	Annex A, 5.12 p.119	Comment	TBC during field assessment	Specify whether this has been clarified and the result	CONFORMS: Text has been replaced with: The document "Bien ban hop dong thuan" (Meeting of Minutes for the final draft for formal approval) was sighted during the field assessment. It was confirmed with MARD that the evidence of consensus was the basis for approval."
8	p. 214 Part VI	Comment	-	Better clarify whether the system conforms	Completed; all conform

ANNEX E: REPORT ON THE FIELD ASSESSMENT

ITS Global undertook a field assessment in Vietnam between 13 January and 20 January 2020. The field assessment took place in the third week of the VFCS's comment period.

A summary of the field assessment itinerary is tabulated below.

SUNDAY JANUARY 12

11.40 ARRIVE HANOI NOI BAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

13.30 ARRIVE SUPER HOTEL CANDLE

287-301 Đội Cấn, Liễu Giai, Ba Đình, Hà Nội 10000

MONDAY JANUARY 13

07.30– 11.30 MEETING WITH VFCS REPRESENTATIVES

VFCS office at MARD

ITS Global briefing:

- PEFC Assessment process
- Overview of draft report findings

VFCS and ITS Global Joint Session

- Work through minor non-conformities
- Provide additional regulatory references
- Text/editorial edits
- Other queries

13.30 – 16.30 [Continue] MEETING WITH VFCS REPRESENTATIVES

Present: Khalil Hegarty, Richard Laity (PEFC SEA), Mr Cao Chi Cong (VN Forests), Dr Bui Chinh Nghia (VN Forests), Vo Trung Kien (PEFC SEA)

TUESDAY JANUARY 14

09.00 Board of Accreditation Stakeholder consultation: Mr Vu Xuan Thuy, Director, Board of Accreditation

13.00 NEPCON – Cu Van Ho via Skype Stakeholder consultation:

14.30 Lien Duong – SFMI, 114 Hoàng Quốc Việt, Cổ Nhuế, Từ Liêm, Hà Nội, Vietnam

17.30 Le Xuan Truong (meeting in Ngoc Ha) National University of Forestry

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15

07.30 Depart for field visit to pilot testing site in Son Duong

- 10.30 Arrive Son Duong
- Visits to: Water management or riparian zones, harvesting sites, log transport, nurseries or planting preparation, reforestation sites, community engagement activities.
- 16.00 Depart Son Duong

THURSDAY JANUARY 16

- 08.00 – Ngueyn Tu Kim: Vietnam Academy of Forest Sciences
- 10.00 Lan Anh – Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- 13.30 Mr. Hoàng Văn Long – Cooperative Alliance (VCA)
- 15.30 Mr. Đào Công Khanh (Sustainable Forest Management Initiative, NGO)

FRIDAY JANUARY 17

- 09.30 Depart Super Hotel Candle

STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS (ANONYMOUS)

Standard Development

Stakeholders generally expressed overall satisfaction with the standard development process. There were no stakeholders that felt they were excluded from the standard development process. Nor were there any stakeholders that felt that other stakeholders were excluded from the stakeholder process. There was no sense among any of the stakeholders that they were unable to make meaningful contributions; stakeholders also indicated that any comments made on the draft were taken seriously and in a large number of cases were reflected in the drafts.

Stakeholders verified the account of the standard development submitted in the Standard Development Report was accurate.

They also provided more detail on the stakeholder development process, and indicated that they thought the process was fair and transparent. They also were happy with the modalities used in the standard development, i.e. the splitting of groups into different technical working groups, with representatives from different stakeholder groups in each.

One common concern among stakeholders was that the language of the standard be made more understandable to those without a technical forestry background, and this was largely achieved.

Forest Management Standard

There were no major concerns with the forest management standard raised throughout the consultations.

The only concerns appeared to be among those who had experience with other forest management standards (i.e. Forest Stewardship Council certification). This was largely to do with the number of indicators for forest management, specifically for biodiversity and for forest protection.

However, there was a general recognition among all that the new standard represented both an alignment with government policy, and related to this, a compromise between more prescriptive standards for forest management and a standard that would facilitate the inclusion of a larger number of smaller farmers and forest operators within the standard.

Some stakeholders think there should be a different standard for smallholders, as there is some concern that they will not be able to meet the forest management standard.

Community Engagement

Stakeholders noted that there are already high levels of engagement between forestry companies and local communities via regularly held meetings at the provincial and sub-provincial level, specifically People's Committees at the commune level, and community presence on Forest Management Boards at the provincial level.

Implementation

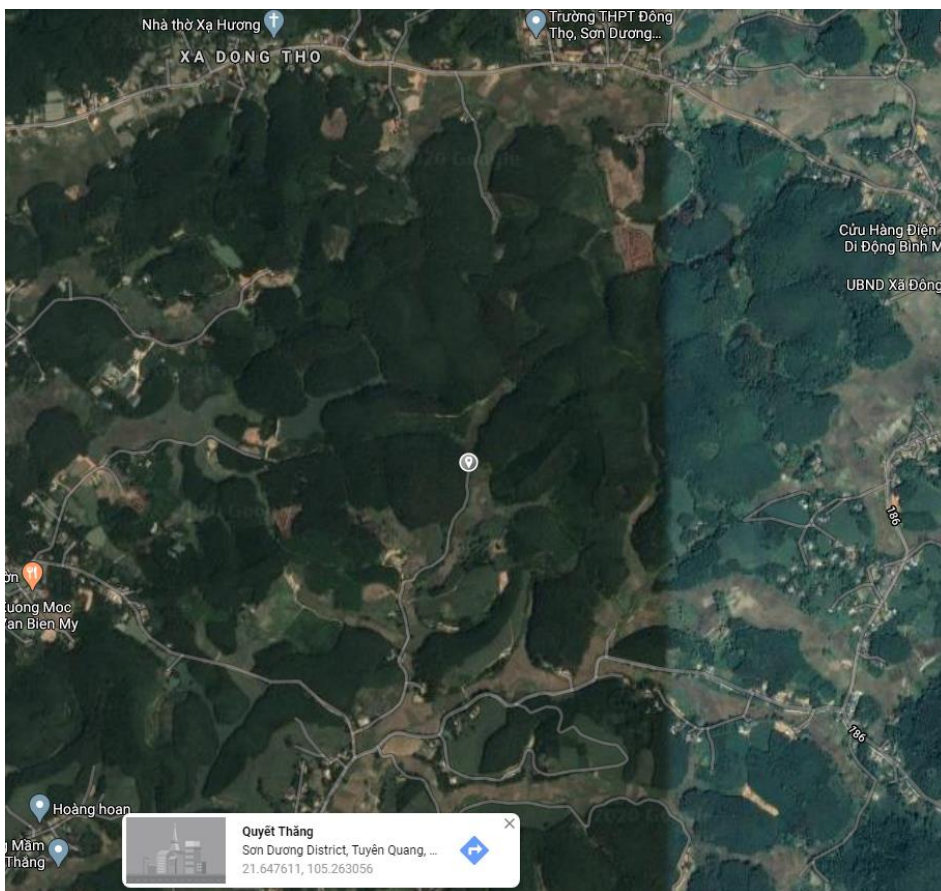
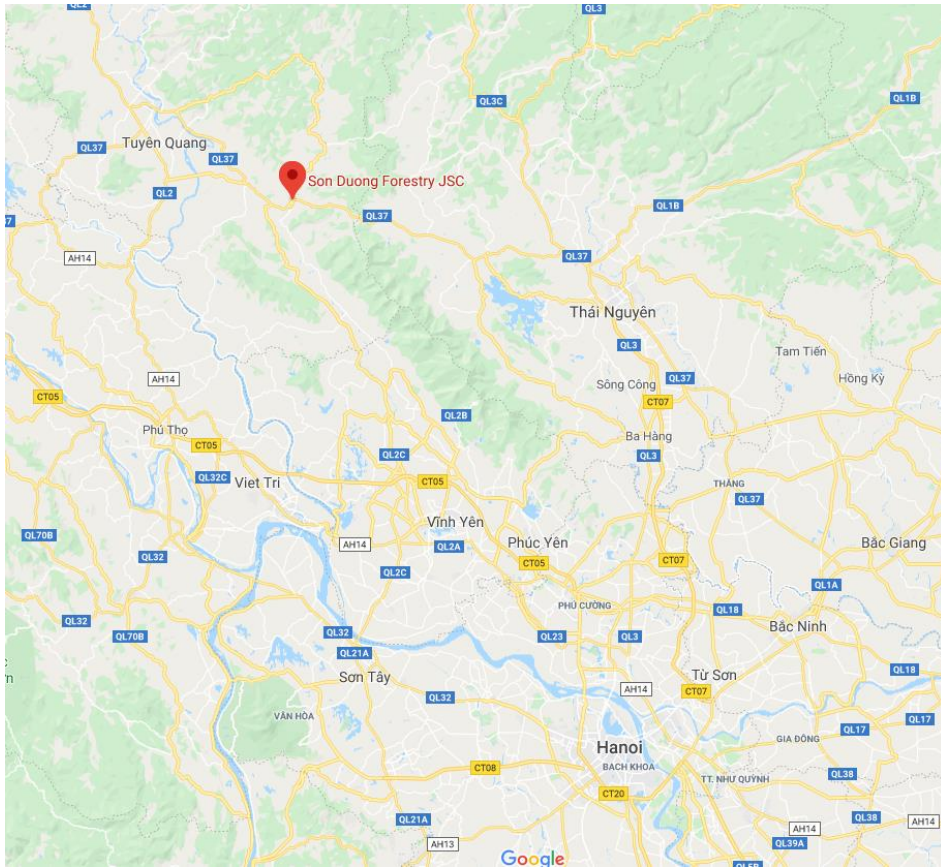
There was a broad concern among many stakeholders that although the standard is robust, there will be a gap in terms of implementing the standard, particularly when it comes to educating farmers in the standard, and having them maintain standards for the purposes of audits.

There is also a concern among some stakeholders that landscape management, particularly high-intensity mixed-use landscapes, and poor environmental practices of those outside of the forest sector (or farmers undertaking both forestry and agriculture) will prevent successful implementation of the standard.

SITE VISIT

ITS Global visited forest operations in Son Duong. The forest company is Son Duong Forestry JSC (Công Ty TNHH MTV Lâm Nghiệp Sơn Dương).

A map of the location of the company and the visit locations are below.



ITS Global undertook a visit to the company's head office, where a briefing was provided on the company's operations. ITS Global used the opportunity to ask company representatives about their involvement in the standard development.

It was intended that ITS Global undertake a site visit to operations that had been used for pilot testing. Due to a miscommunication, the site visited was not subject to pilot testing. It was, however, certified to FSC standards and can be considered typical by local standards. In lieu of this, ITS Global undertook an extensive consultation with the auditor of the VFCS pilot testing site.

ITS Global visited the company's operations, outlined below, with photographs:

Seedling nursery

The seedling nursery is used as a distribution point for the company's operations. It was noted that there is a large market for seedlings and seeds in local villages and towns, though seeds and seedlings in the open market are generally considered to be of lower quality.



Plantation area



Harvesting area

The harvesting area visited belonged to a contract farmer working for the company. The area had been harvested relatively recently, and afforestation activities had not commenced. It was noted that the local farmer had used fire and burnt the slash. This underlined a point that many stakeholders had made that farmer education may be a barrier to implementation.



Meeting with local community member

ITS Global met with a local community member who held harvesting rights to a relatively small plot of acacia mangium trees. She indicated that her and members of her local community had enjoyed significantly improved livelihoods since switching to acacia mangium, and that it was significantly more profitable than farming rice.



Riparian zone

ITS Global visited the riparian zone pictured below. It was noted that the mixed-use landscape did not permit tree-farming operations close to water sources. However, this did not necessarily prevent the establishment of other crops within those zones, which were allocated for agriculture. In this case, paddy rice.

