

# Gabonese Association of the Pan African Forest Certification System – PAFC GABON



## PAFC GABONESE FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEME

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**Sustainable forest management – PAFC Gabon standards  
requirements  
2013 proposed definitive version**

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With the collaboration of:

**ECOFORAF**



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## **1. Introduction**

This document focuses on the PAFC Gabon forest management certification standards (requirements).

These standards aim to assess the legal, social, environmental and economic aspects of the administration of a managed forest in the Gabonese socio-cultural and economic context.

They are based around four principles:

Principle 1:Covers the legal and regulatory framework of forest management and exercise of the occupation.

Principle 2:This principle involves the forest operator and / or manager implementing management methods that guarantee long-term stability and continuity of production of the desired goods and services.Forest management should also provide economic services and goods in the long-term without however sacrificing environmental and social services.

Principle 3:Focuses on the requirements that enable the forest's main ecological functions to be maintained.The ecological functions of forests comprise all the forest ecosystem's biotic and abiotic interactions.The species of forest fauna and flora and their habitat needs are core parts of the forest's ecological functions.

Principle 4:Focuses on the contribution made by sustainable forest management to general wellbeing,the socio-economic development of local communities and indigenous populations, population involvement in forest management and workers' rights, healthcare, safety at work and improving the living conditions of forest workers and their families.

## **2. PAFC Gabon definitions**

### **Forest Management Unit**

A forest management unit is the area covered by a management plan. It cannot exceed 200,000 hectares.

### **Forest Administration Unit**

A forest administration unit (FAU) is defined at FMU level in the management plan. It equates to an exploitable area of five AAC (annual allowable cuts) either over a five or seven-year period. It is covered by an administration plan which defines the AAC and the felling sequence.

### **Annual Allowable Cut**

This is the area that can be exploited on an annual basis within the scope of a management plan. The area's exploitation is planned using an AOP (annual operating plan) based on an exploitation inventory. The AAC can be made over year N, N+1 and N+2.

### **Series plots**

Series are areas with a clearly defined core objective (production, conservation, village usage, research etc). They can be defined at FMU, FAU or AAC level. Special exploitation (or non-exploitation) rules are then set so as to meet the objective (for example, conservation series -the area should not be exploited).

### **(Forest) operator**

The operator is the individual or organisation tasked with management plan compliance. The operator is also responsible for contributing to local development (see article 251 of the Forestry Code).

### **(Forest) manager**

The forest manager is the individual or organisation that exploits the forest within the scope of a management plan. The manager may be separate from the operator.

### **Rightful claimant**

Rightful claimants are defined as members of the family who are:

- Legally recognised.
- Live permanently on the forest camp with an employee.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring refers to all activities that aim to keep an up-to-date register.

## **Management plan (MP)**

The management plan is a document that details the forest management objectives of a Forestry Concession Under Sustainable Development (FCSD) / forest management unit (FMU) with regard to sustainable forest management. It includes production, environmental and social objectives.

Article 22 (Gabonese Forestry Code) – The management plan sets down:

- ✓ The boundaries and surface area of the series plots and forest strata.
- ✓ Composition of the 'target species' grouping.
- ✓ The rotation selected for management purposes.
- ✓ The Minimum Diameter for Exploitation (MDE) chosen for the FMU for each of the target species.
- ✓ The rate of regeneration of the numbers of each of the "target species" between the first and second felling.
- ✓ The annual allowable cut.
- ✓ The boundaries of the administration units.
- ✓ The felling sequence in the administration units.
- ✓ The characteristics and location of principle roads and infrastructure.
- ✓ The intervention programme, notably inventories, reforestation, natural or artificial regeneration, forest exploitation and the building of infrastructure.

## **Contractual clauses**

The contractual clauses supplement the management plan and define the specific technical exploitation procedures in the FAU. The clauses contractually bind the operator and the Forest Administration.

The Forestry Code refers to it in articles 39, 40, 46 and 115.

## **Contractual specifications**

The contractual specifications are the set of documents governing relations between the operator and FMU local communities.

Article 251 (Gabonese Forestry Code): In order to promote the social aspect of sustainable management policy, a contribution – specifically of a financial nature – has been put in place, funded by the forest concession holders so as to support the collective interest development initiatives set up by the aforementioned communities.

The nature and level of the contribution are defined by the contractual specifications covering each concession.

## **Special exploitation clauses in National Park buffer zones**

The special exploitation clauses in national park buffer zones lay down the specific procedures that the operator undertakes to implement in park buffer zones. The clauses must receive the technical approval of the national parks management body.

### **Wildlife and hunting management plan**

A wildlife and hunting management plan is developed and implemented in the company in order to limit the direct and indirect impact of exploitation on fauna.

**“The management documents” are as a minimum requirement the management plan (MP), the administration plan (AP) and the annual operating plan (AOP).**

### **INVENTORIES**

Article 54 (Forestry Code) – The forest inventory is an assessment of forest resources with a view to planning and rationalising their management.

Depending on the set planning objectives, two types of forest inventory are needed within the framework of the management and administration of a FMU.

#### **Management inventories**

Article 56 (Forestry Code) – The management inventory enables:

- ✓ A quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the forest stands that make up the FMU to be conducted.
- ✓ The resource to be located and forest maps to be established on the basis of stratification obtained by remote sensing.
- ✓ All the dendrology and dendrometry data needed to determine management parameters, specifically yield and rotation, to be collected.
- ✓ A minimum amount of environmental data to be collected in order to detect the presence of areas that are ecologically fragile or that are of great biological or heritage value.

#### **Exploitation inventory**

Article 60 (Forestry Code) – The exploitation inventory involves quantifying and precisely locating exploitable saplings and future saplings in the AAC in order to:

- ✓ Optimise the route of hauling roads and the location of log yards.
- ✓ Rationalise exploitation and forestry work.
- ✓ Limit environmental damage.

This inventory is conducted across the whole area of the AAC. It is linked to a detailed site map.

### **3. Sustainable Forest Management Standard**

#### **3.1. Entities eligible for PAFC Gabon certification**

**Certifiable entity:**The PAFC Gabon Revision Forum decided that the revised standards only apply to entities with management plans.This means that the certifiable entity in the PAFC Gabon context is therefore the Forest Management Unit (FMU).

#### **3.2. PAFC Gabon Sustainable Forest Management Requirements**

##### **3.2.1. The main sustainable forest management criteria, indicators and principles**

<b>Principle 1</b>	<b>Forest Management Unit administration must comply with the legal requirements</b>
<b>Criterion1.1</b>	<b>Forest management complies with the legislation applicable at national level and coversforest management practices, nature and environmental protection, protected and endangered species, customary rights of local populations, workers’ rights, payment of taxes.</b>
<b>Indicator 1.1.1</b>	<b>Forest management complies with all the national standards and laws and all the administrative requirements.</b>
SI 1.1.1.1	The responsible ministry has notified the operator in writing that their management plan has been approved.
SI 1.1.1.2	In compliance with the national technical standards, prior studies (management inventories, socio-economic study etc) have been conducted within the timescales stipulated in the Provisional Convention on Management of Exploitation and Processing and are correctly documented and available.
SI 1.1.1.3	National management standards (specifically with regard to the Minimum Diameter for Exploitation under Management, minimum regeneration rate, target species, Forest Administration Unit volumes etc) are respected.
<b>Indicator 1.1.2</b>	<b>The manager and operator are complying with their administrative and tax obligations.</b>
SI 1.1.2.1	The operator and manager can prove that their tax affairs are in order by presenting receipts and / or correspondence from the tax offices.
SI 1.1.2.2	The operator and manager are registered with the relevant institutions.
<b>Indicator 1.1.3</b>	<b>Forest exploitation complies with legal and regulatory forest and environmental specifications and the international conventions ratified by Gabon.</b>

SI 1.1.3.1	Forest exploitation management document specifications are respected.
SI 1.1.3.2	All the authorisations needed to conduct an AAC have been obtained prior to harvesting getting underway.
SI 1.1.3.3	The operator complies with the set length of each AAC (three years in Gabon).
SI 1.1.3.4	Environmental authorisations are issued by the government department for the environment in accordance with regulations.
SI 1.1.3.5	Special exploitation clauses are put forward for activities in National Park buffer zones and are approved by the National Parks authority.
<b>Indicator 1.1.4</b>	<b>The legal and customary rights of local populations to own, use and administer their forest land and resources are clearly defined, acknowledged and respected.</b>
SI 1.1.4.1	Exercise of customary usage rights is covered by agreements between the forest operator and FMU local communities.
SI 1.1.4.2	The legal and regulatory provisions on property are known and applied, notably when crops are destroyed.
<b>Indicator 1.1.5</b>	<b>The provisions of convention 169 of the ILO and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are known and applied.</b>
<b>Indicator 1.1.6</b>	<b>The forest manager is actively involved in the development of FMU neighbouring communities in application of the laws and regulations in force.</b>
SI 1.1.6.1	The contribution to local development is made in accordance with the Contractual Specifications agreed between the different parties.
<b>Indicator 1.1.7</b>	<b>National and international labour regulations are applied.</b>
SI 1.1.7.1	The forest manager respects legal requirements on hiring, remuneration and working conditions.
SI 1.1.7.2	The forest manager respects legal and regulatory requirements on social security.
SI 1.1.7.3.	The forest manager complies with legal requirements concerning social dialogue (staff representatives, trade unions etc).
SI 1.1.7.4	The forest manager complies with legal requirements concerning training and professional development.
SI 1.1.7.5	The forest manager respects legal requirements on hygiene, health and safety in the workplace.
SI 1.1.7.6	The forest manager complies with the legal and regulatory requirements on

	employee and rightful claimant living conditions.
<b>Criterion1.2</b>	<b>The forest manager makes a contribution to providing adequate protection against illegal activities in its FMU.</b>
<b>Indicator 1.2.1</b>	<b>The artificial limits of the FMU are marked out on the ground and are regularly maintained.</b>
<b>Indicator 1.2.2</b>	<b>The forest manager regulates vehicle access to non-public roads in its FMU.</b>
<b>Indicator 1.2.3</b>	<b>The forest manager documents illegal activities inside their concession and informs the relevant authorities.</b>

<b>Principle 2</b>	<b>The forest management unit, whatever the form of land-use, is sustainably managed with a focus on supplying goods and services.</b>
<b>Criterion 2.1</b>	<b>The forest management unit is managed based on well-defined and clearly established objectives with a sustainable development ethos.</b>
<b>Indicator 2.1.1</b>	<b>The FMU is administered for a length of time compatible with the objectives detailed in the management documents and based on a sustainable management ethos.</b>
SI 2.1.1.1	The management plan is valid for a minimum duration of 20 years.
SI 2.1.1.2	Harvesting only takes place within the geographical boundaries laid down in the management documents.
SI 2.1.1.3	The manager complies with the management document provisions.
<b>Indicator 2.1.2</b>	<b>The manager proves their management expertise.</b>
SI 2.1.2.1	The management plan was prepared by staff specialising in management from the manager's own workforce or by specialised consultants.
SI 2.1.2.2	Management is done by staff with a clearly established remit to apply a management plan.
<b>Indicator 2.1.3</b>	<b>A comprehensive management document exists and sets the various long-term objectives for the Forest Management Unit based on a sustainable development ethos.</b>
SI 2.1.3.1	The management plan explains the long-term objectives to be reached during rotation, integrating the production of commercial and non-commercial goods and services.
SI 2.1.3.2	The different uses of the forest and forestry products are identified.
SI 2.1.3.3	The FMU is sub-divided into different series plots based on the constraints identified during the preliminary studies, forms of forest usage, functions and the selected objectives.
SI 2.1.3.4	The maps showing the forest unit and its series plots, the distribution of resources and the village landholdings are available.
SI 2.1.3.5	The management plan – specifically using maps – defines the areas to be used (production series). The exploitable volume during the management period and the average annual volume are substantiated.
SI 2.1.3.6	The annual allowable cut, minimum diameter for exploitation and number of

	trees harvestable are listed in all the management documents
SI 2.1.3.7	A social plan of action and a management plan for fauna supplement the management documents.
<b>Indicator 2.1.4</b>	<b>Contractual clauses are attached to the management plan and detail the intervention procedure and the rights and duties of the forest manager and the sub-contractors working in the FMU.</b>
SI 2.1.4.1.	Specific clauses on exploitation and forestprotection measures are clearly detailed in the Contractual Clauses.
SI 2.1.4.2	The Contractual Clauses make provision for the application of low-impact exploitation techniques in accordance with the National Technical Guide.
<b>Indicator 2.1.5</b>	<b>Forest management is implemented in practice as soon as the plan is approved.</b>
SI 2.1.5.1	The management plan requirements are made available to all the stakeholders notably by means of a public summary, while respecting the confidential nature of some information.
SI 2.1.5.2	Regular and frequent field monitoring visits demonstrate that the activities of the various stakeholders comply with the specifications of the management documents and the Contractual Clauses.
SI 2.1.5.3	All of the stakeholders and staff are informed and made aware about the management plan being implemented.
SI 2.2.5.4	The manager demonstrates that they have a management implementation action plan.
<b>Indicator 2.1.6</b>	<b>The minimum infrastructure needed for exploitation is maintained.</b>
SI 2.1.6.1	The main buildings in the forest camps are constructed and maintained in a sustainable fashion.
SI 2.1.6.2	The road network needed for exploitation is maintained.
<b>Criterion2.2</b>	<b>Sustainable production of timber is ensured both in terms of quantity and quality.</b>
<b>Indicator 2.2.1</b>	<b>The harvest inventory is efficiently carried out, in compliance with the standards in force, and at least two months before harvesting.</b>
SI 2.2.1.1	Trees to be felled are first plotted on a map and marked out.

SI 2.2.1.2	Trees to be protected (seed-producing trees, young trees, or critical risk species according to the IUCN) are plotted on maps and visibly marked before harvesting gets underway.
<b>Indicator 2.2.2</b>	<b>Rotation and yield are clearly established.</b>
SI 2.2.2.1	Yield and rotation calculations are verifiable from the management documents and inventory numerical data.
SI 2.2.2.2	Rotation is based on growth rates, minimum diameter of trees to be harvested and data obtained from the management inventory.
<b>Indicator 2.2.3</b>	<b>All exploitation complies with the forest management documents and the Contractual Clauses.</b>
SI 2.2.3.1	The AOP is based on results and analyses of the operating inventories and complies with the Management Plan, Administration Plan (limits, target species, Minimum Diameter under Exploitation for Management etc.) and the Contractual Clauses.
SI 2.2.3.3	Harvesting limits are explicit and known by all the employees.
	The Contractual Clauses exploitation procedures are respected and implemented.
SI 2.2.3.4	The manager produces an AAC implementation review stating that harvesting is compliant with the AOP (annual operating plan).
SI 2.2.3.5	The road and hauling network is planned and respected insofar as is possible.
<b>Indicator 2.2.4</b>	<b>Wastage is minimized at all stages of production and processing.</b>
SI 2.2.4.1.	Felling methods are applied to optimize the volume of usable timber.
SI 2.2.4.2.	The greatest utilizable volume of the felled tree is recovered.
SI 2.2.4.3	The number of felled trees forgotten or abandoned in the forest and decaying logs in the yards (forest, sawmills, railway sidings etc) is minimised. Otherwise, cases are substantiated and documented.
SI 2.2.4.4	Industrial equipment is modern and compatible with the annual yield detailed in the Management Plan.
SI 2.2.4.5	A strategy for treating waste generated by wood processing is developed and rolled out.
SI 2.2.4.6	Processing chain performance is comparable with national and regional standards.
<b>Indicator 2.3.5</b>	<b>The forest manager is able to provide all the documentation needed to</b>

	<b>enable each forest product to be tracked from its origin.</b>
SI 2.3.5.1	The manager has put in place a forest product traceability system.
SI 2.3.5.2	Effective mechanisms to produce, market and promote their forest products and services are developed in order to diversify them. They take account of the results of market research and potential new markets and economic activities linked to forest goods and services.
<b>Criterion 2.3</b>	<b>Exploitation techniques implemented in the FMU are compatible with the management objectives adapted to the FMU and to target production yields.</b>
<b>Indicator 2.3.1</b>	<b>Forest exploitation techniques are clearly described and communicated to workers.</b>
SI 2.3.1.1	A procedural manual / handbook describes forestry techniques.
SI 2.3.1.2	Compliance with exploitation procedures is regularly checked and documented.
SI 2.3.1.3	Procedures are regularly updated.
<b>Indicator 2.3.2</b>	<b>The harvesting of multi-purpose tree species as timber does not negatively impact on other forms of use.</b>
SI 2.3.2.1	Non-timber forest products used and their forms of usage are identified, particularly for species that produce both timber and non-timber forest products.
SI 2.3.2.2	Forest exploitation does not impair the production and harvesting of other forest products.
SI 2.3.2.3	Harvesting methods for multi-use species in the village series plots are listed in the Contractual Clauses.
<b>Indicator 2.3.3</b>	<b>The operator develops an employee training policy.</b>
SI 2.3.3.1	An employee training policy is implemented in the company.
SI 2.3.3.2	A training and recycling plan is prepared and regularly implemented taking account of the previously identified needs.

<b>Criterion 2.4</b>	<b>The forest management system is regularly revised or if a <i>force majeure</i> event occurs.</b>
<b>Indicator 2.4.1</b>	<b>The implementation of the management plan is continuously followed up and evaluated.</b>

SI 2.4.1.1	While respecting the confidentiality of information, the managers in charge of forest management must be able to provide a summary of the monitoring results.
SI 2.4.1.2	A management parameters monitoring system exists and functions in practice.
SI 2.4.1.4.	The actual harvest is regularly compared to what was initially projected in the management documents.
<b>Indicator 2.4.2</b>	<b>The forest management document is revised periodically based on a timescale set at national level.</b>
SI 2.4.2.1	Revisions are carried out if they prove necessary.
SI 2.4.2.2	Monitoring and research results, as well as new scientific findings and technical data, are incorporated during the management document review process.
SI 2.4.2.3.	The revisions are approved by the Forest Administration.

<b>Principle 3</b>	<b>The forest's main ecological functions are maintained.</b>
<b>Criterion 3.1</b>	<b>Sustainable management is based on dynamic acquisition of ecological knowledge.</b>
<b>Indicator 3.1.1</b>	<b>The available knowledge enables an initial ecological diagnosis of forest ecosystems.</b>
SI 3.1.1.1	Vegetation, topographical, geological and water system maps are available.
SI 3.1.1.2	Databases on forest fauna and flora in the concession are available.
SI 3.1.1.3	Fauna distribution maps within the FMU produced using the management inventories are available.
SI 3.1.1.4	Maps or data on the distribution of exploitable, endangered, rare and endemic species from the various inventories are available.
<b>Indicator 3.1.2</b>	<b>Impact studies are carried out in relation to the scale of exploitation, in accordance with the scarcity of the resources in question. These studies must be incorporated into the manager's practices.</b>
SI 3.1.2.1	Exploitation monitoring and new road infrastructure maps are available.
SI 3.1.2.2.	Monitoring of the impact of forest operations is put in place.
SI 3.1.2.3	Analysis of monitoring results enables the impact of exploitation on the forest to be assessed.
SI 3.1.2.4	Monitoring results are incorporated into the management measures if necessary in order to reduce the impact, with the aim being to achieve continuous improvement.
<b>Indicator 3.1.3</b>	<b>New scientific and technical data is periodically summarised.</b>
SI 3.1.3.1	Monitoring of scientific results demonstrating the impact of forest exploitation is put in place.
SI 3.1.3.2	Monitoring of sustainable forest management practices is put in place.

<b>Criterion 3.2</b>	<b>The impact of exploitation on the forest's structure is reduced.</b>
<b>Indicator 3.2.1</b>	<b>Reduced impact forest exploitation techniques are implemented.</b>
SI 3.2.1.1	Felling is controlled and spares young trees as far as possible.
SI 3.2.1.2	Hauling routes comply with a harvesting plan based on the AOP and do not damage saplings that need protecting.
SI 3.2.1.3	Haulage/skidding machines should not create significant ruts on the roads and move around with the blade up in the forest undergrowth as much as possible.
SI 3.2.1.4	Infrastructure (primary and secondary routes, quarries, timber yards, hauling roads) are adapted and sized in accordance with the resource.
<b>Indicator 3.2.2</b>	<b>Forest conversion and the usage of fire are supervised and limited in the FMU.</b>
SI 3.2.2.1.	In the FMU, forest conversion and the usage of fire for agricultural purposes are supervised and limited to zones earmarked for neighbouring community, employee and rightful claimant farming.
SI 3.2.2.2	If reforestation is necessary, it is solely done with local species.
SI 3.2.2.3	Any reclassification of a part of the FMU is documented.
<b>Criterion 3.3</b>	<b>The impact of exploitation on biodiversity is minimized.</b>
<b>Indicator 3.3.1</b>	<b>A management plan for ecologically important forest areas is developed, implemented and monitored.</b>
SI 3.3.1.1	<p>Ecologically important forest areas are identified and mapped at an appropriate scale. They contain significant concentrations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems, such as riparian forests and wetlands.</li> <li>• Zones containing endemic species and endangered species' habitats, as defined by the IUCN.</li> <li>• In situ genetic resources that are endangered or protected and take into account the following:</li> <li>• Important major landscapes at global, regional or national level with a natural abundance and distribution of naturally present species.</li> </ul>

SI 3.3.1.2	The most sensitive identified ecologically important forest zones are covered by protection measures.
SI 3.3.1.3	The limits of protected zones are clearly defined and marked in the field.
SI 3.3.1.4	The implementation of a management plan for ecologically important forest areas is monitored.
<b>Indicator 3.3.3</b>	<b>The manager develops a fauna and hunting management plan so as to minimize the impact of forest exploitation.</b>
SI 3.3.3.1	The manager's employees and rightful claimants are made aware about national hunting regulations (protected species, bag limits, hunting seasons etc).
SI 3.3.3.2.	The transport and sale of game and the transport of weapons in the company's vehicles are subject to prior authorisation being obtained.If this happens, it must be in compliance with the legal requirements.
SI 3.3.3.3.	Access routes to the forest concession are controlled.Only authorised vehicles are allowed to use non-public forest roads that do not serve villages.
SI 3.3.3.4.	Secondary roads are closed after harvesting, except when required for forest monitoring or for local development.
SI 3.3.3.5	Hunting by employees is supervised and monitored in accordance with national regulations.
<b>Indicator 3.3.4</b>	<b>Species diversity and density of flora are not significantly modified by the harvesting methods.</b>
SI 3.3.4.1.	Rare and endemic species of limited distribution are protected.
SI 3.3.4.2.	The use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimized, monitored and strictly controlled, in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols.
SI 3.3.4.3.	The use of genetically modified organisms is prohibited.
SI 3.3.4.4.	The use of exotic species is carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.

<b>Criterion3.4</b>	<b>Measures are taken so as to improve natural regeneration of the forest.</b>
<b>Indicator 3.4.1</b>	<b>The manager implements a strategy to regenerate species that are being regenerated because of a harvesting shortage.</b>
SI 3.4.1.1.	Harvested species seed-producing trees – with a diametric bell-shaped structure – are protected during harvesting.
SI 3.4.1.2.	The minimum diameter of trees to be harvested is set above the ‘successful fruit-bearing’ diameter when known.
SI 3.4.1.3.	For enrichment planting in harvested forests or in the agro forestry system, the use of indigenous species with unquestionable commercial value is preferable.
<b>Criterion3.5</b>	<b>The impact of harvesting on water, soils and slopes is minimized</b>
<b>Indicator 3.5.1</b>	<b>Water flow rate and quality are maintained.</b>
SI 3.5.1.1	Forest access routes opened up by the manager do not lead to water accumulating or flooding.
SI 3.5.1.2	Infrastructure built to bridge water bodies is designed to minimize the waterway silting up and filling up.
SI 3.5.1.3	Regular monitoring of signs of obvious contamination caused by the chemical products used by the manager is conducted.
<b>Indicator 3.5.2</b>	<b>The impact of harvesting activities on the biological, physical and chemical characteristics of soils and on the slopes is minimized and monitored.</b>
SI 3.5.2.1.	Insofar as is possible, road infrastructure avoids sensitive areas (low areas, river banks and steep slopes).
SI 3.5.2.2.	Work is done and its effectiveness is monitored in order to limit erosion on abandoned permanent (access roads, bridges, pipes and forest camps) and secondary infrastructure (haulage machine paths, timber yards and quarries).
SI 3.5.2.3	The construction and upkeep of the forest camp limits erosion and clearing.
SI 3.5.2.4	Special waterway bank harvesting measures are put in place.
SI 3.5.2.5	Exploitation in overly steep areas is banned.
SI 3.5.2.6	Measures are taken if major erosion is observed.
<b>Indicator 3.5.3</b>	<b>The usage of pollutant products is rationalised</b>
SI 3.5.3.1	Storage and usage of oils and other pollutant products minimizes the risk of

	pollution.
SI 3.5.3.2	Oil and other pollutant products that are used are recovered, disposed of and treated in such a way as to minimize the risk of pollution.
SI 3.5.3.3	An industrial and household waste management system is rolled out in order to maximize their disposal.
SI 3.5.3.4	The usage of pesticides is minimized. The usage of WHO type 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides is prohibited, except if no other alternative is available. Silvicultural alternatives and other biological measures shall be preferred.
SI 3.5.3.5	Pesticides, just like chlorinated hydrocarbons, whose by-products remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreements (Stockholm Convention), are prohibited.
SI 3.5.3.6	Pesticide usage complies with the instructions given by the manufacturer, specifically with regard to equipment and training.
SI 3.5.3.7	If fertilisers are used, they are applied in a controlled manner, taking great care of the environment.
SI 3.5.3.8	Employees who use chemical products are informed about the risks and product information sheets are available in French, as a minimum requirement.

<b>Principle 4</b>	<b>Depending upon the scale and intensity of forestry management operations, the manager and operator of the forest management unit (FMU) must contribute to the improvement of the economic and social well-being of workers present in the FMU and local and pygmy indigenous people.</b>
<b>Criterion 4.1</b>	<b>Arrangements for accessing natural resources are clearly made with the free, informed and prior consent of the local and pygmy indigenous populations.</b>
<b>Indicator 4.1.1</b>	<b>The forest manager creates a local and pygmy indigenous population consultation and joint working mechanism.</b>
SI 4.1.1.1.	A social relations coordinator is clearly identified from among the manager's workforce and is known by the local and pygmy indigenous populations.
SI 4.1.1.2.	An individual or group of individuals is chosen and clearly identified in each village / town by the local and pygmy indigenous populations in order to legitimately represent them in their dealings with the forest manager.
SI 4.1.1.3	A consultation mechanism for the stakeholders is created and operates in practice in the FMU.
<b>Indicator 4.1.2</b>	<b>Local and pygmy indigenous populations are informed and made aware of their rights and duties with regard to natural resource access.</b>
SI 4.1.2.1	The management plan is publicised in order to guarantee the local and pygmy indigenous populations' right to be informed.
SI 4.1.2.2	Targeted awareness raising campaigns are organised by the manager.
<b>Indicator 4.1.3</b>	<b>Rules governing the sharing of jointly used areas, knowledge and know-how are clearly defined and respected by the manager and local and pygmy indigenous populations by means of Contractual Clauses.</b>
SI 4.1.3.1.	The boundaries of one or more zones where harvesting is being carried out with the free, informed and prior consent of the local and pygmy indigenous populations are defined.

SI 4.1.3.2.	Provisions covering FMU natural resource access arrangements for the local and pygmy indigenous populations and the operator are defined in the Contractual Clauses in a concerted manner and prior to harvesting getting underway.
SI 4.1.3.3	Special religious, cultural or economic sites (areas that are fundamental to the needs of the local and pygmy indigenous populations) must be clearly identified by means of participatory mapping with the local and pygmy indigenous populations and are covered by protection or management measures set in consultation with the local and pygmy indigenous populations.
SI 4.1.3.4	Local and indigenous populations must be compensated for the loan and application of their traditional forestry techniques and knowledge. This compensation must be freely and formally accepted prior to the start of forestry work.
<b>Indicator 4.1.4</b>	<b>The Contractual Clauses contain provisions on the sanctions applicable in the event of the set rules being breached.</b>
SI 4.1.4.1	A committee comprising the two parties monitors the application of the management rules.
SI 4.1.4.2	In the event of crops being destroyed by the manager, the legal crop compensation procedure is respected and the specialised services involved.
SI 4.1.4.3	In a case not covered by the regulations in force, compensation will be negotiated and agreed, respecting the interests of those involved.
<b>Indicator 4.1.5</b>	<b>The conflict prevention and resolution procedure is established in a participatory fashion and implemented by the local and pygmy indigenous populations and the forest operator.</b>
SI 4.1.5.1	A written conflict prevention and resolution procedure devised in a concerted manner exists.
SI 4.1.5.2	The conflict prevention and resolution procedure is known and applied by the two parties.
SI 4.1.5.3	Conflict resolution decisions are accepted and implemented by the parties concerned.

<b>Criterion4.2</b>	<b>The share of benefits derived from forests is considered to be satisfactory by all stakeholders.</b>
<b>Indicator 4.2.1</b>	<b>The forest manager works so that the local and pygmy indigenous populations in the management unit and those bordering it receive part of the revenue generated by the exploitation of the management unit.</b>
SI 4.2.1.1	The operator participates in local development in application of the legal and regulatory provisions via agreements made in conjunction with the local and pygmy indigenous populations.
SI 4.2.1.2	Income-generating community projects will be encouraged when implementing the agreements made within the framework of the operator's involvement in local development.
SI 4.2.1.3	Local development agreements are respected and documented.
<b>Indicator 4.2.2</b>	<b>Local and pygmy indigenous communities living in or near the harvested forest area benefit from preferential employment and training opportunities and other services provided by the manager.</b>
SI 4.2.2.1	The forest manager opts for local applicants when applicants are equally qualified for the post in question.
SI 4.2.2.2	There is a recruitment and training policy put in place by the forest manager for young people from local villages.
SI 4.2.2.3	The manager supplies interested and informed local and pygmy indigenous populations with logs and sawmill offcuts.
<b>Indicator 4.2.3</b>	<b>In accordance with the scale and impact of forest operations at local level, the operator contributes to the development of the local economy.</b>
SI 4.2.3.1	The forest manager opts for local firms as sub-contractors when they are equally qualified for the task in question.
SI 4.2.3.2	In isolated areas, the forest manager authorises people and goods to use its network of forest roads, as long as the legal provisions are respected.
<b>Indicator 4.2.4</b>	<b>The operator contributes to the basic education of local and pygmy indigenous populations present in the Forest Management Unit, in accordance with the contractual provisions.</b>
SI 4.2.4.1	Children from local and pygmy indigenous communities have access to the operator's educational infrastructure.

<b>Indicator 4.2.5</b>	<b>The health of local and pygmy indigenous populations is improved as a result of the contribution made by forestry.</b>
SI 4.2.5.1	Local and pygmy indigenous populations have access where possible to the operator's forest camp clinic.
SI 4.2.5.2.	The manager regularly takes part in health awareness raising campaigns in the neighbouring villages.
<b>Criterion4.3</b>	<b>The forest manager helps to improve the health and education of the families of the workers in the FMU.</b>
<b>Indicator 4.3.1</b>	<b>Preventive measures are taken by the manager to minimize any forestry activity occupational risks.</b>
SI 4.3.1.1	Risks and hazards of forestry work are assessed.The workers are informed about the outcomes of this assessment and about suitable preventive measures.
SI 4.3.1.2.	Internal procedures and memoranda are widely circulated to remind the employees about the observance of safety standards.
SI 4.3.1.3.	Appropriate safety gear and equipment are distributed and worn by employees in their various work locations.
SI 4.3.1.4	Employees regularly undergo medical examinations in accordance with the regulations in force.
SI 4.3.1.5	Occupational safety sanctions are developed, applied and recorded by the manager in the event of a failure on the part of employees to comply with safety measures.
SI 4.3.1.6	Emergency procedures are established and operational.
SI 4.3.1.7	Work and safety gear and equipment is regularly maintained and renewed.
SI 4.3.1.8	Occupational accidents are monitored and recorded.
<b>Indicator 4.3.2</b>	<b>A health and education system is provided for the families of workers in the FMU.</b>
SI 4.3.2.1	Hygiene and public health measures (drinking water, latrines, household refuse...) are taken by the forest manager.
SI 4.4.2.2.	One or more health centres, with qualified staff living on the spot, exist and are satisfactorily functional.
SI 4.3.2.3.	The clinic is supplied with drugs and healthcare equipment, with this being

	monitored.
SI 4.3.2.4.	The manager supplies foodstuffs and essentials via a store that does not apply surcharges.
SI 4.3.2.5	The operator contributes to the education of the children of workers in the FMU until the legal school leaving age.
<b>Criterion4.4</b>	<b>The involvement and representation of pygmy indigenous populations, as identified in FMU management procedures, is encouraged by the operator.</b>
<b>Indicator 4.4.1</b>	<b>The operator takes account of the nomadic lifestyle and non-agricultural economy of the pygmy indigenous populations.</b>
SI 4.4.4.1	Agreements that are free, informed and prior to exploitation exist between the operator and the pygmy indigenous populations regarding their displacement and activities within the FMU.
SI 4.4.4.2	Pygmy indigenous populations are not displaced and their camps are not destroyed without their free, informed and prior consent being obtained.
SI 4.4.4.3	The lifestyle and nomadic activities of pygmy indigenous populations are taken into account and respected with regard to employment.
<b>Indicator 4.4.2</b>	<b>The operator implements a consultation and joint working mechanism that is adapted to the pygmy indigenous populations.</b>
<b>Indicator 4.4.3</b>	<b>The revenue generated by forestry work is fairly shared out between the pygmy indigenous populations and local populations.</b>
SI 4.4.3.1	Contractual clauses adopted in a participatory manner by the operator and the pygmy indigenous populations are implemented.
SI 4.4.3.2	Pygmy indigenous populations are not discriminated against in terms of access to employment.

### **3.2.2. The certified body's sustainable forest management policy**

The certified body, before starting the certification application procedure, must clearly and transparently define a sustainable forestry management policy backed by scientific data and technical expertise for good and sustainable extraction of managed forest resources, respecting the environment, compatible with social expectations and respect for rights and uses of local populations, and which offers good economic performance prospects for the various planned activities.

This sustainable forestry management policy is formulated by the management of the certified body; it is relayed within the main divisions of the certified body and everyone, inside and outside the company, is informed about it.

This policy must meet the following requirements:

- Be defined by management at the highest level.
- Have a clear commitment to comply with the PAFC Gabon principles.
- Contain an undertaking to comply with the applicable legal requirements and other applicable requirements relating to the environmental aspects.
- Have a commitment to continuous improvement of socio-environmental performance.
- Be available to the public and communicated to staff.
- Be subject to regular revision.

The certified body will make sure that its sustainable forestry management policy complies with the Congo River Basin policy on good forestry management and is not contrary to decisions taken at regional or national level.

The certified body ensures a global as possible vision in its sustainable forestry development policy covering the forests for which it holds a permit.

### **3.2.3. The certified body's internal sustainable forest management system**

The certified body must internally develop a set of administrative management measures and procedures that will guarantee compliance with the Principles, Criteria and Indicators listed above.

From the beginning of its certification procedure, the applicant will prove that its internal organisation and its administrative management of the measures taken to guarantee sustainable forest management exist and are effective. These measures must guarantee management of the system in place and permanent control and assessment of it as part of an ethos of continuous forest performance improvement.

#### 4. Requirements not included in the revised PAFC Gabon standard

Some of the PEFC minimum requirements were not included in the standard. The following reasons for this were approved by the Forum.

<p>5.1.12 The conversion of abandoned farmland or land devoid of trees into forest must be taken into consideration when it offers added economic, ecological, social or cultural value.</p>
<p><i>The Forum deemed that this requirement is not relevant within the scope of forestry work in the country.</i></p> <p><i>In fact, the only farmland that is abandoned is generally reused for slash-and-burn. Land devoid of trees in the forest concessions is often savannah. Forestation rarely forms part of the practices of Gabonese operators.</i></p>
<p>5.2.1 Planning of forest management helps maintain and increase the health and vitality of forest ecosystems and to rehabilitate damaged ecosystems when possible using forestry techniques.</p>
<p><i>The Forum felt that this requirement is included in the indicators and sub-indicators designed to identify and protect future saplings, foster the regeneration of problematic species and in the requirements governing target species regeneration rates.</i></p>
<p>5.2.2 Forest health and vitality is periodically monitored, more specifically key biotic and abiotic factors that could potentially affect the health and vitality of forest ecosystems, such as pests, disease, over-grazing and intensive stockbreeding, fire, damaged caused by climatic factors, air pollutants and forest operations.</p>
<p>5.2.3 Monitoring and maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality must take into consideration the effects of natural fires, pests and other problems.</p>
<p><i>The Forum felt that certain forms of damage to forest health such as pests, diseases, over-grazing and intensive stockbreeding, climatic factors and air pollutants are not relevant at the present time in the Gabonese context.</i></p> <p><i>Fire requirements are met by monitoring agricultural fronts and damage linked to forest exploitation is also covered in Principle 3.</i></p>
<p>5.4.6 Forestation and reforestation work that improves and restores ecological connectivity should be promoted.</p>
<p><i>The Forum deemed that this requirement is not relevant within the scope of forestry work in the country because plantations are designed to enrich openings and reforestation to restore ecological connectivity is not carried out because it would require the reforestation of road infrastructure used in general during every other rotation cycle.</i></p>
<p>5.4.8 Forest management practices should promote a diversity of horizontal and vertical structures in appropriate places, such as uneven-aged stands, and species diversity, such as mixed stands. Practices should also aim to maintain and restore a diversity of landscapes in appropriate places.</p>
<p><i>The Forum deemed that this requirement is inherent to Gabonese forests as the country's forests are made up of uneven-aged and mixed stands. As exploitation is highly selective, it maintains the various potential landscapes observed in a FMU.</i></p>

5.4.12 In compliance with management objectives, measures must be taken to balance out the pressure placed on regeneration, forest growth and biodiversity by animal populations and grazing.

*The Forum deemed that pressure caused by animal populations and grazing simply does not exist in Gabon, with animal populations even being viewed as being necessary for forest regeneration.*

5.4.13 Standing and fallen dead wood, hollow trees, old copses and rare and special species should be left in place in a sufficient quantity and distribution.

*The Forum felt that the requirement on rare and special species is covered by the PAFC Gabon standard. Gabonese forests are natural tropical forests and contain many dead standing or fallen trees.*

5.6.5 Adequate public access to the forests for recreational purposes must be provided, while respecting ownership rights and the rights of others, the impact on forest resources and ecosystems, and compatibility with other forest functions.

5.6.7 Forest management operations must take into consideration all the socio-economic functions, particularly recreation and the aesthetic value of forests, for example by maintaining varied forest structures and encouraging attractive looking trees, copses and other features such as colour, flowers and fruits. However, this must be done in such a way as to ensure that it does not negatively impact upon forest resources and forest land.

*The Forum felt that recreation in the FMU is not a concept that fits with the Gabonese context. Access to FMU is often linked to employee access and access for neighbouring and indigenous populations. Access for neighbouring populations is governed by customary usage rights which are enshrined in the PAFC Gabon standard.*