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QUẢN LÝ RỪNG BỀN VỮNG – CÁC YÊU CẦU

Sustainable forest management – Requirements

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Foreword

VFCS/PEFC ST 1003:2026 replaces VFCS/PEFC ST 1003:2019.

VFCS/PEFC ST 1003:2026 is an identical adoption of TCVN 14596:2025, *Sustainable forest management – Requirements*.

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Introduction

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) was officially recognized at the “Earth Summit” held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. SFM is understood as the implementation of appropriate forest governance measures, including policy, management, and technical requirements to achieve the sustainability of forest resources across economic, social and environmental aspects.

Over the times SFM has been expanded in many countries and has become one of the important requirements in national socio-economic development policies, aiming to ensure a balance between economic development and environmental protection, particularly in the context of the continuous decline in forest area in both quantity and quality, leading to biodiversity degradation, land degradation, and negative impacts on the livelihoods of forest-dependent local communities.

In response to the role and importance of forests in environmental protection, particularly in the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals on sustainable development and climate objectives under the Paris Agreement, countries and international organizations have established increasingly stringent requirements for the practice and certification of SFM. As a result, markets for forest products, especially those in developed countries, impose increasingly high requirements for SFM certification and forest product chain of custody to ensure legality, sustainability, and environmental integrity.

At the international level, there are currently two internationally recognized forest certification organizations, namely the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Both organizations are international non-governmental organizations. These organizations have developed and continuously enhanced standards and guidelines for SFM certification, chain of custody certification, and other types of certification to meet the requirements of forest product markets. The SFM standards of both systems set out requirements for legal compliance, respect for the rights of local communities, forest management, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, as well as monitoring and evaluation to ensure that forests are managed sustainably.

This standard is an identical adoption of TCVN 14596:2025, *Sustainable forest management – Requirements*, and serves as the SFM standard of VFCS, in accordance with the requirements of PEFC and it replaces standard VFCS/PEFC ST 1003:2019.

This standard specifies the requirements for SFM and serves as the basis for the assessment and certification of SFM within the framework of the VFCS and PEFC.

In this standard, the following verbal forms are used:

- "shall" and "shall not" are understood as mandatory requirements;
- "should" indicates a recommendation;
- "allow", "only allow" indicates permission.

1 Scope

This standard specifies requirements for sustainable forest management applicable to the owners of forests and managers of tree outside forests.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purpose of this standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 Terms and definitions related to forests and trees outside forests

3.1.1

Perennial industrial crops (cây công nghiệp lâu năm)

A type of crop that is planted once, grown and harvested for many years, the product is used as raw materials for industrial production or require processing before use.

EXAMPLE: Rubber trees, cocoa, coffee, tea, cashews, pepper...

3.1.2

Trees outside forests (cây ngoài rừng)

Woody trees that grow naturally or be planted on land outside the forestry planning.

Note 1: Trees outside forests, including: forestry trees; perennial industrial crops; perennial fruit trees; perennial multi-purpose trees; crops are scattered on land in home gardens, traffic corridors, riversides, canals, ditches, regional banks, plot banks, rice fields, and combined agriculture and forestry.

3.1.3

Forest environment services (dịch vụ môi trường rừng)

Activities providing the use values of the forest environment.

Note 1: Types of forest environmental services:

- a) Protect land, control soil erosion and sedimentation of the lakes, rivers and stream beds;
- b) Regulate and maintain water sources for production and social life;
- c) Carbon absorption and storage of forests; reducing greenhouse gas emissions from limiting deforestation and forest degradation, sustainable forest management, green growth;
- d) Protecting and maintaining the beauty of natural landscapes, preserving biodiversity of forest ecosystems for tourism services;
- dd) Supply of spawning grounds, food sources, natural breeds, water sources from forests and elements from the forest environment and ecosystem for aquaculture.

3.1.4

Ecosystem (hệ sinh thái)

Meaning a community of organisms and non-living elements interacting and metabolizing as a functional unit in a certain geographical area.

3.1.5

Non-forest ecosystem (hệ sinh thái không phải rừng)

The land does not meet the requirements for the definition of *forest* (3.1.11).

3.1.6

Ecologically important forest area (khu rừng có tầm quan trọng về sinh thái)

Forest areas:

- a) Containing protected, rare, sensitive, or representative forest ecosystems;
- b) Containing significant concentrations of endemic species and habitats of threatened species, as defined and recognized;
- c) Containing endangered or protected genetic in situ resources;
- d) Contributing to globally, regionally, and nationally significant large landscapes with natural distribution and abundance of naturally occurring species.

3.1.7

Forest products (lâm sản)

Products harvested from forests, including forest plants, forest animals, and other forest organisms, including timber, non-wood forest products, processed timber products, rattan, bamboo.

3.1.8

Non-wood forest products (lâm sản ngoài gỗ)

Products consisting of goods of biological origin, non-wood, harvested from forests.

3.1.9

Non-wood products from trees outside forests (lâm sản ngoài gỗ từ cây ngoài rừng)

Products consisting of goods of biological origin, non-wood, harvested from TOFs.

3.1.10

Gene source (nguồn gen)

Species of organisms, genetic specimens in protected areas, biodiversity conservation facilities, scientific research and technological development facilities and in nature.

3.1.11

Forest (rừng)

An ecosystem consists of forest flora and fauna, fungi, microorganisms, forestland and other environmental factors in which the main component is one or some species of trees, bamboo or palms with the height is determined according to the flora distributed on soil and rocky mountain, wetland, sandy area or other typical vegetation; with minimum block area of 0.3 ha; minimum tree canopy of 0.1; or trees are able to reach these thresholds in its hat distribution area.

Note 1: Tree height in accordance with the forestry law.

Note 2: The above thresholds are the regulations on shade and height.

3.1.12

Planted forest (rừng trồng)

Forests are established by human activities on non-forested land; improvement of natural forests; replanting or regeneration of planted forest after harvesting.

3.1.13

Natural forest (rừng tự nhiên)

Forest that is available in nature or restored by natural regeneration or regeneration with additional afforestation.

3.1.14

Forest degradation (suy thoái rừng)

The degradation of forest ecosystems, which reduces the function of forests, including the conversion of natural forests to plantations, or the replantation of perennial woody trees.

3.2 Terms and definitions related to management of forests and trees outside forests

3.2.1

Labor safety (an toàn lao động)

Solutions to prevent and control the impacts of hazardous factors in order to ensure that no occupational injuries or fatalities occur during the working process.

3.2.2

Biodiversity conservation (bảo tồn đa dạng sinh học)

The protection of the richness of important, unique or representative natural ecosystems; the protection of natural habitats that are permanent or seasonal for wild species, environmental landscapes, and unique natural beauty; the breeding, planting, and caring for species included in the List of endangered, precious and rare species prioritized for protection; the long-term preservation and maintenance of genetic specimens.

3.2.3

Stakeholders (bên liên quan)

Individual or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity.

[TCVN ISO 9000:2015 (ISO 9000:2015), 3.2.3]

3.2.4

Silvicultural measures (biện pháp lâm sinh)

Technical measures affecting forests to restore and manage forests according to defined objectives.

Note 1: Measures include:

- a) Zoning to promote natural regeneration; zoning to promote natural regeneration with additional planting;
- b) Nurturing and enriching forests;
- c) Enhancing natural forests;
- d) Afforestation, replanting forests, tending and nurturing planted forests.

3.2.5

Hazardous wastes (chất thải nguy hại)

Waste may contain toxic, flammable, explosive, corrosive, infectious elements and other hazardous factors that pose a threat to the environment and human health.

[SOURCE: TCVN 6706:2009, 2.1]

3.2.6

Manager of trees outside forest (chủ quản lý cây ngoài rừng)

Organizations and individuals have the lawful right to use land for planting and managing *trees outside forests* (3.1.2).

3.2.7

Forest owner (chủ rừng)

Organizations, households, individuals and local communities that are allocated or leased forests by the Government; land allocation or lease of land for afforestation; self-restoration and development of forests; receiving the transfer, donation or inheritance of forests in accordance with law; organizations and individuals have lawful rights to forest management and business.

Note 1: Forest owners include:

- a) Special-use forest management boards and protection forest management boards;
- b) Economic organizations, including enterprises, cooperatives, unions of cooperatives and other economic organizations established and operating in accordance with the law;
- c) Units of the people's armed forces that are allocated forests;
- d) Organizations engaged in forestry-related science and technology, vocational training and education;
- đ) Domestic households and individuals;
- e) Residential local communities;
- g) Foreign-invested enterprises that are leased land by the State for planting production forests;
- h) Other organizations and individuals having lawful land use rights and forest use rights.

3.2.8

Group entity (chủ thể nhóm)

Organizations with legal person status established in accordance with law, representing forest owners who are individuals and households performing *group forest management* (3.2.18), are responsible for organizing forest management to ensure compliance with requirements on sustainable forest management.

Note 1: Group subjects can be management agencies, enterprises, cooperatives, cooperative unions, socio-professional organizations, etc.

3.2.9

Forest conversion to other land use (chuyển đổi rừng sang mục đích khác)

Direct human activity to convert forested land to non-agricultural land.

3.2.10

Forest conversion to agricultural use (chuyển đổi rừng sang mục đích sản xuất nông nghiệp)

Conversion of land with forest cover to *agricultural use* (3.2.19), whether due to human intervention or not.

Note 1: Regeneration by planting or direct seeding and/or promoting natural regeneration, using species that were predominantly harvested or other species present in the mixed-species forest structure previously, is not considered conversion of forest to agricultural use.

3.2.11

Community (cộng đồng dân cư)

Local communities of people living in the same villages, hamlets, residential groups and other residential areas who have the same customs.

3.2.12

Forestry activities (hoạt động lâm nghiệp)

One or more activities of forest management, protection, development, harvesting and utilization; processing and trading of forest products.

3.2.13

Management system (hệ thống quản lý)

The set of interrelated or interacting elements of an organization to establish policies, goals, and processes to achieve those goals.

[SOURCE: TCVN ISO 9000:2015 (ISO 9000:2015), 3.5.3]

3.2.14

Site (lập địa)

The habitat of plants is affected by external factors that act on them.

[SOURCE: TCVN 12630-1:2019, 3.1, amended – "forest trees" are replaced by "plants"]

3.2.15

Hazardous waste management (quản lý chất thải nguy hại)

Activities to control hazardous waste throughout the process from generation to collection, storage, transportation, treatment, and destruction of hazardous waste.

[SOURCE: TCVN 6706:2009, 2.2]

3.2.16

Site management of planted forest (quản lý lập địa rừng trồng)

All *silvicultural measures* (3.2.4) in planted forest management aim to maintain the elements that constitute the settlement, in accordance with natural conditions, and ensure the stable maintenance of the production productivity of the site.

Note 1: Within the scope of planted forest management activities, site management is understood as soil fertility management, including the synthesis of technical measures on vegetation treatment before planting, management of organic materials after harvesting, soil tillage techniques, care and management of soil nutrients to meet the needs of forest trees to maintain and enhance soil fertility and yield of planted forests through many business cycles.

3.2.17

Sustainable forest management (quản lý rừng bền vững)

Forest management methods that ensure the achievement of forest protection and development objectives without declining values and enhancing the forest value, improving livelihoods, protecting the environment and contributing to maintain the national security.

3.2.18

Group forest management (quản lý rừng theo nhóm)

The mode of forest management in which small-scale forest owners (forest owners are individuals and households) associate with each other or association with organizations or forest owners are organizations through *group entity* (3.2.8) to manage forests.

3.2.19

Agricultural use (sản xuất nông nghiệp)

The use of land for agricultural production purposes, including annual crops, perennial crops, aquaculture, intensive livestock farming, salt making and other production areas.

3.2.20

Customs (tập quán)

The Code of Conduct has clear contents to determine the rights and obligations of individuals and legal entities in specific civil relations, which are formed and repeated many times over a long period of time, widely recognized and applied in a region, region, ethnic group, etc. residential local communities or in a civil sector.

3.2.21

Belief (tín ngưỡng)

Human beliefs are expressed through rituals associated with traditional customs and practices to bring spiritual peace to individuals and local communities.

3.2.22

Land dispute (tranh chấp đất đai)

Disputes over the rights and obligations of land users between two or more parties in land relations.

4 Requirements for sustainable forest management

4.1 Compliance with laws and international conventions

4.1.1 Land and forest use rights

4.1.1.1 Forest owners shall have documents proving the lawful rights to use land and forests.

NOTE: Legal documents include:

- a) Certificate of land use rights;
- b) Decision on land allocation;
- c) Decision on forest allocation;
- d) Decision on land and forest allocation;
- đ) Decision on forest allocation associated with land allocation or land lease;
- e) Decision on land lease;
- g) Decision on land allocation or land lease;
- h) Contract on forest plantation land assignment with another forest owner;
- i) Contract on land lease or borrowing;
- k) Contract on joint venture or cooperation in production;
- l) Forest register book;
- m) Document by the commune-level People's Committee confirm that land use without dispute;
- n) Other documents as prescribed by law.

4.1.1.2 In the case of land and forest are used according to customary or traditional rights, forest owners shall ensure to be no dispute.

4.1.1.3 Forest owners shall clearly define the boundaries of land and forests on the map and in the field.

4.1.2 Functions, obligations, assigned tasks or business registration licenses

4.1.2.1 Forest owners shall comply with the functions, tasks, and production and business as registered. This requirement is not mandatory for forest owners who are households, individuals or residential local communities.

4.1.2.2 Forest owners shall archive and update all records and documents associated with management, production and business activities of forest owners.

4.1.2.3 Forest owners shall take measures to prevent corruption.

4.1.2.4 Forest owners shall comply with regulations on taxes, fees, trade and customs.

4.1.2.5 In case the payable amounts have not been fully paid as prescribed, the forest owner shall have a plan for reimbursement and be certified by the functional agency.

4.1.3 Sustainable forest management and legal forest product origin

4.1.3.1 Forest owners shall develop the SFM plan according to the prescribed form. Forest owners are individuals, households and local communities that implement forest management in groups, and group entity are responsible for organizing the SFM plan establishment.

4.1.3.2 Forest owners shall publicize a summary of the SFM plan. The disclosure of personal and business information of forest owners and other information shall comply with the provisions of the law on information security. The summary shall include the main contents of the management plan and the map of the area where the management plan is implemented. In case of implementing forest management in groups, the group subjects shall publicize the summary of the forest management plan.

4.1.3.3 Forest owners shall have measures to prevent prohibited forestry activities.

4.1.3.4 Forest owners shall coordinate with competent agencies and local administrations in identifying, controlling and preventing prohibited acts in forestry activities.

4.1.3.5 Forest owners shall comply with the law on the breeding, planting, harvesting, utilization, and trading of endangered, precious, and rare forest flora and fauna.

4.1.3.6 Forest owners shall comply with the law on dossiers, processes, and procedures for harvesting and management of forest products.

4.1.3.7 Forest owners shall archive all records for cases of violation for at least the last 5 years.

4.1.4 International conventions

4.1.4.1 Forest owners shall comply with the laws and the guidance of competent agencies on international treaties, including the basic conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other relevant conventions.

NOTE 1: The ILO Fundamental Conventions consist of eight conventions (ILO 29^[16], 87^[17], 98^[18], 100^[19], 105^[20], 111^[21], 138^[22] and 182^[23]) which are defined by the ILO as "fundamental" on principles and rights in the workplace such as the right to freedom of association and recognition of workers' input, not to use forced or coerced labor in any form, not to use child labor, not to discriminate in employment and occupation.

NOTE 2: Other relevant conventions include: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) ^[24], Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP)^[26], Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)^[15], Convention on Combating Desertification^[25].

4.2 Respect the rights of local community and people

4.2.1 Ensuring the legal land and forest use rights of local community and people

4.2.1.1 Forest owners shall respect all legal forest and land use rights of local community and local people to manage and use land and forest; In coordination with the local communities, local people, and other relevant stakeholders identify on maps and in the field the areas associated with their

customary livelihood practices, such as the collection of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) and the provision of water for domestic and production purposes; shall have management plan and be incorporated into the SFM plan for these identified areas.

4.2.1.2 Forest owners shall clarify and have agreement on land and forest boundaries between local communities, local people, and forest owners.

4.2.1.3 Forest owners shall give priority to local communities and local people to undertake their legal activities on their land and forests.

4.2.2 Resolve all disputes over ownership and use-rights of forest and land

4.2.2.1 Forest owners shall have appropriate mechanisms and measures to settle disputes over ownership and use rights of forest and land in accordance with laws. This requirement is not mandatory for forest owners who are households, individuals or local communities.

4.2.2.2 Forest owners shall archive all records of disputes for at least the last five years.

4.2.3. Create employment opportunities and enhance livelihoods for local communities and people and ensure human rights

4.2.3.1 Forest owners shall give priority to local communities and local people to participate in forest activities and enhance their livelihood. This requirement is not mandatory for forest owners who are households, individuals or local communities.

4.2.3.2 Forest owners shall not violate the laws on human rights of local communities and local people.

4.2.4 Meet the basic cultural, belief and recreational needs of local community and people associated with land and forests

4.2.4.1 Forest owners shall work closely with local communities, people and other stakeholders to identify significant areas of cultural, belief and recreation on maps and in the field under the management of forest owners; Shall have a management plan of these areas and it shall be incorporated into a sustainable forest management plan based on consultation with local local communities and stakeholders.

4.2.4.2 Forest owners shall have regulations for management, protection, and use of identified significant areas of cultural, belief, and recreational value in consultation with local community, local people, and stakeholders.

4.2.5 Comply with the laws on disputes and complaints settlement

4.2.5.1 Forest owners shall ensure the principle of “Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)” when implementing activities in areas affecting local communities, ethnic minorities, and local people.

NOTE: “Free” means that decisions made during the FPIC process are not subject to coercion. “Prior” refers to ensuring that local people have sufficient time to receive and process information to reach consensus in decision-making. “Informed” means that local people are provided with accurate, clear, and complete information in their own language.

4.2.5.2 Forest owners shall identify the potential negative impacts of each forestry activity on the livelihoods, health, land, forests and other assets of local communities, ethnic minorities and local people.

4.2.5.3 Forest owners shall have measures to prevent adverse impacts on local local communities and people when implementing forest management activities.

4.2.5.4 Forest owners shall have all mechanisms and measures to settle complaints and disputes; and shall compensate for damage to local communities, ethnic minorities and local people.

4.2.5.5 Forest owners shall pay compensation for damage to local communities, ethnic minorities and local people in accordance with law.

4.2.5.6 Forest owners shall support the technical infrastructure maintenance for localities when use them for forestry activities and shall provide additional support to upgrade these infrastructures if applicable.

4.2.5.7 Forest owners shall archive all records on disputes, complaints and compensation for damages for at least the last 5 years.

4.3 Ensure the rights and working conditions for the workers

4.3.1 Ensure fairness, rights and interests of workers (including contractors' workers)

4.3.1.1 Forest owners shall have and strictly perform labor contracts with laborers or their representatives in accordance with law.

4.3.1.2 Forest owners shall comply with regulations on the employment of minor laborers, disabled laborers and elderly laborers.

4.3.1.3 Forest owners shall not allow to participate in or forced or compulsory labour in any form.

4.3.1.4 Forest owners shall implement gender equality in recruitment, training, payment of salaries and social welfare in accordance with law.

4.3.2 Ensure working conditions for workers (including labors of contractors)

4.3.2.1 Forest owners shall equip and instruct workers to use occupational safety protection tools suitable to working conditions.

4.3.2.2 Forest owners shall instruct workers to use and preserve supplies and equipment that are easy to cause accidents and endanger life and health.

4.3.2.3 Forest owners shall instruct workers to use chemicals to ensure occupational health and safety for their health.

4.3.2.4 Forest owners shall train workers on occupational safety.

4.3.3 Respect the participation right in labor union organizations and other rights from agreement between workers and employers, human rights

4.3.3.1 Forest owners shall give favorable conditions for labors to participate in trade union

organizations. This requirement is not mandatory for forest owners who are households, individuals or local communities.

4.3.3.2 Forest owners shall develop and comply with principles on democracy, collecting opinions of labors on issues associated with their working conditions and life. This requirement is not mandatory for forest owners who are households, individuals or local communities.

4.3.3.3 Forest owners shall not violate the legal laws on human rights for workers and other lawful agreements between workers and employers.

4.3.4 Resolve complaints and compensate the damages to workers

4.3.4.1 Forest owners shall have all mechanisms and maintain all mechanisms and measures to settle complaints and shall compensate for losses and damage to property, health and other lawful benefits to labors in lines with laws.

4.3.4.2 Forest owners shall have measures to prevent damage and loss of property and health to workers when carrying out forestry activities.

4.3.4.3 Forest owners shall pay compensation for damage to property, health and other lawful benefits to labors in accordance with law or agreements between the parties.

4.3.4.4 Forest owners shall archive all records of complaints and compensations for at least the last 5 years.

4.4 Manage, protect, develop and utilize forests

4.4.1 Implement forestry activities under the SFM plan

4.4.1.1 Forest owners shall implement activities according to the SFM plan and annual plan.

4.4.1.2 Forest owners shall update and adjust their SFM plans periodically or when there are changes in natural, socio-economic conditions, scientific and technological advances, policies and laws, from the results of monitoring and evaluation, but shall ensure the objectives of sustainable forest management.

4.4.1.3 Forest owners shall collect and store geographical coordinate information on timber and forest product harvesting areas.

NOTE: Geographical coordinate information of a land plot described by latitude and longitude coordinates corresponding to at least one latitude and one longitude point and using at least six decimal digits; for land plot of more than four hectares used for the production of forest and tree based products, this shall be provided using polygons with sufficient latitude and longitude points to describe the perimeter of each land plot.

4.4.1.4 Forest owners shall keep all records on the update and adjustment of the sustainable forest management plan for at least the last five years.

4.4.2 Produce and utilize plant cultivars

4.4.2.1 Forest owners shall implement trial and recognition of new cultivars in accordance with the laws on management of forestry plant cultivars.

4.4.2.2 Forest owners shall comply with legal laws on conditions for production and trading of cultivars, origins of cultivars, technical processes and environmental protection for seed production.

4.4.2.3 Forest owners shall ensure quality standards and origin of cultivars as prescribed by law in utilization of cultivars.

4.4.2.4 Forest owners shall comply with the legal laws on export and import of seeds.

4.4.3 Apply silvicultural measures according to the objectives of the SFM plan

4.4.3.1 Forest owners shall select plant species suitable to the site conditions and objectives of sustainable forest management.

4.4.3.2 Forest owners shall apply silvicultural techniques suitable to the characteristics of plant species, site conditions and business objectives.

4.4.3.3 Forest owners shall apply appropriate measures of site conditions management in the management of planted forests.

4.4.3.4 Forest owners shall apply silvicultural techniques to natural forests suitable to each type of forest according to their functions (protection, special-use, production), forest category, and forest condition.

4.4.4 Diversify management, production and business activities to enhance the benefits of forests

4.4.4.1 Forest owners should implement a variety of management, production and business activities based on scientific and technical and market information on forest products such as timber, non-wood forest products and forest environmental services.

4.4.4.2 Forest owners should plant and develop indigenous, multi-purpose tree species and non-wood forest products with high economic value.

4.4.4.3 Forest owners should diversify revenue sources from forests and forest environmental services.

4.4.4.4 Forest owners should link production with the value chain, marketing and consumption of forest products and forest environmental services.

4.4.5 Implement measures to prevent forest harmful diseases

4.4.5.1 Forest owners shall have a plan and implement measures for management and prevention of harmful forest diseases; shall give priority silvicultural and biological measures to minimize the use of chemical pesticides in plant protection.

4.4.5.2 Forest owners shall promptly notify the local authorities upon detecting outbreak for the forest harmful diseases for coordination of the needed actions.

4.4.5.3 Forest owners shall archive all records on forest harmful diseases for at least the last five years.

4.4.6 Implement forest fire prevention and fighting measures

4.4.6.1 Forest owners shall have a plan and implement measures for forest fire prevention and fighting.

4.4.6.2 Forest owners shall have and maintain forest fire prevention and fighting measures in accordance with laws.

4.4.6.3 Forest owners shall promptly notify the local authorities upon detecting forest fires for coordination of implementing needed actions.

4.4.6.4 Forest owners shall implement activities to raise the capacity of workers and awareness for local communities and local people in forest fire prevention and suppression. In case the forest owner is an individual, household or community that implements group forest management, the group entity shall organize the implementation of this requirement.

4.4.6.5 Forest owners shall archive all records of forest fires for at least the last 5 years.

4.4.7 Harvest forest products in a rational manner to maintain stable and long-term forest resources

4.4.7.1 Forest owners shall harvest forest products for each type of forest in compliance with laws.

4.4.7.2 Forest owners shall ensure that the annual harvest of forest products shall not exceed the average annual growth rate of the forest and shall be determined in the SFM plan.

4.4.7.3 Forest owners shall declare and archive all records on harvesting forest products in accordance with laws.

4.4.8 Construct and maintain technical infrastructures suitable to the management objectives and minimize environmental impacts

4.4.8.1 Forest owners shall have a plan and implement the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, culverts, transport roads, timber slides and timber yards in accordance with laws; The works are shown on the map. This requirement is not mandatory for forest owners who are households, individuals or residential local communities.

4.4.8.2 Forest owners shall ensure that the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, culverts, transport roads, timber slides and timber yards will not cause potential negative impacts on the environment.

4.5 Manage and protect environment within forestry activities

4.5.1 Conduct assessment of the impacts of forestry activities on the environment

4.5.1.1 Forest owners shall assess the positive and negative impacts on the environment potentially caused by all forestry activities according to the scale and intensity of the forestry activities.

4.5.1.2 Forest owners shall prepare a plan and implement the plan to prevent and minimize negative impacts on the environment before implementing forestry activities.

4.5.1.3 Forest owners should implement measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs)

and effectively use resources in forestry activities.

4.5.2 Implement measures to protect land and water sources in forestry activities

4.5.2.1 Forest owners shall identify on the field and map areas with soil and water protection functions, such as buffer zones along rivers, streams, ponds and lakes, wetlands, steep slopes and agricultural production areas.

NOTE: Wetlands are swamps, peatlands, areas permanently or seasonally inundated, including coastal and island areas not exceeding 6 meters in depth at the lowest tidal level.

4.5.2.2 Forest owners shall prepare a plan and implement measures to protect and restore vegetation in areas with the function of protecting soil and water sources identified in 4.5.2.1.

4.5.2.3 Forest owners shall identify possible negative impacts on soil and water sources in implementing forestry activities.

4.5.2.4 Forest owners shall develop and implement measures to mitigate negative impacts on soil and water sources.

4.5.2.5 Forest owners should give priority for forest planting and restoration on bare land, soil prone to erosion and degraded soil through appropriate soil protection techniques.

4.5.3. Manage and utilize pesticides, chemicals, petrol, oil and chemical fertilizers to ensure absolute safety to humans and environment

4.5.3.1 Forest owners are only allowed to use pesticides that are authorized in accordance with the laws; pesticides and chemicals will not contain ingredients that are prohibited under the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP)^[25] and List 1A and List 1B of the World Health Organization (WHO).

4.5.3.2 Forest owners shall ensure occupational health and safety and the environment in the transportation, storage from pesticides, chemicals, petrol, oil and chemical fertilizers.

4.5.3.3 Forest owners shall use or provide the manual to workers for using pesticides, chemicals, petrol, oil and chemical fertilizers to ensure occupational health and safety for the environment and humans in accordance with laws. In case of group forest management, the group entity shall provide training and guidance to all group members.

4.5.3.4 Forest owners need to control the utilization of chemical fertilizers and should use organic fertilizers and biofertilizers to increase soil fertility.

4.5.3.5 Forest owners shall understand and regularly update and disseminate to workers and stakeholders the list of prohibited pesticides and chemicals according to relevant laws, international treaties and WHO. In case of group forest management, the group entity shall understand and regularly update and shall provide training and guidance to all group members.

4.5.3.6 Forest owners shall record and store information on types, dosages, times and places of use of pesticides, chemicals and chemical fertilizers.

4.5.4 Manage hazardous waste to ensure safety for the environment and people

4.5.4.1 Forest owners shall minimize hazardous waste generated from forestry activities.

4.5.4.2 Forest owners shall control and collect packaging and hazardous waste after use to places that are safe for the environment and human health in accordance with laws.

4.5.4.3 Forest owners shall dispose of packaging and hazardous waste in accordance with the laws.

4.6 Maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity

4.6.1 Identify and protect ecologically important forest areas

4.6.1.1 Forest owners shall conduct forest inventory, mapping, and development of database, and consult stakeholders on ecologically important forest areas.

4.6.1.2 Forest owners shall prepare a plan and implement activities to protect or conserve ecologically important forest areas as defined in 4.6.1.1.

4.6.1.3 Forest owners shall prepare a plan and supervise the protection and conservation activities of ecologically important forest areas.

4.6.1.4 Forest owners shall comply with the laws on protection and conservation of ecologically important forest areas.

4.6.1.5 Forest owners shall update and adjust plans based on monitoring results.

4.6.1.6 Forest owners shall enhance the capacity of relevant workers and raise awareness among local community and local people about the protection and conservation of ecologically important forest areas.

4.6.1.7 Forest owners shall update and archive all records of ecologically important forest areas.

4.6.2 Implement activities to protect flora and fauna

4.6.2.1 Forest owners shall prepare a list and consult relevant stakeholders on endangered, precious and rare species of flora and fauna that need to be protected in accordance with laws.

4.6.2.2 Forest owners shall publicize and implement measures to protect identified species in need of protection and their habitats.

NOTE: Habitat means a geographical landscape composed of interacting ecosystems, formed under the influence of interactions among geology, topography, soil, climate, biology, and human activity within an area.

4.6.2.3 Forest owners shall update and archive all records of identified species in need of protection.

4.6.2.4 Forest owners shall have measures to prevent and supervise illegal hunting and logging activities.

4.6.2.5 Forest owners shall archive the necessary number and distribution of dead and fallen trees, hollow trees, old-growth forests and rare tree species to protect biodiversity and maintain the health

and stability of forests and surrounding ecosystems.

4.6.3 Implement measures to maintain and enhance the ecological value and biodiversity of forests

4.6.3.1 Forest owners shall apply appropriate silvicultural measures, shall give priority to use native tree species in forest restoration, enrichment and afforestation.

4.6.3.2 Forest owners need to prioritize mixed plantations to enhance biodiversity and forest sustainability.

NOTE: Mixed plantations are plantations with more than one crop species intercropping per unit area.

4.6.3.3 Forest owners shall not use genetically modified plants in forest plantations unless sufficient scientific evidence demonstrates that their impacts on humans, animals, and environmental health are equivalent to or more positive than those of conventionally bred enhanced tree species.

NOTE 1: Genetically modified plants are plants in which genetic material that has been altered occurs unnaturally through natural pollination and/or recombination, is plants whose genetic structure has been altered by transgenic technology.

NOTE 2: The following gene transfer techniques are considered to produce genetically modified trees^[27]:

- a) Recombinant nucleic acid techniques involving the formation of new combinations of genetic material by the insertion of nucleic acid molecules produced by whatever means outside an organism, into any virus, bacterial plasmid or other vector system and their incorporation into a host organism in which they do not naturally occur, but in which they are capable of continued propagation;
- b) Techniques involving the direct introduction of genetic material prepared outside the organism into the organism, including microinjection, macroinjection, and microencapsulation;
- c) Cell fusion techniques (including protoplasmic fusion) or hybridization in which living cells with new combinations of hereditary genetic material are formed through the fusion of two or more cells by methods that do not occur naturally.

NOTE 3: The following techniques are not considered genetically modified resulting in genetically modified trees^[27]:

- a) In vitro fertilization;
- b) Natural processes such as conjunction, loading, transformation;
- c) Polyploidy induction.

4.6.3.4 Forest owners shall implement measures and shall have agreements with local communities and local people to minimize the impact of grazing on forest regeneration, growth and biodiversity.

4.6.3.5 Forest owners shall reforest on bare land areas in accordance with forestry planning; natural forests shall be zoned for promotion of natural regeneration, natural regeneration with additional planting, or forest enrichment.

4.6.4 Control strictly exotic species to avoid negative impacts on forest ecosystems

4.6.4.1 Forest owners are not allowed to use exotic species that have a negative impact on the

environment and invasive alien species in accordance with laws.

4.6.4.2 Forest owners shall comply with the laws on the import of animals, plants, genetic resources and microorganisms.

4.6.4.3 Forest owners shall have preventive measures to control and avoid exotic species at the place where imported species are cultivated, avoiding encroachment to the outside.

4.6.4.4 Forest owners shall archive all records on the origin and use of exotic species for at least 5 years.

4.6.5 Conversion of forests and ecologically important forest areas

4.6.5.1 Forest owners shall not convert the forest to agricultural production purposes.

4.6.5.2 Forest owners shall not convert natural forests and ecologically important forest areas to planted forests or other purposes. In case the area is permitted to conversion, all the following conditions shall be satisfied at the same time:

- a) Complying with laws associated with 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 affected stakeholders;
- b) There are no negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas;
- c) Not causing negative impacts on areas with high carbon stocks;
- d) Contributing to the long-term conservation, economic and social benefits.

NOTE: Planted forest areas transformed from natural forests after 31/12/2010 are not granted SFM certificates.

4.6.5.3 Forest owners shall not plant forests in areas that are not forests but are of ecologically important areas. In case the area is permitted to plant forests, all of the following conditions shall be satisfied at the same time:

- a) Complying with laws associated with land use and forest management, approved land use planning, including consultation with stakeholders affected by afforestation activities;
- b) There are no negative impacts on threatened non-forest ecosystems (including vulnerable, rare or endangered ecosystems), areas of culturally and socially significant, critical habitats of threatened species or other conservation areas;
- c) Not causing negative impacts on areas with high carbon stocks;
- d) Contributing to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits.

NOTE: The area that is not forested but is of ecologically important area is:

- a) Containing protected, rare, vulnerable or typical non-forest ecosystems;
- b) There is a significant concentration of endemic species and habitats of threatened species, identified according to the recognized list;
- c) Containing genetic resources that are either threatened or protected in the natural environment;

d) Contributing to major landscapes of global, regional and national importance with the distribution and abundance of naturally occurring species.

4.6.5.4 Forest owners shall archive all description and evaluation documents on the conservation value of the converted areas (if any).

4.7 Monitor and evaluate SFM plan implementation

4.7.1 Prepare monitoring and evaluation plan for forestry activities

4.7.1.1 Forest owners shall identify monitoring and evaluation indicators; shall determine the progress and resources for forestry activities annually.

4.7.1.2 Forest owners shall prepare procedures, data collection templates, monitoring, and evaluation indicators aligning the SFM plan.

4.7.1.3 Forest owners shall make clear responsibilities for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

4.7.1.4 Forest owners shall prepare a plan and periodically implement internal evaluation, including frequency, methods, responsibilities, plan requirements, and reporting. The internal audit shall include a review of relevant processes and outcomes of previous audit.

4.7.1.5 Forest owners shall arrange appropriate and qualified personnel for internal evaluation.

4.7.1.6 Forest owners shall notify the results of the internal evaluation to the stakeholders.

4.7.1.7 Forest owners shall archive all records associated with monitoring and evaluation activities.

4.7.1.8 In case of the Group forest management, the group entity shall have responsibility for organizing the implementation of all the requirements specified in 4.7.1.1 to 4.7.1.7.

4.7.2 Monitoring and evaluating forestry activities

4.7.2.1 Forest owners shall prepare annual data monitoring, including harvested volumes of timber and non-wood forest products, changes in total area and growth of planted forests and non-wood forest products.

4.7.2.2 Forest owners shall prepare a 5-year periodic monitoring plan, including: timber growth, regeneration, and species composition of natural forests.

4.7.2.3 Forest owners shall have data and reports on the protection or conservation of forests of ecologically important forest areas and species in need of protection.

4.7.2.4 Forest owners shall monitor the situation of forest diseases and other unpredictable risks.

4.7.2.5 Forest owners shall monitor the environmental and social impacts of forestry activities.

4.7.2.6 Forest owners shall have annual data on the cost and income of forestry activities.

4.7.2.7 Forest owners shall report and publicize results of monitoring and auditing for implementation of the SFM plan.

4.7.2.8 Forest owners shall periodically monitor working conditions and make adjustments when

necessary.

4.7.2.9 In case of group forest management, the group entity shall have responsibility for organizing the implementation of all the requirements specified in 4.7.2.1 to 4.7.2.8.

4.7.3. Develop management systems and archiving all records on forest management and business and forest change monitoring maps

4.7.3.1 Forest owners shall have a system to manage forest data resource and a forest status map.

4.7.3.2 Forest owners shall have management system for forestry activities.

4.7.3.3 Forest owners shall have a system for managing forest product dossiers from the stage of harvesting, transportation, processing (if any) and trading products to ensure traceability of forest products in accordance with the forestry laws. This requirement shall be audited annually when conducting SFM certification audit.

4.7.3.4 In case of Group forest management, the group entity shall have responsibility for implementing all the requirements specified in 4.7.3.1 to 4.7.3.3.

4.7.4 Review and improve the management system

4.7.4.1 Forest owners shall conduct an annual review of the management system, which shall include at least the following contents:

- a) Status of enhancement actions from the last review of the management system;
- b) Internal and external changes on the management system;
- c) Information on the organization's performance results, including non-conformities and corrective actions, monitoring results, auditing results;
- d) Opportunities for enhancement of the management system.

4.7.4.2 Forest owners shall consider and enhance the management system based on the review results specified in 4.7.4.1.

4.7.4.3 Forest owners shall archive all records on the results of the annual review of the management system.

4.7.4.4 In case of group forest management, the group entity shall have responsibility for organizing the implementation of all the requirements specified in 4.7.4.1 to 4.7.4.3.

4.7.5 Implement corrective actions for non-conformities

4.7.5.1 When detecting non-conformities in forest management, forest owners shall:

- a) Make corrective actions as applicable:
 - 1) Take action to control and resolve the non-conformities;
 - 2) Handle the consequences and impacts caused by the non-conformities.
- b) Analyze and assess the need to take action to eliminate the causes of non-conformities to not

repeat or be allowed to happen where else based on the following information:

- 1) Identify the cause of the non-conformities;
- 2) Determine whether a similar non-conformity exists or could potentially occur and supplement the necessary action;
- 3) Review the effectiveness of the taken corrective action.

c) Consider changes to the management system, if necessary.

4.7.5.2 Forest owners shall ensure that corrective actions are appropriate to the effects of the encountered non-conformities.

4.7.5.3 Forest owners shall archive all records of non-conformities, corrective actions and remedial results.

4.7.5.4 In case of Group forest management, the group entity shall have responsibility for organizing the implementation of all the requirements specified in 4.7.5.1 to 4.7.5.3.

5 Requirements for sustainable management of trees outside forests

5.1 The area of trees outside forests

Areas of trees outside forests subject to sustainable management shall meet the following criteria:

- a) Having the objective of supplying timber and/or non-wood products;
- b) Being managed;
- c) Contributing to landscape maintenance, environmental and ecological protection.

5.2 Applying requirements for sustainable forest management to tree outside forests

5.2.1 For trees outside forests that are forestry trees, perennial industrial crops, perennial fruit and perennial multi-purpose trees, the managers of trees outside forests shall comply with all the requirements specified in Clause 4. The requirements in 4.1.3.1 and 4.7.3.3 are replaced by the following requirements:

- a) With 4.1.3.1: The managers of trees outside forests shall have a plan for sustainable management of trees outside the forests according to the form prescribed by the forestry laws.
- b) With 4.7.3.3: The managers of trees outside forests shall have a management system of product data from the stage of harvesting, transportation, processing (if any) and trading products to ensure traceability of products in accordance with the forestry laws. Harvesting from trees outside the forests shall require forest product records. This requirement shall be checked annually when conducting SFM certification audit.

5.2.2 For trees outside forests that are scattered on land in home gardens, traffic corridors, riversides, canals, ditches, banks, land plots, fields and combined agroforestry, the managers of trees outside forests shall comply with the requirements stated in Clause 4, except for the requirements specified in 4.2.5.2, 4.2.5.3, 4.2.5.4, 4.3.4.2, 4.4.3.2, 4.4.3.3, 4.4.3.4, 4.4.4.1, 4.4.4.2, 4.4.4.3, 4.4.4.4, 4.4.6.1, 4.4.6.2, 4.4.6.3, 4.4.6.4, 4.4.6.5, 4.4.7.2, 4.5.1.3, 4.5.2.3, 4.6.1.1, 4.6.1.2,

4.6.1.3, 4.6.1.4, 4.6.1.5, 4.6.1.6, 4.6.1.7, 4.6.2.5, 4.6.3.1, 4.6.3.2, 4.6.3.4, 4.6.3.5, 4.6.5.1, 4.6.5.1, 4.6.5.3, 4.7.2.2. The requirements in 4.1.3.1 and 4.7.3.3 are replaced by the following requirements:

a) With 4.1.3.1: The managers of trees outside forests shall have a plan for management of trees outside the forests, including the following information: current status of management of scattered trees, management objectives, volume of timber and non-wood products expected to be harvested, measures to minimize negative impacts on the environment.

b) With 4.7.3.3: There is a system for managing dossiers of products from trees outside the forests from the stage of harvesting, transportation, processing (if any) and trading products to ensure traceability of products in accordance with the forestry laws. Harvesting from trees outside the forests shall require forest product records. This requirement shall be checked annually when conducting SFM certification audit.

5.2.3 When applying the requirements stated in Clause 4 to trees outside forests, several terms and definitions are replaced as follows:

a) "managers of trees outside forests" replaces for "forest owner";

b) "trees outside forests area" substitutes for "forest", " trees outside forests planting area" substitutes "planted forest"; "planting trees outside forest" replaces "planting forests";

c) "Products from trees outside forests" substitutes for "forest products"; "non-wood products from trees outside forests" replaces "non-wood forest products";

d) "Activities associated with trees outside forest (planting, tending, management and harvesting)" replaces "forestry activities";

đ) "Plant cultivars" replaces "forestry plant cultivar ";

e) "Plan for sustainable management of trees outside forests " replaces "plan for management of trees outside forests " for trees outside forests that are forestry trees, perennial industrial crops, perennial fruit and perennial multi-purpose trees; "trees outside forests management plan" replaces the "management plan" for trees outside forests that are scattered plants on land in home gardens, traffic corridors, riversides, canals, ditches, banks, land plot, fields, and agroforestry.

References

- [1] Law on Occupational Safety and hygiene dated June 15, 2015;
- [2] Law on Environmental Protection dated November 17, 2020;
- [3] Law on Biodiversity dated November 13, 2008;
- [4] Land Law dated January 18, 2024;
- [5] Law on Forestry dated November 15, 2017;
- [6] Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated November 16, 2018 of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development regulating sustainable forest management;
- [7] Circular No. 13/2023/TT-BNNPTNT dated November 30, 2023 of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development amending and supplementing a number of articles of Circular No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated November 16, 2018 of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development regulating sustainable forest management;
- [8] VFCS/PEFC ST 1003:2019, *Bộ tiêu chuẩn quản lý rừng bền vững* (Sustainable Forest Management Standards);
- [9] PEFC ST 1003:2024, *Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements*;
- [10] PEFC ST 2002-1:2024, *Requirements for the Implementation of PEFC EUDR Due Diligence System (PEFC EUDR DDS)*;
- [11] FSC-STD-VN-01-2018, *The FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard of Vietnam*;
- [12] TCVN 12630-1:2019, *Bản đồ lập địa – Quy định trình bày và thể hiện nội dung – Phần 1: Bản đồ lập địa cấp I* (Site map – Regulations on layout and presentation of contents – Part 1: Site map class I);
- [13] TCVN 6706:2009, *Chất thải nguy hại – Phân loại* (Hazardous waste – Classification);
- [14] TCVN ISO 9000:2015 (ISO 9000:2015), *Hệ thống quản lý chất lượng – Cơ sở và từ vựng* (Quality Management System – Basis and Vocabulary);
- [15] CITES, *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*, 1973, as amended;
- [16] ILO No. 29, *Forced Labour Convention*, 1930;
- [17] ILO No. 87, *Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention*, 1948;
- [18] ILO No. 98, *Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention*, 1949;
- [19] ILO No. 100, *Equal Remuneration Convention*, 1951;
- [20] ILO No. 105, *Abolition of Forced Labour Convention*, 1957;
- [21] ILO No. 111, *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention*, 1958;
- [22] ILO No. 138, *Minimum Age Convention*, 1973;
- [23] ILO No. 182, *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention*, 1999;

- [24] United Nations, *Convention on Biological Diversity*, 1992;
 - [25] United Nations, *Convention to Combat Desertification*, 1992;
 - [26] *Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants*, 1998;
 - [27] Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 March 2001 on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms and repealing Council Directive 90/220/EEC - Commission Declaration;
 - [28] Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2023 on making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010.
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