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Contact person:	<u>Adolfo Lemus</u>
Contact email:	alemus@ra.org

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Introduction

A key purpose of the Rainforest Alliance is to recognize good forest managers through credible independent certification of forestry practices. The Rainforest Alliance is a certification body accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council™¹. The purpose of these standards is to provide forest managers, landowners, forest industry, scientists, environmentalists and the general public with information on the aspects of forest management operations that Rainforest Alliance evaluates to make certification decisions in the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) certification system. These standards have been developed for Belize, based upon the Rainforest Alliance Generic standards which have been approved by the FSC (through the Accreditation Services International). The scope of the current standard is Belize (all forests types and geographic areas). The current interim standards have been specifically adapted by Rainforest Alliance to apply to Belize, and will be periodically up-dated based on stakeholders' input, new approved FSC policies, standards, directives, guidelines and advice notes, and field trials to this version. The principles, criteria and indicator in this document are applicable for assessing all Forest Management Enterprises (FME) with wood production as a major (though not exclusive) objective.

Background

Forests can be managed for many different objectives and products. Such management can occur in natural forests or plantations, for timber or non-timber forest products, include mechanized or manual harvesting, and managed by a large industrial operation or a local community or landowner cooperative. Many combinations are possible. A critical question has been - how to evaluate the wide range of ecological, socioeconomic and silvicultural impacts of forest management activities in a clear and consistent fashion, based on a combination of scientific research and practical experience?

In 1991, the former SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance put forth the *first* set of global standards for forest management certification, entitled "Generic Guidelines for Assessing Natural Forest Management" applicable at the forest or operational level for forest operations. In 1991, SmartWood also distributed the first region-specific guidelines for management of natural forests in Indonesia. In 1993, SmartWood distributed the draft "Generic Guidelines for Assessing Forest Plantations" and revised guidelines for natural forest management. The initial Working Group for developing the first FSC Principles and Criteria in 1991-1993 was co-chaired by the SmartWood Director. In 1998, after seven years of application and "learning by doing" through forest assessments and audits, SmartWood conducted a major revision of its standard for assessing forest management in both natural forests and tree plantations. Revisions since then have occurred in 2000, 2004 and 2008. Since 1993, each set of our standards has been reviewed by FSC staff, the international body that has accredited Rainforest Alliance as a forest management and chain of custody certifier.

These standards were developed in consultation with the staff and representatives of Rainforest Alliance worldwide, as well as other professional foresters, ecologists, social scientists and forest practitioners. Rainforest Alliance representatives have in-depth field experience developing region-specific forest certification standards, some going back as far as 1989 (Indonesia, California). We developed these standards to be in accord with FSC requirements as well as other forest management and biological conservation guidelines issued by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). We have also drawn on work of our Network partners (Imaflora in Brazil and NEPCon in Denmark, Scandinavia, Russia and Eastern Europe), Center for International

¹ Rainforest Alliance is an FSC accredited certifier FSC® A000520

Forestry Research (CIFOR), International Labor Organization (ILO), many scientists, forest industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and FSC regional standards working groups. We would like to acknowledge the significant contributions made by these and other international, national and local organizations, and the many forestry operations (certified and uncertified), foresters, loggers, and local stakeholders who have critiqued past versions of the Rainforest Alliance standards and provided suggestions for improvement.

Public Comments

The certification process has both public and private aspects. Certification assessments are not public documents unless specifically required by law (e.g. for some public forests) or approved for public distribution by the certified operation. However, three public documents are available for each and every certified FME:

1. A public stakeholder consultation document that announces each certification assessment at least 45 days prior to field work;
2. The certification standard used; and,
3. A public certification summary that is produced with the results of each separate forest certification.

The public stakeholder consultation document informs the public about the assessment at least 45 days prior to it taking place. This document is distributed publicly prior to or during an assessment. The document is typically distributed by hand delivery, FAX, mail, or email and is posted to the Rainforest Alliance website at www.rainforest-alliance.org. The specific Rainforest Alliance standard for each assessment is also publicly available before and during the assessment and is a part of the public record for every forest certification. The public certification summary is produced as a final step of the certification process, and is available only after an operation has been approved for certification. For public certification summaries visit the FSC certified organization website at <http://info.fsc.org/> or contact Rainforest Alliance at 8^a. Avenida, 15-62 Zona 10, Guatemala City, Guatemala; telephone (502) 2383-5757; fax (502) 2383-5777; email alemus@ra.org. **We strongly encourage you to give us your input, either positive or negative, on our candidate or certified FME, certification standards, or certification procedures.**

Note on the Use of this Standard

All aspects of this standard are considered to be normative, including the scope, standard effective date, references, terms and definitions, tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated.

Other notes

Regional Standards Development

FSC working groups around the world are developing country- or region-specific forest certification standards. Rainforest Alliance fully supports, encourages and participates wherever possible in such processes. Our experience is that the regional standard setting process is vital. Regional standard setting is an excellent way of engaging the public in important, broad ranging discussions on the future of forests and human communities. In other words, the regional standards setting process should not be seen just as a technical standards setting process, but also as a process of outreach on the topic of responsible forest management.

As part of the FSC process, regional standards are developed by a regional working group, field-tested, revised and approved by the regional working group, and then submitted to the

FSC's international headquarters for approval. The final product, if approved, is an "FSC accredited standard". Once accredited, all FSC-approved certifiers (like Rainforest Alliance) must use the endorsed regional standard as the fundamental starting point for FSC certification in that country/region. Certifiers may choose to be more rigorous than the regional standard, but they cannot be less rigorous.

In all countries or regions not covered by an FSC accredited forest stewardship standard, Rainforest Alliance will develop a locally adapted or interim standard for use in evaluating forest management operations in that designated geographic area. The adapted standard is developed from the Rainforest Alliance's generic standard with modification to certification indicators to take into account the national context (e.g. legal requirements, environmental, social and economic perspectives). This draft will be translated to the official language of the country in which the FME to be evaluated is located and is submitted for consultation for at least 60 days; then Rainforest Alliance makes modifications to the draft in a maximum of 10 days, based on comments received, and publish the official interim version at least 30 days prior to the start of fieldwork for a full assessment. In other words, a period of at least 100 days is needed from the distribution of the first draft of interim standards until the application of them in a fieldwork in countries where a working standard was not previously present. Distribution to key stakeholders occurs via the Internet (email and posted on the Rainforest Alliance website), mailings and face to face meetings.

Operations certified under a previous FSC or Rainforest Alliance standard have a maximum of one year to meet any newly endorsed FSC regional standard.

For the specific case of Belize, since there is not a FSC accredited national standard yet, Rainforest Alliance has developed this Interim Standard to be used, meanwhile. Among the documents that have been reviewed and considered in developing this Interim Standard are:

- FSC-STD-01-001 (version 4-0) FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship.
- FSC-STD-20-002 (version 3-0) Structure, Content, and Local Adaptation of Certification Body's Generic Forest Stewardship Standards.
- FSC-POL-30-401 FSC certification and ILO conventions.
- FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria.
- FM-12 Rainforest Alliance Generic Standards for Assessing Forest Management, Rainforest Alliance, April 2012.

Rainforest Alliance Standards Structure

The Rainforest Alliance generic standards are based directly on the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship (**FSC-STD-01-001**) and include specific generic indicators for each criterion to create a global Rainforest Alliance standard. These indicators are the starting point from which region-specific "Rainforest Alliance Interim Standards" are developed for use in the forest by forest auditors to evaluate the sustainability of forest management practices and impacts of candidate FME.

The standards are divided into the following ten principles:

- 1.0 Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles.
- 2.0 Tenure and Use Rights & Responsibilities.
- 3.0 Indigenous Peoples' Rights.

- 4.0 Community Relations and Workers' Rights.
- 5.0 Benefits from the Forest.
- 6.0 Environmental Impact.
- 7.0 Management Plan.
- 8.0 Monitoring and Assessment.
- 9.0 Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests.
- 10.0 Plantations.

In the standard, each FSC principle and its associated criteria is stated, along with the Rainforest Alliance indicators. All criteria in all principles must be evaluated in every assessment; unless certain principles are deemed not applicable by Rainforest Alliance auditors (e.g., Principle 10 will not be applicable if there are no plantations).

Indicators for Small and Large FME

As required under FSC policy, Rainforest Alliance has developed indicators for certain criteria² that are specific to certain sizes of operations. Clear quantitative definitions for small versus large FME are included in regionalized Rainforest Alliance Interim Standards. Where these Rainforest Alliance regional thresholds are not established, large FME should be considered those larger than 50,000 ha. Small FME definition is determined by FSC regional thresholds set for small or low intensity managed forests (SLIMF), which have been set either globally by FSC (100 ha) or by FSC National Initiatives.

² Criteria 4.4, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2, 8.5, 9.1, 9.2, 10.5, and 10.8.

Contents

A Scope

This standard shall be the basis for FSC certification of forest management enterprises in Belize.

B Standard effective date

This standard shall be effective from January 15, 2014.

C References

- FSC-STD-01-001 v4-0 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship.
- FSC-STD-01-002 v1-0 FSC Glossary of Terms.

D Terms and definitions

See Annex 4 for Glossary.

Acronyms:

- FME:** Forest management enterprise.
FMU: Forest management unit.
FSC: Forest Stewardship Council.
HCVF: High conservation value forests.
NTFP: Non-timber forest products.
RA: Rainforest Alliance.
SLIMF: Small or Low Intensity Managed Forests.

Rainforest Alliance Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Belize, December 2014

PRINCIPLE 1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES.

Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

- 1.1 Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.**
 - 1.1.1 Forest management enterprise (FME) shall demonstrate a record of compliance with the applicable national laws and regulations, including those related to forestry, environment, and labour (See Annex 1). Any noncompliance is being addressed with the appropriate agency.
 - 1.1.2 The relevant FME's staff shall have available and understand the content of the applicable national laws and regulations.
- 1.2 All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.**
 - 1.2.1 FME shall be up-to-date in payment of applicable fees, taxes, timber rights or leases, royalties, etc.
- 1.3 In signatory countries, the provisions of all binding international agreements such as CITES, ILO Conventions, ITTO, and Convention on Biological Diversity, shall be respected.**
 - 1.3.1 FME shall meet the intent of applicable conventions that Belize has ratified (See Annex 2).
 - 1.3.2 The relevant FME's staff shall have available and understand the legal and administrative obligations with respect to relevant international agreements.
- 1.4 Conflicts between laws, regulations and the FSC Principles and Criteria shall be evaluated for the purposes of certification, on a case-by-case basis, by the certifiers and the involved or affected parties.**
 - 1.4.1 Conflicts between laws, FSC P&C and international treaties or conventions shall be identified by FME.
 - 1.4.2 FME shall work in conjunction with the appropriate regulatory bodies and other parties to resolve conflicts between laws/regulations and FSC Principles or Criteria.
- 1.5 Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorised activities.**
 - 1.5.1 The forest management unit(s) (FMU) shall be protected by FME from unauthorized activities like human settlement, hunting, harvesting (of timber or non-timber forest products), damage to archaeological sites, or other activities not controlled by forest

manager.

- 1.5.2 FME shall clearly signal in the field the FMU's boundaries.
- 1.5.3 FME shall take appropriate measures to protect its FMU from wildfires, implementing effective actions to prevent and control them (e.g., environmental education, training, equipment, inter-institutional coordination).
- 1.5.4 Existing archaeological resources shall be demarcated on maps, and protected in the field. The planning documents shall contain guidelines for protection of such resources.
- 1.5.5 For large operations³, FME shall develop (in writing) and implement a strategy for control and surveillance of the FMU.
- 1.6 Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.**
 - 1.6.1 FME shall have a publicly available policy or statement committing the organization to adhere to the FSC certification standards on the forest under assessment. Whenever contractors are used, FME shall commit them to adhere to the FSC P&C.
 - 1.6.2 FME shall not implement activities that blatantly conflict with the FSC P&C on forest areas outside of the forest area under assessment.
 - 1.6.3 FME shall disclose information on all forest areas over which the FME has some degree of management responsibility to demonstrate conformance with current FSC policies on partial certification and on excision of areas from the scope of certification.

PRINCIPLE 2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

- 2.1 Clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land (e.g. land title, customary rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated.**
 - 2.1.1 FME shall demonstrate the land tenure is legal, clear, and documented.
 - 2.1.2 Under a lease agreement, FME shall have documented evidence of legal, long term⁴ rights to manage the lands and to utilize the forest resources for which certification are sought.
- 2.2 Local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights shall maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over forest operations unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.**
 - 2.2.1 FME shall acknowledge (in a formal, fair and documented way) the legal or customary

³ Large operation: > 10,000 ha for natural forests, and > 2,000 ha for forest plantations.

⁴ Long term: at least 10 years.

tenure or use rights of all local communities to manage or use the forest resources (timber or non-timber).

- 2.2.2 FME shall provide evidence that free and informed consent to management activities affecting use rights has been given by local communities or affected parties.
- 2.2.3 FME shall issue permits to local communities for harvesting of timber and NTFP, based on written or spoken agreements.
- 2.3 Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified.**
- 2.3.1 Disputes over tenure claims and use rights shall be resolving through a legal and systematic way, given preference to a voluntary/conciliatory means, before taking court measures.
- 2.3.2 FME should not be involved in outstanding disputes of substantial magnitude on the candidate forest area that involve a significant number of interests.

PRINCIPLE 3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS.

The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognised and respected.

- 3.1 Indigenous peoples shall control forest management on their lands and territories unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.**
- 3.1.1 FME shall acknowledge (in a formal, fair and documented way) the customary tenure or use rights of all indigenous peoples to manage or use the forest resources (timber or non-timber) from the FMU under assessment.
- 3.1.2 No forest management operations shall take place in areas identified under 3.1.1 above, without clear evidence of free and informed consent of the indigenous peoples claiming such land, territories or customary rights.
- 3.1.3 For cases where forest management is delegated to a third party, legally established agreements shall be in place.
- 3.1.4 Agreements with indigenous groups shall be honoured.
- 3.2 Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples.**
- 3.2.1 There shall be no evidence or indication that the FME threatens the rights and resources of indigenous peoples.
- 3.3 Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in co-operation with such peoples,**

and recognised and protected by forest managers.

- 3.3.1 Special sites of indigenous cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance shall be defined by the FME, with support from indigenous peoples. Those sites shall be clearly identified in management planning documents, on maps and in the forest.
- 3.3.2 Relevant indigenous peoples shall be in agreement with the guidelines for protecting the special sites during forest operations. Those guidelines shall be applied in the field.
- 3.4 Indigenous peoples shall be compensated for the application of their traditional knowledge regarding the use of forest species or management systems in forest operations. This compensation shall be formally agreed upon with their free and informed consent before forest operations commence.**
- 3.4.1 Indigenous peoples shall be fairly compensated for the use of their traditional knowledge for commercial purposes.
- 3.4.2 If applicable, the compensation systems shall be clearly established between the FME and the indigenous peoples.

PRINCIPLE 4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKER'S RIGHTS.

Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well being of forest workers and local communities.

- 4.1 The communities within, or adjacent to, the forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services.**
- 4.1.1 Local communities and residents shall be given equal or preferential opportunities in forest management activities in terms of employment, training, and provision of supplies to FME, and other benefits or opportunities.
- 4.2 Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.**
- 4.2.1 Wages and other benefits (health, retirement, worker's compensation, housing, food) for full-time staff and/or contractors shall be consistent with (not lower than) prevailing local standards.
- 4.2.2 Daily working hours for FME's staff and/or contractors shall not exceed the maximum allowed by the local standards, according to the type of activity.
- 4.2.3 FME shall prepare written contracts with its workers, where rights and obligations from both parties are clearly stated. Other kind of documents may be accepted, only if workers receive and accept in writing (at time of hire) the rights and obligations of both parties.
- 4.2.4 FME shall have first-aid kits available in offices and in the field, containing basic and adequate medicine; moreover, FME shall have trained personnel to give first aids in case of an accident.
- 4.2.5 FME's and contractor's workers shall be registered in the Social Security Board.

- 4.2.6 Health and safety measures in the FMU (including forest, office, and industrial facilities) shall comply with national minimum requirements.
- 4.2.7 Workers (staff and contractors) shall be provided with safety equipment in good working order, appropriate to the tasks of workers and the equipment used (e.g. local norms are important, ideally the following: hard hats, hearing protection, high visibility vests, steel toe boots, etc.).
- 4.2.8 Shelter conditions for FME's workers (including bathrooms), shall fulfill minimum national requirements for security and sanitation.
- 4.2.9 FME policies and practices shall ensure equal treatment of employees in terms of hiring, advancement, dismissal, remuneration, and employment related social security.
- 4.2.10 FME shall not allow the hiring of minors under sixteen years old. When minors (between 16 – 18 years old) are contracted, the assigned job shall not be injurious to the moral or physical development.
- 4.3 The rights of workers to organise and voluntarily negotiate with their employers shall be guaranteed as outlined in Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).**
- 4.3.1 FMEs, by their actions and policies, shall respect the rights of workers (staff and contractors) to organize or join trade unions as outlined in ILO Convention 87.
- 4.3.2 FMEs, by their actions and policies, shall respect the rights of workers (staff and contractors) to engage in collective bargaining as outlined in ILO Convention 98.
- 4.4 Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups (both men and women) directly affected by management operations.**
- 4.4.1 Large FME shall evaluate socio-economic impacts associated with forest management activities.
- 4.4.2 FME shall define, in writing, the steps to follow for consultation with local stakeholders, communities and neighbouring landowners who could be affected during management planning and operations (not applicable to SLIMF).
- 4.4.3 FME shall demonstrate that input from stakeholders' participation was considered and/or responded to during management planning and operations (not applicable to SLIMF).
- 4.4.4 Applicable to SLIMF only: FME shall keep an up-to-date list of the neighbouring landowners or communities that could be affected during and/or after the forest management activities.
- 4.5 Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed for resolving grievances and for providing fair compensation in the case of loss or damage affecting the legal or customary rights, property, resources, or livelihoods of local peoples. Measures shall be taken to avoid such loss or damage.**

- 4.5.1 FME shall make all reasonable efforts to avoid losses and damages affecting local peoples (e.g. roads, buffer zones and/or sources of water, special sites of cultural significance, or others that could affect resources or life of local peoples), and in resolving grievances related to legal rights, damage compensation and negative impacts.
- 4.5.2 Procedures for consistently and effectively resolving grievances and determining compensation for loss or damage shall be implemented, whenever needed. Those procedures shall be established with the participation of the affected parties.

PRINCIPLE 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST.

Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

- 5.1 Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.**
 - 5.1.1 FME shall develop a financial analysis that demonstrates the medium-term⁵ economic viability (for plantations the financial analysis shall, at least, be for a harvesting cycle), taking into consideration the environmental and social, as well as operational costs necessary to maintain certifiable status (e.g. management planning, road maintenance, silvicultural treatments, long-term forest health, growth and yield monitoring, and conservation investments). The analysis shall be based on credible assumptions.
 - 5.1.2 Applicable to SLIMF FME only (Note: the above indicator does not apply): FME shall have available a medium-term budget projection that includes the income, and provision for environmental and social, as well as operational costs necessary for forest management. The budget shall be based on credible assumptions.
 - 5.1.3 FME shall develop a database, and keep it updated, about the costs of activities related to forest management, as well as the income. These data shall be used to improve the future forest management planning.
- 5.2 Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.**
 - 5.2.1 FME shall seek the "highest and best use" for individual tree and timber species.
 - 5.2.2 In natural forests, FME shall encourage utilization of frequently occurring, lesser known, or less-commonly utilized plant species for commercial and subsistence uses.
 - 5.2.3 Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) shall be considered during forest use and processing, whenever it is technically and economically feasible.
 - 5.2.4 Local processing of forest products should be emphasised where possible.

⁵ Medium term: 5 – 10 years.

5.3 Forest management should minimise waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.

5.3.1 Harvesting techniques shall be designed to avoid log breakage, timber degradation and damage to the forest stand and other resources.

5.3.2 Waste generated through harvesting operations, on-site processing and extraction shall be minimized.

5.3.3 FME shall promote the use of waste generated from forest operations.

5.4 Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.

5.4.1 FME shall foster product diversification and exploration of new markets and products.

5.4.2 FME shall support local value added processing, whenever possible.

5.5 Forest management operations shall recognise, maintain, and, where appropriate, enhance the value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.

5.5.1 While planning the management, FME shall identify and value the natural resources and its environmental services.

5.5.2 FME shall protect the full range of forest services associated with the defined forest area including: municipal watersheds, commercial and recreational fisheries (or the supply of water to downstream fisheries), visual quality, contributions to regional biodiversity, recreation and tourism.

5.5.3 FME shall protect riparian zones along all watercourses, streams, pools, springs and lakes/ponds, consistent with the requirement of national regulations or best management practices.

5.6 The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained.

5.6.1 In natural forests, the annual allowable cut (AAC) of forest products (by area or volume), shall be established based on conservative, well-documented and most current estimates of growth and yield, making sure the actual harvests do not exceed calculated replenishment rates over the long term.

5.6.2 In natural forests, FME shall apply the established AAC.

5.6.3 In forest plantations, the growth projections and harvesting rates and regimes (for thinning and final harvesting), shall be based on well-documented information and on field data, and be consistent with the species performance in the region.

- 5.6.4 For investment operations⁶: In case the growth projections are used for making financial investment claims, the FME shall include a visible clarification statement in all material carrying the FSC and RA trademarks, about the responsibility of the financial claims (e.g., “FSC and RA are not responsible for, and do not endorse, any financial claims on returns on investments”) (based on FSC-STD-50-001 V1-2, Section 9).

PRINCIPLE 6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.

- 6.1 Assessment of environmental impacts shall be completed – appropriate to the scale, intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources – and adequately integrated into management systems. Assessments shall include landscape level considerations as well as the impacts of on-site processing facilities. Environmental impacts shall be assessed prior to commencement of site-disturbing operations.**
- 6.1.1 FME shall complete environmental assessments during management planning, prior to implement site disturbing activities (not applicable to SLIMF).
- 6.1.2 FME shall apply the recommendations from the environmental assessment, in order to minimize the possible negative impacts resulting from the forest management.
- 6.1.3 Environmental impacts of on-site processing facilities shall be controlled (e.g. waste, construction impacts, etc.).
- 6.2 Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting shall be controlled.**
- 6.2.1 The likely presence of rare, threatened or endangered species (see Annex 3), and their habitats (e.g. nesting and feeding areas) in the FMU shall be assessed by FME on the basis of the best available information.
- 6.2.2 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of management, conservation zones, protection areas or other protection measures shall be established based on technically sound requirements for the protection of rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats. Those protection measures shall be described in the management plan.
- 6.2.3 Conservation zones shall be demarcated on maps, and where feasible, on the ground. Conservation zones shall be protected when the forest operations take place.
- 6.2.4 Applicable to SLIMF FME only: (note: indicators 6.2.1 – 6.2.3 do not apply) Where

⁶ In this context, “investment operation” is a forest management project developed in a natural forest or an established forest plantation, where the FME gets financial resources from a variety of investors in order to achieve its management objectives, usually through the offering of financial investment returns in a given period of time.

information exists on rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitat, the FME shall use this information to protect these resources.

6.2.5 Timber species on either local and/or international endangered or threatened species lists (e.g. CITES Appendix 1, national lists) shall not be harvested.

6.2.6 Hunting, fishing, trapping and NTFP collecting shall be controlled in the FMU.

6.3 Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including:

a) Forest regeneration and succession.

b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.

c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.

6.3.1 FME shall document the ecological and silvicultural justification for the management system, based on Government regulations, field data specific to the forest and/or technical publications.

6.3.2 In natural forest, the management systems shall maintain, enhance or restore forest composition and structure (e.g. species number and diversity). When refinement silvicultural systems (e.g. liberation) are applied, those shall be well justified in the planning documents, and approved by the Belize Forest Department.

6.3.3 FME shall use fallen or standing dead trees only if there is a solid technical justification in the planning documents, that the removal of such trees does not negatively affect the forest ecological functions.

6.4 Representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape shall be protected in their natural state and recorded on maps, appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations and the uniqueness of the affected resources.

6.4.1 In natural forest, representative samples of existing ecosystems shall be protected in their natural state, based on the identification of key biological areas and/or consultation with environmental stakeholders, local government and scientific authorities (at least 10% is promoted).

6.4.2 In forest plantations, representative samples of existing ecosystems shall be protected in their natural state, and/or afforest some areas by using native species to the region (at least 10% is promoted).

6.5 Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to: control erosion; minimise forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbances; and protect water resources.

6.5.1 FME shall have written guidelines for soil conservation, protection of water resources, minimise forest damage during harvesting (sawing, skidding, transportation), construction of roads, skid trails, and log yards, and other activities that could generate mechanical disturbances.

6.5.2 Prior to harvesting, FME shall prepare maps at a scale that allows effective supervision of

soil and water resource management and protection activities, including roads, main skid trails, log yards, drainage structures, buffer zones, and conservation areas.

- 6.5.3 Training shall be given to FME staff and contractors to meet guidance requirements, and for the correct use of maps (not applicable to SLIMF).
- 6.5.4 FME shall demonstrate that the defined guidelines are being implemented, including the use of maps in the field.
- 6.5.5 FME shall prepare guidelines for construction, maintenance, and closure of roads in the FMU; those guidelines shall be followed in the field.
- 6.5.6 FME shall take appropriate measures to avoid obstruction of natural watercourses during management operations (e.g. avoid dirt fillings instead of a bridge to pass a creek).
- 6.6 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. World Health Organisation Type 1A and 1B and 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. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimise health and environmental risks.**
- 6.6.1 Forest managers shall employ silvicultural systems, integrated pest management and vegetation control strategies that result in the least adverse environmental impact. Pesticides are used only when non-chemical management practices have been proven ineffective or cost prohibitive.
- 6.6.2 If chemicals are used, the following requirements apply:
- A complete inventory of chemicals shall be provided by the FME and detailed inspections of storage areas or other facilities validate that inventory is complete and accurate;
 - Records shall be kept of all chemical used by the FME including name of the product, location and method of application, total quantity of chemical used and dates of application.
 - Safe handling, application (using proper equipment) and storage procedures shall be followed; and,
 - Staff and contractors shall receive training in handling, application and storage procedures.
- 6.6.3 Chemicals prohibited by the FSC (FSC-GUI-30-001 V2-0), or those banned in Europe, U.S. and Belize, or World Health Organization Type 1A or 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides shall not be used. The exception is when a formal derogation has been granted by the FSC. In such cases, the FME follows the terms of the approved derogation.
- 6.7 Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.**

- 6.7.1 Chemical, container, liquid and solid waste shall be disposed of off-site in an environmentally sound and legal manner, whether from forest operations or processing facilities.
- 6.8 Use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimised, monitored and strictly controlled in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols. Use of genetically modified organisms shall be prohibited.**
- 6.8.1 Use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimized, monitored and strictly controlled by FME.
- 6.8.2 Use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) shall be prohibited by FME.
- 6.9 The use of exotic species shall be carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.**
- 6.9.1 Use of exotic species by FME shall be well justified (from a technical and environmental side); the use of exotic species shall be approved by the relevant Government agencies.
- 6.9.2 Selected exotic species for plantations shall be adequate for the site conditions and management objectives.
- 6.9.3 Where exotic species are planted, measures shall occur to prevent spontaneous regeneration outside plantation areas, unusual mortality, disease, insect outbreaks or other adverse environmental impacts.
- 6.10 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in circumstances where conversion:**
- a) Entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and,**
 - b) Does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and,**
 - c) Will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.**
- 6.10.1 FME shall not convert forests, or threatened non-forested habitat to plantations or non-forest land uses, except where the conversion meets the conditions of 6.10.2 – 6.10.4.
- 6.10.2 If conversion occurs, it shall be very limited in scale and not exceed 5% of the forest management unit over any 5 year period (see FSC-DIR-20-007-ADV-10).
- 6.10.3 If the conversion occurs, plantations or non-forest uses shall not replace high conservation value forests.
- 6.10.4 If conversion occurs, the forest manager shall demonstrate that any conversion produces long term conservation benefits across the FMU.
- 6.10.5 FME shall not make activities that contribute to the destruction or substantial alteration of natural forests, or other type of natural ecosystems, in areas outside the assessed FMUs.

PRINCIPLE 7: MANAGEMENT PLAN.

A management plan – appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations – shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long-term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.

7.1 The management plan and supporting documents shall provide:

- a) Management objectives.**
- b) Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands.**
- c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories.**
- d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection.**
- e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics.**
- f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments.**
- g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.**
- h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership.**
- i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.**

7.1.1 FME management plan, or appendices or reference documents, shall include presentation of the following components:

- a) Management objectives;**
- b) Land tenure status;**
- c) Description of the forest resources to be managed (timber and non timber), environmental conditions and limitations, land use, socioeconomic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands;**
- d) Silvicultural and ecological justification of management prescription, based on information gathered through resource inventories or permanent sample plots, and on publications about the ecology of the forest in question;**
- e) Description and justification of rate of harvest of forest products (timber or non-timber, as applicable), based on the annual allowable cut, or silvicultural programs;**
- f) In natural forest, description and justification for species selection to harvest, and the minimum diameters to use;**
- g) Measures for identifying and protecting rare, threatened and endangered species and/or their habitat;**
- h) High quality and adequate maps to guide forest activities, with information including boundaries, forest types, production areas, protected areas, harvesting compartments, infrastructure (roads, bridges, camping areas, log yards) cultural resources and its buffer zones;**
- i) Description and justification for use of different techniques and equipment for the establishment, maintenance, management, and harvesting;**
- j) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments;**
- k) Forest protection plan for controlling wildfires, pests and diseases, human settlements, illegal harvesting, hunting, immigration, damage to cultural sites, among others; and,**
- l) Plans for monitoring of forest growth, regeneration and dynamics.**

- 7.1.2 Management plans or related annual operating or harvesting plan shall be technically sound, applied in the field, detailed enough, and according to the size of the FME and to the complexity and intensity of forest operations.
- 7.1.3 Applicable to SLIMF FME only: (note: above indicators do not apply) A written management plan exists that includes at least the following:
- a) The objectives of management;
 - b) A description of the forest;
 - c) How the objectives will be met, harvesting methods and silvicultural systems to ensure management in the long-term;
 - d) Reasonable harvest limits (which must be consistent with FSC criterion 5.6);
 - e) Environmental/ social impacts of the plan;
 - f) Conservation of rare species and any high conservation values;
 - g) Maps of the forest, showing protected areas, planned management and land ownership; and,
 - h) Duration of the plan.
- 7.1.4 Management plans or related annual operating or harvesting plan shall be available to staff and used in the forest.
- 7.2 The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.**
- 7.2.1 A technically sound and financially realistic timeframe shall exist for revision/adjustment of the management plan.
- 7.2.2 Management plan (and/or annual operating plan) revision or adjustments shall occur on timely and consistent basis.
- 7.2.3 Management plan revisions shall incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information regarding changing silvicultural, environmental, social and economic conditions.
- 7.3 Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.**
- 7.3.1 Evidence of formal or informal training of forest workers to ensure proper implementation of the management plan shall exist in the forest.
- 7.3.2 For large FME, a formal training plan for staff and forest workers related to the management plan and its implementation shall be documented and executed.
- 7.3.3 According to the size and complexity of forest operations, FME shall have a formal administrative section or unit made of qualified personnel (administrator or manager, forest engineer, forest technician), in charge of the proper execution of the management plan (not applicable to SLIMF).
- 7.4 While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the primary elements of the management plan, including those listed in Criterion 7.1.**

- 7.4.1 FME shall make publicly available a summary of the management plan, including information on elements listed in Indicator 7.1.1.
- 7.4.2 Applicable for SLIMF FME only (Note: above indicator does not apply): Upon request, FME shall make available relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who are directly or indirectly affected by the forest management activities of FME (e.g. adjacent landowners, affected communities).

PRINCIPLE 8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT.

Monitoring shall be conducted -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management -- to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.

- 8.1 The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations as well as the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change.**
- 8.1.1 A plan and design, based on consistent and replicable procedures, shall exist for periodic monitoring and reporting.
- 8.1.2 The frequency and intensity of monitoring shall be based on the size and complexity of the operation and the fragility of the resources under management.
- 8.1.3 Applicable to SLIMF FME only (Note: above indicators do not apply): FME shall conduct regular and consistent monitoring in connection with harvesting operations and reforestation.
- 8.2 Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators:**
- a) Yield of all forest products harvested.**
 - b) Growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest.**
 - c) Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna.**
 - d) Environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations.**
 - e) Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.**
- 8.2.1 The monitoring plan should be technically sound and identify/describe observed changes in conditions in terms of:
- Silviculture (growth rates, regeneration and forest condition, typically as part of a suitable continuous forest inventory system);
 - Commercial harvest including NTFPs (volumes of commercial harvest, harvested areas);
 - Environment (environmental changes affecting flora, fauna, soil and water resources; outbreak of pests, invasive species, nesting sites for endangered bird species);
 - Socioeconomic aspects (forest management costs, yields of all products, and changes in community and worker relations or conditions, accident rates); and,
 - Identified high conservation value forest attributes.

- 8.2.2 Applicable to SLIMF FME only (Note: above indicator does not apply): FME shall at a minimum monitor and record information on the following:
- Amount of products harvested;
 - Invasive exotic species;
 - Growth and regeneration of managed species;
 - Post harvest inspection for erosion and estimate of residual basal area;
 - Regular monitoring of any identified high conservation values.
- 8.2.3 A network of permanent sample plots (PSP) shall be installed. The PSP shall be representative of the area under management, in order to be able to collect periodic and statistically reliable information on growth, regeneration, mortality, and general conditions of the forest.
- 8.3 Documentation shall be provided by the forest manager to enable monitoring and certifying organisations to trace each forest product from its origin, a process known as the "chain of custody."**
- 8.3.1 Volume and source data on harvested forest products shall be available (i.e. scaled, inventoried, measured) in the forest, in transport, at intermediate storage yards (e.g. log yards), and processing centers controlled by FME.
- 8.3.2 Sales invoices and other documentation related to the sale of certified products shall include the FSC product group description (e.g. *FSC 100% Mahogany Boards*), and the chain of custody certificate code in the correct format (e.g. *RA-FM/COC-XXXXXX*).
- 8.3.3 Certified forest products shall be clearly distinguished from non-certified products through marks or labels, separate documented storage, and accompanying invoices up to the point of sale (i.e. up to the "forest gate").
- 8.4 The results of monitoring shall be incorporated into the implementation and revision of the management plan.**
- 8.4.1 FME shall demonstrate that monitoring results are incorporated into revisions of the management plan, or other planning documents.
- 8.5 While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the results of monitoring indicators, including those listed in Criterion 8.2.**
- 8.5.1 For large operations, results of monitoring shall be incorporated into summaries and other documents that are publicly available.
- 8.5.2 For investment operations: the FME shall make available, at least to its investors, the results and analysis of measurements of its permanent sampling plots.
- 8.5.3 Applicable to SLIMF FME only (Note: indicator 8.5.1 does not apply): Upon request, FME shall make available relevant parts of the monitoring results to stakeholders who are directly or indirectly affected by the forest management activities of FME (e.g. adjacent landowners).

PRINCIPLE 9: MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS.

Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes, which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.

9.1 Assessment to determine the presence of the attributes consistent with High Conservation Value Forests will be completed, appropriate to scale and intensity of forest management.

9.1.1 FME shall have conducted an assessment to identify HCVs within the FMU. Such an assessment shall include:

- Consultation with conservation databases and maps;
- Consideration of primary or secondary data collected during forest inventories on the designated forest area by FME staff, consultants or advisors;
- Interviews with environmental/biological specialists, indigenous/local communities, and scientific experts, among others; and
- Documentation of threats to HCVs.

9.1.2 Applicable to SLIMF FME only (Note: the above indicator does not apply): Consultations shall have occurred with environmental stakeholders, government or scientists to identify HCVs and/or HCVF. If HCVs or HCVF are present, FME shall take all reasonable steps to protect these values and/or reduce threats.

9.2 The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance thereof.

9.2.1 FME consultations with stakeholders shall clearly outline identified conservation attributes as well as proposed strategies for their maintenance or threat reduction. No SLIMF operations shall document its stakeholder consultations.

9.3 The management plan shall include and implement specific measures that ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of the applicable conservation attributes consistent with the precautionary approach. These measures shall be specifically included in the publicly available management plan summary.

9.3.1 If HCVF or HCVs are present, planning documents shall provide site-specific information which describes the measures taken to protect or restore such values.

9.3.2 Measures to protect HCVF values shall be available in public documents or in the FME management plan summary.

9.3.3 FME shall demonstrate the application of measures to protect HCVF in the field.

9.4 Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.

9.4.1 In case HCVF are identified within the FMU, FME shall monitor and assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.

PRINCIPLE 10: PLANTATIONS.

Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1 - 9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

10.1 The management objectives of the plantation, including natural forest conservation and restoration objectives, shall be explicitly stated in the management plan, and clearly demonstrated in the implementation of the plan.

10.1.1 Objectives of tree planting shall be explicit in the management plan, with clear statements regarding the relationship between tree planting and the silviculture, socioeconomic and environmental (i.e. forest conservation and restoration) realities in the region.

10.1.2 Management objectives for conservation of natural forest and restoration shall be described in the management plan, and demonstrated in forest management activities.

10.1.3 FME shall execute pruning and thinning on time, according to species requirements, status of plantation, and production objectives.

10.2 The design and layout of plantations should promote the protection, restoration and conservation of natural forests, and not increase pressures on natural forests. Wildlife corridors, streamside zones and a mosaic of stands of different ages and rotation periods shall be used in the layout of the plantation, consistent with the scale of the operation. The scale and layout of plantation blocks shall be consistent with the patterns of forest stands found within the natural landscape.

10.2.1 Planning and distribution of forest plantations shall protect and conserve the natural forests and wildlife corridors.

10.2.2 Buffer zones along watercourses and around water bodies shall be established according to regional best management practices or local laws and regulations.

10.2.3 Areas of natural forest, wildlife corridors, buffer zones for water bodies, and other protection areas shall be identified in the field and indicated on maps.

10.3 Diversity in the composition of plantations is preferred, so as to enhance economic, ecological and social stability. Such diversity may include the size and spatial distribution of management units within the landscape, number and genetic composition of species, age classes and structures.

10.3.1 FME should maintain and/or enhance landscape diversity by varying block size and configuration, species, genetic diversity, age class and structure.

10.4 The selection of species for planting shall be based on their overall suitability for the site and their appropriateness to the management objectives. In order to enhance the conservation of biological diversity, native species are preferred over exotic species in the establishment of plantations and the restoration of degraded ecosystems. Exotic species, which shall be used only when their performance is

greater than that of native species, shall be carefully monitored to detect unusual mortality, disease, or insect outbreaks and adverse ecological impacts.

10.4.1 FME shall base the selection of species and sources on technical justifications and documented trials (when available) that show the suitability to specific site conditions (soils, topography and climate) and management objectives.

10.4.2 Where exotic species have been selected, the FME shall explicitly justify this choice demonstrating that their performance is greater than that of native species. Moreover, the specific measures to prevent spontaneous regeneration outside plantation areas, unusual mortality, diseases, insect outbreaks or other adverse environmental impacts shall be documented.

10.4.3 FME shall keep documented proof of the source of seeds or vegetative material used for establishing the plantations.

10.5 A proportion of the overall forest management area, appropriate to the scale of the plantation and to be determined in regional standards, shall be managed so as to restore the site to a natural forest cover.

10.5.1 Representative samples of existing natural ecosystems shall be protected or restored to their natural state, based on the identification of key biological areas, consultation with stakeholders, local government and scientific authorities (at least 10% is promoted).

10.5.2 Applicable to SLIMF FME only (note: above indicator does not apply): Plantation design and management practices shall protect ecological values, especially around conservation features or protected areas.

10.6 Measures shall be taken to maintain or improve soil structure, fertility, and biological activity. The techniques and rate of harvesting, road and trail construction and maintenance, and the choice of species shall not result in long-term soil degradation or adverse impacts on water quality, quantity or substantial deviation from stream course drainage patterns.

10.6.1 Explicit measures shall be taken to maintain or enhance the soil in terms of structure, fertility and biological activity, during design, establishment, and management of forest plantations.

10.6.2 The harvesting systems and selection of equipment shall take into account the specific site conditions, slope, precipitation, type of product to harvest, and the project size. Harvesting activities shall be executed during the dry-weather time of the year.

10.6.3 FME shall take appropriate measures to minimise degradation of water quality, quantity, and distribution

10.7 Measures shall be taken to prevent and minimize outbreaks of pests, diseases, fire and invasive plant introductions. Integrated pest management shall form an essential part of the management plan, with primary reliance on prevention and biological control methods rather than chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Plantation management should make every effort to move away from chemical pesticides and fertilizers, including their use in nurseries. The use of chemicals is

also covered in Criteria 6.6 and 6.7.

- 10.7.1 Measures shall be taken in the forest to prevent outbreaks of pests, diseases, and invasive plant introductions.
- 10.7.2 FME shall develop a plan for forest fire prevention and control.
- 10.7.3 An integrated pest management plan shall exist that identifies pests, determines acceptable injury or action thresholds, and alternative methods of addressing threats.
- 10.7.4 FME shall have a policy and strategy to minimize use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers.
- 10.7.5 The vegetative material damaged by pests and/or diseases shall be disposed of using adequate and safe practices.
- 10.8 Appropriate to the scale and diversity of the operation, monitoring of plantations shall include regular assessment of potential on-site and off-site ecological and social impacts, (e.g. natural regeneration, effects on water resources and soil fertility, and impacts on local welfare and social well-being), in addition to those elements addressed in principles 8, 6 and 4. No species should be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site, are not invasive, and do not have significant negative ecological impacts on other ecosystems. Special attention will be paid to social issues of land acquisition for plantations, especially the protection of local rights of ownership, use or access.**
 - 10.8.1 Monitoring shall include evaluation of potential onsite and off-site ecological and social impacts of plantation activities.
 - 10.8.2 Applicable to SLIMF FME only (note: above indicator does not apply): FME shall document negative environmental or social impacts and design and implement measures to address the impacts.
 - 10.8.3 No species shall be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site, and that invasive characteristics, if any, can be controlled.
 - 10.8.4 The purchase of lands or land leases for plantation establishment shall respect the rights of local people (including indigenous people with customary tenure or use rights) to own, use, and access of resources.
- 10.9 Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994 normally shall not qualify for certification. Certification may be allowed in circumstances where sufficient evidence is submitted to the certification body that the manager/owner is not responsible directly or indirectly of such conversion.**
 - 10.9.1 The plantation shall not occupy land converted from natural forest since November 1994, unless clear evidence exists that the current manager/owner was not directly or indirectly responsible for such conversion.

Annex 1: List of national and local forest and related laws and administrative requirements which apply in Belize.

- Forests Act. December 31, 2000.
- Forests (Royalty) Ordinance, 1973 (No. 15 of 1973). April 18, 1973.
- Plant Protection Ordinance 1941.
- Wild Life Protection Regulations 1945.
- Private Forests (Conservation Act). December 01, 1945.
- Fisheries Ordinance.
- Forest Rules, 1957.
- Forest Rules. October 31, 2003.
- Land Reserves (other than Indian and Carib Reserves) Regulations, 1962.
- Regulations made by the Governor in Council under Section 9(a) of the Fisheries Ordinance, Chapter 133 of the Laws of British Honduras revised edition, 1958.
- Water and Sewerage Ordinance.
- Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution) Act 1971.
- Merchant Shipping Act 1974.
- Forest Reservation (Cockscomb Basin Forest Reserve) Order 1977.
- Dangerous Goods Ordinance.
- Forests Ordinance.
- Wildlife Protection Act 1981.
- National Park System Act 1981.
- Removal of Refuse (Belmopan) Regulations.
- Wildlife Sanctuary Declaration (Crooked Tree) Order.
- Cockscomb Basin (Closed Area for Hunting) Regulations.
- Forest Reservation (Cockscomb Basin Forest Reserve) Order 1984.
- Biological Residues (Control) Regulations 1985.
- The Pesticides Control Act 1985.
- Wildlife Sanctuary Reservation (Cockscomb Basin) Order 1986.
- Forest Reservation (Grant Works Reserve) Order 1987.
- The Registered and Restricted Pesticides (Uses, Restrictions and Precautions) Regulations.
- The Solid Waste Management Authority Act 1991.
- Environmental Protection Act 1992.
- The Mines and Minerals (Safety, Health and Environmental) Regulations.

- The Registered and Restricted Pesticides (Registration) Regulations, 1995.
- Environmental Protection (Effluent Limitations) Regulations 1995.
- Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1995.
- The Pollution Regulations, 1996.
- Labour Act, 2000.
- Labour Act: Subsidiary Laws, 2003.
- International Labour Organization Conventions Act, 2003.

Annex 2: List of the multilateral environmental agreements and ILO Conventions that Belize has ratified.

- Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) Ratified in 1993.
- UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (1990).
- International Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles for the Western Hemisphere (December 21st, 1997) International Plant Protection Convention (Rome, 1951).
- Convention on the Conservation of Biodiversity and the Protection of Priority Wilderness Areas in Central America (Managua, 1992).
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971).
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Washington, 1973).
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (New York, 1992).
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Heritage (Paris, 1972).
- Convention on the Protection of Archaeological, Historical and Artistic Heritage of American Nations (Santiago, 1976).
- Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) (1989).
- Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America (ALIDES) (1994).
- Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 1983).
- Convention 87, International Labour Organization, Ratified in 1983.
- Convention 98, International Labour Organization, Ratified in 1983.

Annex 3: List of officially endangered species in Belize.

- Species in the Animals Appendix I, II and III, and species in the Plants Appendix II and III: <http://www.cites.org/esp/index.shtml>
- IUCN Red List species (2007) native de Belize: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

Annex 4: Glossary of terms⁷

Biological diversity: The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (See Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992).

Biological control agents: Living organisms used to eliminate or regulate the population of other living organisms.

Biological diversity values: The intrinsic, ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic values of biological diversity and its components. (See Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992).

Chain of custody: The channel through which products are distributed from their origin in the forest to their end-use.

Chemicals: The range of fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, and hormones which are used in forest management.

Criterion (pl. Criteria): A means of judging whether or not a Principle (of forest stewardship) has been fulfilled.

Customary rights: Rights which result from a long series of habitual or customary actions, constantly repeated, which have, by such repetition and by uninterrupted acquiescence, acquired the force of a law within a geographical or sociological unit.

Ecosystem: A community of all plants and animals and their physical environment, functioning together as an interdependent unit.

Endangered species: Any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Exotic species: An introduced species not native or endemic to the area in question.

Forest integrity: The composition, dynamics, functions and structural attributes of a natural forest.

Forest management/manager: The people responsible for the operational management of the forest resource and of the enterprise, as well as the management system and structure, and the planning and field operations.

Forest management unit (FMU): A clearly defined forest area with mapped boundaries, managed by a single managerial body to a set of explicit objectives which are expressed in a self-contained multi-year management plan.

⁷ from FSC glossary of terms, FSC-STD-01-002 V1-0

Forest stewardship: Forest management which, in conformity with the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship, is environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable.

Genetically modified organisms: Biological organisms, which have been induced by various means to consist of genetic structural changes.

Indicator: A quantitative or qualitative variable which can be measured or described, and which provides a means of judging whether a forest management unit complies with the requirements of an FSC Criterion. Indicators and the associated thresholds thereby define the requirements for responsible forest management at the level of the forest management unit and are the primary basis of forest evaluation.

Indigenous lands and territories: The total environment of the lands, air, water, sea, sea-ice, flora and fauna, and other resources which indigenous peoples have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. (Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Part VI).

Indigenous peoples: "The existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them and, by conquest, settlement, or other means reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial situation; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form a part, under State structure which incorporates mainly the national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant." (Working definition adopted by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples).

Investment operation: a forest management project developed in a natural forest or an established forest plantation, where the FME gets financial resources from a variety of investors in order to achieve its management objectives, usually through the offering of financial investment returns in a given period of time.

High Conservation Value Forests: High Conservation Value Forests are those that possess one or more of the following attributes:

- a) forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia);
- b) large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance;
- c) forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems;
- d) forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control);
- e) forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health); and/or

- f) areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

Landscape: A geographical mosaic composed of interacting ecosystems resulting from the influence of geological, topographical, soil, climatic, biotic and human interactions in a given area.

Local laws: Includes all legal norms given by organisms of government whose jurisdiction is less than the national level, such as departmental, municipal and customary norms.

Long term: The time-scale of the forest owner or manager as manifested by the objectives of the management plan, the rate of harvesting, and the commitment to maintain permanent forest cover. The length of time involved will vary according to the context and ecological conditions, and will be a function of how long it takes a given ecosystem to recover its natural structure and composition following harvesting or disturbance, or to produce mature or primary conditions.

Native species: A species that occurs naturally in the region; endemic to the area.

Natural cycles: Nutrient and mineral cycling as a result of interactions between soils, water, plants, and animals in forest environments that affect the ecological productivity of a given site.

Natural Forest: Forest areas where many of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems such as complexity, structure and diversity are present, as defined by FSC approved national and regional standards of forest management.

Non-timber forest products: All forest products except timber, including other materials obtained from trees such as resins and leaves, as well as any other plant and animal products.

Other forest types: Forest areas that do not fit the criteria for plantation or natural forests and which are defined more specifically by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship.

Plantation: Forest areas lacking most of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems as defined by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship, which result from the human activities of planting, sowing or intensive silvicultural treatments.

Precautionary approach: Tool for the implementation of the precautionary principle.

Principle: An essential rule or element; in FSC's case, of forest stewardship.

Silviculture: The art of producing and tending a forest by manipulating its establishment, composition and growth to best fulfil the objectives of the owner. This may, or may not, include timber production.

SLIMF (small or low intensity managed forest): A forest management unit which meets specific FSC requirements related to size and/or intensity of timber harvesting, and can therefore be evaluated by certification bodies using streamlined evaluation procedures. The applicable FSC requirements are defined in *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria*.

Stakeholder: Individuals and organizations with a legitimate interest in the goods and services provided by an FMU; and those with an interest in the environmental and social effects of an

FMU's activities, products and services. They include: those individuals and organizations which exercise statutory environmental control over the FMU; local people; employees; investors and insurers; customers and consumers; environmental interest and consumer groups and the general public [modified from Upton and Bass, 1995].

Succession: Progressive changes in species composition and forest community structure caused by natural processes (nonhuman) over time.

Tenure: Socially defined agreements held by individuals or groups, recognized by legal statutes or customary practice, regarding the "bundle of rights and duties" of ownership, holding, access and/or usage of a particular land unit or the associated resources there within (such as individual trees, plant species, water, minerals, etc).

Threatened species: Any species that is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all, or a significant portion of its range.

Use rights: Rights for the use of forest resources that can be defined by local custom, mutual agreements, or prescribed by other entities holding access rights. These rights may restrict the use of particular resources to specific levels of consumption or particular harvesting techniques.

Annex 5: Summary of the Rainforest Alliance Certification Assessment Process⁸

The certification assessment process begins with a candidate FME submitting an application to Rainforest Alliance. Based upon a review of the application, the scope of the area to be certified and discussions with the candidate, Rainforest Alliance will propose a certification process that includes either a preassessment followed by a main assessment, or goes directly to a main assessment. Every candidate operation is assigned a Rainforest Alliance task manager who will liaise with the assessment lead auditor and the candidate to schedule and perform the evaluations.

Rainforest Alliance auditors are provided with detailed guidance on the certification process, including pre-assessment briefings (either in person or by telephone) and access to a written Rainforest Alliance handbook for forest assessment. The purpose of these briefings and the manual is to ensure that a consistent and thorough certification process is followed.

In addition to following the Rainforest Alliance procedures outlined in our forest evaluation handbook, there are three other ways in which we ensure accuracy and fairness in our certifications:

1. The assessment must involve individuals who are familiar with the particular region and type of forest management operation under evaluation. It is Rainforest Alliance policy to involve local specialists in all assessments.
2. Team members must be familiar with Rainforest Alliance certification procedures. Each Rainforest Alliance certification assessment has a designated lead auditor who must have participated in a formal Rainforest Alliance auditor-training course or previously participated in other Rainforest Alliance forest management assessments or audits.
3. The assessment must use region-specific standards (i.e. accredited FSC standard or a “regionalized” Rainforest Alliance Interim Standard, based on the Rainforest Alliance Generic Standard).

Team Selection and Planning – Rainforest Alliance selects a qualified lead auditor and other team members to participate in the assessment. The lead auditor’s first task is to ensure that all team members understand the scope and intent of the assessment process. Responsibility for evaluation of different sections (i.e. specific criteria and indicators) of the standard are assigned to different team members, depending on their particular training and expertise. All team members can provide input into any principle, but lead responsibility is assigned for data collection, analysis and writing for each criterion and indicator.

Stakeholder notification: At least 45 days prior to forest evaluation, Rainforest Alliance notifies stakeholders of the pending assessment and requests stakeholders’ observations or comments with regard to the operations conformance with the certification standard.

Fieldwork and Data Collection – Evaluation of conformance with the standard is based upon data collection by the auditors through review of FME management documentation, interviews with staff and stakeholders, and field observations and measurements. The team organizes opening meetings with the FME staff to review the assessment scope and procedures and certification standards. Documentation review and interview with FME staff begin immediately. The assessment process then moves quickly to the field phase. Inspections are made to sites

⁸ For detailed information about procedures, contact our headquarters or regional offices through www.rainforest-alliance.org

chosen by Rainforest Alliance auditors based on a comprehensive review of the candidate FME's forest holdings and management activities, discussions with interested/affected parties, and identification of critical issues or challenging sites. Site visits occur in the forest, at processing facilities, and in surrounding communities. Visits emphasize management activities of all types and phases and different biological or physical conditions.

Team members meet independently with stakeholders. All assessments solicit and incorporate input (confidential and/or open) from directly affected and/or knowledgeable stakeholders, including local communities, adjoining landowners, local forest industry, environmental organizations, government agencies, and scientific researchers. During these consultations, assessment team members explain the assessment process, solicit opinions, and gather impressions about the field performance of the FME being assessed.

Data Analysis and Decision making – Throughout the assessment the team meets independently to discuss progress in gathering information, and discuss preliminary findings. The assessment team works in a consensus fashion to analyze information and evidence gathered, evaluate conformance and reach agreement on their findings as to the certification of the candidate FME.

The assessment team evaluates performance by the FME at the indicator level of the standard. Any non-conformances are analyzed and classified as either minor or major. A nonconformance is considered major if it results in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant criterion in the standard. Conversely, a nonconformance is considered minor if the impacts are limited in scale, prompt corrective action has been taken to ensure it will not be repeated and it does not result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant criterion. For each area of nonconformance identified, the assessment team develops a Nonconformity Report (NCR), which could be classified as follows:

- **Major Nonconformity Report (MAJOR NCR)** is issued to document a major nonconformance with an indicator(s)/criterion that the candidate FME must correct before Rainforest Alliance certification is granted;
- **Nonconformity Report (NCR)** is issued to document a minor nonconformance that candidate FME must correct by a specific deadline (i.e., short term - usually within one year) during the renewable five-year certification period (which is the standard FSC certification contract period); and,
- **Observation (OBS)** is issued when the audit team finds a very minor problem or the early stages of a problem which do not of itself constitute a non-conformance, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future nonconformance if not addressed by the FME. An observation may be a warning signal on a particular issue that, if not addressed, could turn into a nonconformance in the future.

Report Write-up – following the forest evaluation, the team prepares the certification assessment report. This report follows a standardized format and includes detailed findings of performance and proposes pre-conditions (Major NCR), NCRs or observations.

Review of Assessment Report by Candidate FME, Independent Peer Reviewers and Rainforest Alliance Report Review – the candidate operation, at least one peer reviewer, and Rainforest Alliance regional staff, review each certification assessment report.

Certification Decision – Once the above steps are completed, the Rainforest Alliance regional office coordinates a certification decision process. If a certification decision is to approve

certification, a five-year certification contract will be executed which requires annual on-site audits. If an operation is not approved, the certification decision will establish what must be done in order for the operation to achieve certified status in the future.