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| ***Inspection procedure for forestry based company*** |

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# Introduction

European governmental policy – also due to international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol – has set up renewable energy target of 20% by 2020 and stimulate biomass use in the power, heat and transport sectors. According to the European Directives, European Governments encourage as well green power by granting support mechanisms under the form of green certificates or feed-in tariffs. This results in growing global demand for bio-energy resources originating from agriculture and forestry. But to effectively protect the environment a certification programme with a quality mark is necessary in order to guarantee that fossil fuels are substituted in a sustainable fashion by biomass.

Therefore, on behalf of Electrabel, Laborelec and SGS have put in place a certification procedure applied to each wood pellets production unit. This procedure requires at least:

* the evaluation of the **overall energy balance** for the supply of each biomass feedstock including needed fossil energy for making the biomass suitable (drying, pelletising, …) and transporting it up to the power plant: please note that in the case of by-products (i.e. residues), the evaluation of supply chain energy use starts only from the point where the by-products is created;
* the **full traceability of the resources** that were used for manufacturing the biomass and the evidence that those resources are **managed in a sustained way**.

The certification procedure relies on some key players. Saw mills are part of those players as far as woody biomass generation is concerned. Wood pellets manufacture is indeed often based upon residues originating from saw mills, and their activities play as well a role in the energetic balance of the whole supply chain as well as possible environmental, economical and social impacts.

This document is the procedure prepared for auditors to achieve independent audits on biomass processing site, with respect to sustainability principles.

# Administrative information

*Involved parties are here identified and data is collected to ensure traceability and level of competence*. *It also enables biomass identification sourcing.*

**Basic information on the inspection:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of the verification company** |  |
| **Date of audit (on site)** |  |
| **Certification (please indicate)** | * + ISO 17 011   + ISO 19011 (Guidelines adopted)   + EMAS   + National accreditation   + Other… |

*The table below gives information on the inspector(s)’ expertise level.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of the inspector** |  |
| **Training and professional background (description of relevant audits experiences)** |  |

**Basic information on the Forest management unit (FMU)[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Company :…………………………………………………………………………....………

Name of contact person : …………………...…………………………………………..……

Address :………………………………...…………………………………………………...

City :………………………………………………………Postcode :……………………....

Country : ………………………Tel :..……………………Fax :….……………..………….

e-mail address : ………………………………………………………………………..…….

# Please indicate site of production if different from company location

Name of contact person : …………………...…………………………………………..……

Address :………………………………...…………………………………………………...

City :………………………………………………………Postcode :……………………....

Country : ………………………Tel :..……………………Fax :….……………..………….

e-mail address : ………………………………………………………………………..…….

**Certification of the Forest management (if applicable)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If different documents exists please fill in different boxes | |
| Name of certification scheme [[2]](#footnote-2)  Reference number | ……………………………………………………………….  ………………………………………………………………. |
| Place and date of issue  Period of validity | …………………………….……………… , DD/MM/YYYY  From……………………to……….………, DD/MM/YYYY |
| Description of the surface of forest covered by the certificate (join map) | ……………………………………………………………….  ………………………………………………………………. |

# Scope of sustainability assessment of wood pelletS

This form involves the forestry part of the production.

## Description of the wood pellets production chain



The scope perimeter is limited to the wood production processes until the fringes of the forest. All activities within the forest management unit will be under the scope of the audit.



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Production stage** | **Description** |
| Raw material, primary product (possibly forests) | 1. Collection of the raw material (e.g. forest cultivation and exploitation) Alternatively, production of the primary product (e.g. sawlogs) via dedicated process. 2. Transport of the raw material (e.g. wood) to the processing industry to the biomass preparation unit (e.g. pellet plant). |
| Processing (e.g. wood-based) industry | 1. Drying process: The sawdust is dried until moisture content of 8 to 10% is reached. The drying is performed by means of a dryer that uses biomass, gas or fossil fuel as energy. 2. Sieving and milling of the dried wood dust (control of particle size). 3. Densification process: the dried wood is transformed into pellets and this phase might need some binding additives (e.g. lignin) 4. Cooling of the wood pellets 5. Transport of the secondary by-products to the biomass preparation unit (e.g. wood pellet factory) |
| Biomass preparation unit (e.g. wood pellet factory) | 1. Raw material storage at the pellet plant 2. Transformation of raw material into a final biomass product (e.g. pelletising) 3. Storage and handling of the final biomass product (warehouse) |

## Wood extraction scheme (harvesting, transport and storage)

*In this part, the inspector must describe the wood products extraction scheme. This must include equipments used and (if applicable) storage infrastructure. If transport occurs, the vehicles used must also be described.*



## Biomass sourcing: type and origin

*In the following table, the inspector must identify what are the harvested volumes (tonnages) of wood that are certified by the above-mentioned certification scheme(s). Mapping of the certified zones can be useful to essess this. Only the wood that will be sell for final bio-energy production needs to be identified.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| QUANTITIES ANG TYPE OF CERTIFIED OR UNCERTIFIED HARVESTED WOOD MATERIAL  Fill in according to the origin of all the woody raw materials used in the final product (expressed in Mass % of the final product).  Several options can be selected. | \_\_\_\_%  \_\_\_\_%  \_\_\_\_%  \_\_\_\_%  \_\_\_\_%  \_\_\_\_%  \_\_\_\_% | 🞎 Sanitary cuttings of forests  🞎 hard wood  🞎 soft wood  🞎 Timber wood  🞎 Short rotation coppices (cycle between 4 & 8 years)  🞎 Others, specify ………………………………… |

# CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT BASED ON CRAMER PRINCIPLES

This audit form is based on the Sustainability principles developed by the Cramer Commission in the Netherlands. It is designed to assist inspectors in the implementation of the verification criteria set by the NTA commission (last version published in February 2009).

Only the criteria that are relevant for the type of activities of the audited body have been selected and listed.

For a practical approach of these criteria, the NTA8080 document was adapted with elements retrieved from the QUALIFOR generic documents and special energy balance procedure developed by Laborelec. The structure of the document is as follows for the principles 2 t o10:

First principle on Carbon balance is mainly assessed following the experienced procedure of Laborelec-SGS.

For the other principles, the assessment will be based on the QUALIFOR and NTA inputs.

As it is required to assess the respect of all relevant local legislation (environmental: biodiversity, soil-water and air quality; social and economic), Appendix A provides guidelines for this legislation assessment. The inspector should verify that the needed documentation is made available and is part of a well-organized and updated documentation procedure. History of documentation should comply with regulatory requirements.

Stakeholder consultation is required, as part of the audit, if no official certification documents are provided (Guidance following ISO 19 011). If any FSC certificate covering the surfaces where the wood to be processed was harvested is provided, no further verification of the Principles 2 to 10 is needed.

## Principle 1:GHG and energy balance

### Overall energy consumption within the forest management unit

*The auditor must verify all data and comment on the following issues.*

* *Energy resources that are used on the raw material production site. If no energy consumption is needed, it must be justified.*
* *As there might be some intermediary platforms, any energy use on these must also be recorded.*
* *Energy consumption may be calculated trough different methods, which must be described.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Parameter** | **Description** |
| Comment on the energy resources that are used within the forest management unit (e.g. for maintenance, harvesting, transport):  Example :  electricity mix characterization, biomass, gasoil, gas,..  If no energy consumption is needed, then please justify |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Use of fuel (in transport within the FMU, in forest management operations):** | *Delete this part if not applicable.*  *Please make separate tables for transport and processing. Separate also the inventory of different types of fuel.* |
| - Fuel consumption (in MJ fuel per metric ton of biomass harvested): |  |
| * + - Explain **how** this energy consumption has been **evaluated** : | 🞎 invoices of fuel suppliers, on the following period: ……………………………..  🞎 fuel consumption of the harvesting and transport machinery (\_\_\_\_\_L/h)  🞎 a theoretical evaluation based upon specific consumptions of harvesting and transport machinery  🞎 other explanation:....................................................... |
| * + - Give the full calculation that lead to the energy consumption (expressed in kWh per metric ton of biomass produced).: | *In annex: Excel sheet* |

## Principle 2 : Carbon sinks in the soil and in the vegetation

Carbon stock, as well in the standing biomass as in the soil should be maintained through biomass production. This assessment is to be made within the boundaries of the biomass production area from which the wood will be extracted for final bio-energy use. Therefore, it is advisable for the Forest Managers to ensure suitable mapping of their forest management unit.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2.1. Forest management promotes conservation of above-ground carbon sinks (vegetation)** | | |
| An estimate of the standing biomass carbon stock should be made prior to any:   * Site conversion (planting, road construction) * Harvesting.   Forest management shall guarantee the renewal of the initial above-ground carbon stock within a period of 10 years of biomass production. The following procedures should be applied in the FMU.   * The producer can demonstrate the existence of a written management plan for past, present and future harvesting. * Rate of harvest, species selection, management prescriptions (for production and conservation zones), operational techniques and equipments are documented and justified. * Strategic and tactical/operational harvest planning and harvest operations should be carried out in accordance with national best practice guidelines (where these do not exist or are inadequate, for tropical high forest the FAO Model Code of Forest Harvesting Practice will apply). Techniques are designed to avoid log breakage, timber degrade and damage to the forest stand. * In SLIMF, sustainable harvest limits and regeneration plans (long term, at least one full rotation period for the whole of the FMU) are provided.   Monitoring information is readily available and in a format that facilitates effective auditing by third parties | Management plan and operational controls.  (management plans may consist of brief notes on forest characteristics, land use strategy and a map)  Checking the plan exists and contains all the information required.  Harvest and sales records and plans over the relevant time span.  Data on likely or actual growth rates of species harvested.  Timber resource planning, documented inventory.  Field observations of harvesting sites compared to areas planned for harvesting.  Maps of tree location  Interviews with Forest Managers, staff and local experts. Managers’ knowledge of local Best Operational Practices  Evidence of revised planning | Assessment | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2.1. Forest management promotes conservation of underground carbon sinks** | | |
| The biomass production doesn’t involve forest conversion in a land with high carbon stock, e.g. :   * wetlands, including pristine peatland, mangroves * long-term pasture land and grassland * continuously forested areas, that is to say land spanning more than 1 hectare with trees higher than 5 m and a canopy cover of more than 30%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ   Conversion of land for the proposed biomass production shall guarantee the renewal of the initial soil carbon stock in a period of 10 years.  Maps indicating soil carbon stock status should be prepared prior to:   * Site conversion (planting, road construction) * Harvesting.   *Maps with information on all soil types (FAO reference) in the plantation area that indicate their susceptibility to degradation from forest operations and appropriate plantation species.* | Checking the plan exists and contains all the information required.  Field checks that the plan has been implemented in the past and is currently still followed  Management plan, maps of specific areas and operational controls.  Interviews with Forest Managers, staff and local experts..  Evidence of revised planning | Assessment |

## Principle 3 : Food supply and local biomass applications aspects

Verification needed only if asked by the Government. The audited forest manager should cooperate through reporting on the following topics. *However, the information given could not lead to exclusion of certification.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Forest management must not endanger the food supply and local biomass applications** | | |
| Any impacts of forest management on local (indigenous) communities’ resources or tenure rights are identified and known by the Forest Manager (e.g. changes in land prices).  Local and indigenous people are explicitly informed of any impacts that forest management may have on their resources, e.g.:   * Food. * Raw material for energy. * Medicines. * Building materials.   Appropriate rights of access to local rights holders to areas of specific ecological importance is permitted, to the extent that the forest’s ecological function is not jeopardised. | Reporting of the Forest managers on impact assessments and .  *Consultation with representatives of indigenous peoples, local communities and stakeholders*. | Assessment |

## Principle 4 : Biodiversity in forest management

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Forest management must not affect protected or vulnerable biodiversity** | | |
| There is awareness of the local legal requirements concerning:   * Protected areas * Game keeping * Hunting * Environmental planning * Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) * International Biodiversity Convention (CBD)   Specific areas considered as “gazetted protected areas”: [[3]](#footnote-3) occurring in the FMU, and in a buffer zone of 5 km around the FMU, are identified (and mapped).  Biomass production in these areas is allowed only if:   * Measures and controls are implemented to ensure continuous compliance with the legal requirement. * Human intervention has historically ensured protection of biodiversity values in these areas * It took place before the **relevant reference date** (1/1/1997 or relevant date fixed by the EC) and there was no production interruption meanwhile.   Any HCVFs (biological and/or socio-economic or cultural attributes) and appropriate management prescriptions have been identified and planned, in consultation with (and acceptable to) conservation organizations and regulatory authorities. | Interviews with Forest Managers, regulatory authorities and other stakeholders.  Operational documents based on review of policies, procedures and records  Management plans and maps  Consultation with stakeholders and/or government agencies or evidence of input by these agents | Assessment |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Forest management will, where possible, have to strengthen biodiversity** | | |
| Biodiversity management is documented, with:   * Description of current biodiversity (species, count, etc. from flora and fauna) * Current or future protection measures for flora which are part of management to create an ecological balance * Measures that manage hunting or collection of flora and fauna * Risk assessment prior to harvesting operations to avoid damages to biodiversity * Identification (and if possible, mapping) of protective forest varieties, plants and animals, ecological corridors.   Land fragmentation is avoided and ecological corridors are maintained.  Plantation planning and reestablishment make provision for diversity in species and/or provenances and/or clones to achieve optimal economic, ecological and social stability; restructuring of even-aged and/or stands low in diversity is carried out where necessary   * At least 10% of the FMU is planted with local or suitable original species. * The species chosen for plantations are suited to the site and matched to the objectives. * Exotic species are used only where they outperform native species in meeting management objectives.   Staff is aware of and implements these measures . | Operational plans based on review of policies and procedures, forest plans and maps  Field observations and records of collection.  Interviews with forest managers, local experts, staff  Discussions with manager about plantation objectives  Plans for future planting | Assessment |

## Principle 5 : Environmental Impacts Assessment (EIA).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment of environmental impacts shall be completed - appropriate to the scale, intensity of forest management operations and the uniqueness of the affected resources - and adequately integrated into management systems.** | | |
| Site-specific assessments of the potential environmental impacts of all forest operations are carried out prior to commencement of site disturbing operations, such as:   * New roads and infrastructure. * Any form of flow restriction in streams and rivers. * Clearing of natural vegetation. * Change of natural vegetation to commercial or any other use. * Aforestation. * New waste disposal site (identification of sources).   All potential environmental impacts identified during assessments are considered during operations and planning and ensure that adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated   * e.g.: Waste disposal procedure (reduction, recycling, re-use and disposal of in an environmentally and socially responsible manner). | Records of assessments and decisions.  Environmental management plans.  *SLIMF:*  *Manager’s knowledge of the site and impacts of operations*  *Field observations*  *Management plan*  *Documented environmental statement or assessment where legally required*  *Interviews with Forest Managers, supervisors and workers also testing their knowledge of minimum requirements* | Assessment |
| **Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides.** | | |
| There is an up-to-date list of all pesticides used in the organisation that documents trade name, and active ingredient. Where not provided by the product label, authorised applications, application methods and rates will also be documented.  *No pesticides included in the Stockolm convention are used.[[4]](#footnote-4)*  *If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimise health and environmental risks.* | *Chemical pesticides include herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and rodenticides in the formulation applied in the field (including any surfactants, dispersants or solvents used).*   * Records of chemicals in use. * Receipts and invoices. * Procedures for the safe and appropriate use of chemicals * Evidence that waste has been disposed off in an acceptable manner. | Assessment |

## Principle 6 : Soil in forest management

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **In the production and processing of biomass, the soil, and soil quality must be retained or even improved** | | |
| There is a documented soil assessment with identification of the soil types and of the mineral system.  All forest management operations that may damage soil are known (e.g. compaction, erosion) and methods to mitigate or avoid such damages are implemented.  Where soils are degraded from previous activities, there are plans to restore them.  Waste generated through harvesting operations, is minimised whilst leaving adequate organic material on the forest floor for soil conservation.  There are w*ritten guidelines defining acceptable practice available to forest managers and supervisors* such as:   * Appropriate plantation species * Restricted removal of the residual products (needles, branches). * Reporting on the use and storage of chemicals, transport fuels, lubrication oil, etc (\*)   *These operational guidelines must meet or exceed national or regional best practice requirements. . There must be continuous verification and update.* | Documented site information and field observations on soil degradation through erosion, oil and chemical spills, etc.  Evidence that site information is being used in planning of operations.  Maps showing new roads and locations of new and ongoing operations  Interviews with Forest Managers, staff and local experts. | Assessment |

## Principle 7 : Ground and surface water in forest management.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **In the production and processing of biomass, ground and surface water, must not be depleted and the water quality must be maintained or improved** | | |
| Major water resources within the forest area are identified. Sensitive or less renewable water sources are not used.  Buffer zones are maintained along watercourses and around water bodies. These buffer zones are demarcated on maps and comply with specifications made in national and regional best practice guidelines  *There must be continuous verification and update* | Maps and interviews with Forest Managers and staff.  Operational plans and field observations (water intakes, efficiency of water use, recycling of water, wastewater treatment). | Assessment |

## Principle 8 : Air quality in forest management

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **In the production and processing of biomass, the air quality must be maintained or improved** | | |
| Where appropriate, adequate measures are taken to protect the forest from fire.  Use of fire for waste disposal and for preparing land for replanting is avoided except in specific situation and then fully justified (avoidance of diseases and pests).. | Interviews with staff and records of training.  Fire readiness and control procedures.  Monitoring en reporting of any voluntary firing is provided by the Forest manager. | Assessment |

## Principle 9: Contribution to local prosperity related to forest management

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **The production of biomass must contribute towards local prosperity** | | |
| Local processing and markets are provided access to forest products available from the FMU, unless there is a justifiable reason for not doing so.  The utilisation of non-timber forest products by local community enterprises is encouraged.  The management plan must define and describe the measures taken for local employment and contribution to the local economy. | Interviews with Forest Managers (and consultation with local communities).  Evidence of opportunities to support local processing and markets.  Evidence of NTFP[[5]](#footnote-5) sales or licenses or permits issued  *More detailed indicators can be found in EC1, EC6 and EC7 of the GRI reporting* | Assessment |

## Principle 10: Contribution of the forest management to local welfare.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families** | | |
| Forest Managers are aware of laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families and comply with, such as:   * Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. * Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO).   For large scale organisations a written safety and health policy and management system are in place | Interviews with Forest Managers, workers and union representatives.  Guidelines/regulations are readily available.  Labour directives and inspection reports.  Review of policies, procedures and personnel records. | Assessment |
| **Clear, long-term tenure and forest use rights to the land (e.g. land title, customary rights or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated** | | |
| There is documentation showing the owner/manager’s legal rights to manage the land and/or use forest resources  Indigenous people who have customary or legal title to land and resources are identified and their entitlements recognized in management plans and the areas concerned demarcated on maps. Their rights are respected. | Documentation with appropriate legal status.  Maps clearly indicating the boundaries of the FMU.  Management plans and maps.  Consultation with representatives of indigenous peoples. |  |
| **Forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services** | | |
| People in local communities are given opportunities in employment, training and contracting.  People in local communities are well informed on the activities of the company and their impacts on their environment. | Interviews with Forest Managers and workers.  Consultation with representatives of local communities and labour unions.  Training strategies.  Job advertisements in local publications | Assessment |

Appendix A

Regulations and standards applicable in

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A.** | **National Legislation** |
|  | **Forestry, Agriculture and Environment:** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  | **Cultural and social:** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **B.** | **Regulations pertinent to forestry related to and emerging from National Legislation and other legislative institutions:** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **C.** | **International Agreements pertinent to forestry** |
|  | Convention on Biological Diversity |
|  | Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) |
|  | International Labour Organisation (ILO) |
|  |  |
| **D.** | **Local Standards and Best Operating Practices** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Information on “gazetted protected areas”[[6]](#footnote-6) can be found on the following websites (National surveys might be more up to date):

* http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/
* [http://www.unep-wcmc.org/wdpa/unlist/2003\_un\_list.pdf](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/wdpa/unlist/2003_UN_LIST.pdf)
* <http://www.ramsar.org/> (wetlands: ramsar) or <http://www.ramsar.org/index_list.htm> Appendix b

List of rare threatened and endangered species listed for

As an alternative to completing the table below, provide a reference to a website where this information can be found.

|  | **Scientific Name** | **Common Name** | **status** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A.** | **Flora** | | |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **B.** | **FaUna (Mammals)** | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **c.** | **FaUna (Reptiles)** | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **d.** | **FaUna (Birds)** | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **e.** | **FaUna (fish)** | | |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Add localisation of the forest management unit on a map [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Relevant forestry certification schemes are:

   🞎 FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)

   🞎 PEFC (Pan European Forest Certification): national or regional

   🞎 CSA-SFM (Canadian Standards Association’s Sustainable Forest Management)

   🞎 SFI (Sustainable Forest Initiative)

   🞎 FFCS (Finnish Forest Certification System) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Updated database on these areas must be used (see list of references in the appendix A) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. May be too stringent compared to NTA. Add *World Health Organisation Type 1A and 1B chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited.?* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. NTFP= Non Timber Forest Products. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “gazetted protected areas”: areas that are recognized as protected by the regulatory authorities and for which this protected status is officially published. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)