

SBP

Sustainable Biomass Program

Instruction Document 2D: SBP Requirements for Group Schemes

Demonstrating Compliance with the
Netherlands SDE+ Sustainability
Requirements for Biomass
Categories 1 to 4

www.sbp-cert.org



Version 1.0 June 2018

For further information on the SBP Framework and to view the full set of documentation see www.sbp-cert.org

Document history

Published 27 June 2018

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Scope

Adapted from reference source: FSC-STD-30-005 (V1-0) EN. FSC STANDARD FOR GROUP ENTITIES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT GROUPS

This Instruction Document specifies the requirements for the evaluation and certification of Group Schemes for the purpose of demonstrating compliance with the Netherlands SDE+ requirements for category 1-4 biomass.

A Group Scheme comprises a single Group Manager and Group Members.

The Group Manager is the entity representing the Forest Management Units that constitute the Group Members. The Group Manager applies for and may ultimately hold Group Scheme certification. In SBP the Group Manager is an SBP certified Biomass Producer.

A Group Member is a forest owner or forest manager who participates in a group scheme for the purpose of SBP Group Scheme certification. Group Members are responsible for implementing any and all requirements of group membership that are applicable to the Group Member. Group Members do not hold individual certificates, but as long as they comply with all the requirements of group membership, their forest properties are covered by the scope of the certificate issued to the Group Manager.

1 General requirements

1.1 The Group Manager shall:

- a) be an independent legal entity or an individual acting as a legal entity.
- b) be an SBP certified Biomass Producer holding a valid SBP certificate which includes Standard 2 in its scope.
- c) have received written permission from SBP to be a Group Manager.

1.2 The Group Manager shall comply with relevant legal obligations, such as registration and payment of applicable fees and taxes.

1.3 The Group Manager shall implement all aspects of the SBP-approved Forest Management Group Scheme requirements as they relate to Management of Groups¹.

Note: This requirement shall apply even if the Group Member is not a member of the SBP-approved Forest Management Group Scheme.

1.4 Where there is a conflict between the requirements in the SBP-approved Forest Management Group Scheme requirements and those specified in the SBP standards, the SBP standards shall have precedence.

1.5 The Group Manager shall meet the requirements set out in this Instruction Document.

1.6 The forest management activities of each Group Members shall also meet the requirements set out in this Instruction Document insofar as applicable to each Group Member. These include the SDE+ Sustainability requirements and the SDE+ Chain of Custody requirements.

1.7 The Group Manager is responsible for the Group as a whole.

1.8 The Group Manager shall use a management system as well as technical and human resources that enable it to supervise the participating locations within the scope of the Group System.

1.9 The Group Manager shall conduct an annual audit of a sample of the Group Members.

1.10 The Group Manager shall use a registration system to record:

- a) the names and addresses of the Group Members
- b) incoming and outgoing consignments of each individual Group Member.

1.11 The Group Manager shall maintain records of:

- a) a legally enforceable contract with each Group Member
- b) a declaration submitted by each Group Member in which they declare that they meet the SDE+ Sustainability requirements and the SDE+ Chain of Custody requirements insofar as applicable to each Group Member.

¹ SBP-approved Forest Management Scheme Group Scheme requirements are defined in:
FSC – FSC-STD-30-005 (V1-1) EN. FSC STANDARD FOR GROUP ENTITIES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT GROUPS
PEFC - PEFC ST 1002:2010. Group Forest Management Certification - Requirements
SFI - SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module
ATFS - American Tree Farm System © Independently Managed Group (IMG) Certification Standards. ATFS-IMG 2015-2020

2 Feedstock supplied by Group Members

2.1 Feedstock supplied by a Group Member shall also meet the requirements of SBP-compliant feedstock or controlled feedstock, or both as applicable.

2.2 Feedstock supplied by a Group Member in compliance with the requirements in this instruction document, including the relevant SDE+ sustainability requirements, may be recorded by the BP as NL SDE+ compliant feedstock.

2.3 Where feedstock is recorded as NL SDE+ compliant feedstock the BP shall also record the Category using the definition of categories.

2.4 Definition of feedstock categories:

Category 1 feedstock: Feedstock from Forest Management Units ≥ 500 ha. Branches, tops, trees and primary felling residues sourced directly from forests of 500ha or larger. Unused wood that has the same composition as wood growing in the forest and that has not been mixed with or contaminated by foreign materials or substances.

Category 2 feedstock: Feedstock from Forest Management Units < 500 ha. Branches, tops, trees and primary felling residues sourced directly from forests of less than 500ha. Unused wood that has the same composition as wood growing in the forest and that has not been mixed with or contaminated by foreign materials or substances.

Category 3 feedstock: Feedstock from residues from nature and landscape management. Biomass residues (branches, tops, trees) produced in the course of managing urban and rural green spaces and nature areas, other than forests designated for the preservation, restoration or enhancement of specific natural, recreational or aesthetic functions. These also include biomass residues produced during routine maintenance of public green spaces and parks.

Category 4 feedstock: Feedstock from agricultural residues. Residues obtained directly from agricultural business. Short rotation crops are excluded, with the exception of the residues thereof.

Category 5 feedstock: Feedstock from biogenic residues and waste flows. Waste flows and residues from the agro-food and timber industry (secondary residual flows) and tertiary residual flows such as post-consumer wood waste.

3 Chain of custody requirements

Principle. A chain of custody system is in place for the biomass, that covers the entire chain from the Group Member to the Group Manager that links the source to the material used in the biomass.

3.1 Each link in the chain of custody has a quality management system in place that provides safeguards for compliance with the requirements of the chain of custody system.

3.2 Each link in the chain of custody keeps all necessary documentation for demonstrating compliance with the applicable sustainability requirements available for a minimum of 5 years.

3.3 Each link in the chain of custody registers for all incoming or outgoing consignments the quantities and required sustainability information.

3.4 If a link in the chain of custody mixes consignments with different sustainability characteristics a mass balance is used.

For the mixing the following applies:

- The method may be applied up to the level of a location;
- The organisation defines a period with a maximum of a year, during which incoming and outgoing consignments are measured and reports the results;
- the sustainability characteristics of mixed biomass output can be traced back to the characteristics and quantities of the individual incoming consignments, taking account of the applicable conversion factors.

4 Evaluation of SDE+ sustainability requirements

4.1 BPs shall prepare Locally Applicable Verifiers (LAVs) for each indicator of the SDE+ sustainability requirements by applying the SBP requirements in Instruction Note 1A Instructions for Biomass Producers for the development of Locally Applicable Verifiers sections 4 and 5.

4.2 The BP shall evaluate each Group Member against all indicators of the SDE+ sustainability requirements for the relevant feedstock Category using the LAVs.

4.3 Where RVO publishes notification of benchmarked standards where claims from those standards are compliant with some or all of the SDE+ sustainability requirements SBP will equivalently recognize those claims. Feedstock received with an RVO benchmarked standard claim will be exempt from evaluation of the relevant indicators in line with the published RVO benchmarking.

5 SDE+ sustainability requirements

5.1 Sustainability requirements for Category 1 and 2 feedstock

[SDE+ Principle 1 is not applicable]

[SDE+ Principle 2, is only applicable to Category 3 and 4 feedstock]

SDE+ Principle 3: Production of raw biomass does not result in the destruction of carbon sinks

Indicator 3.1 Biomass is not sourced from permanently drained land that was classified as peat land on 1 January 2008, unless it can be demonstrated that the production and harvesting of the biomass does not result in water depletion of a previously undrained soil.

Indicator 3.2 Biomass is not sourced from land that was converted from wetland to an alternative, dryer ecosystem after 1 January 2008.

Indicator 3.3 Biomass is not sourced from production forests, including wood plantations, which were created by means of conversion of natural or semi-natural forests after 31 December 1997.

SDE+ Principle 4: The use of biomass does not result in a long-term carbon debt

Indicator 4.1 The forest management unit where the wood is sourced is managed with the aim of retaining or increasing carbon stocks in the medium or long term.

Indicator 4.2 Biomass is not sourced from stumps unless these stumps had to be removed from the site for other reasons than wood or biomass production.

Indicator 4.3 On average less than half the volume of the annual round wood harvest from forests is processed as biomass for energy generation.

Note: Round wood from production forests with a rotation period of less than 40 years is exempt from this requirement.

SDE+ Principle 5: Biomass production does not result in Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC)²

Indicator 5.1 Biomass sourced from new bioenergy plantation systems that were planted after 1 January 2008 have a demonstrably low ILUC risk.

SDE+ Principle 6: Relevant international, national, regional and local laws and regulations are observed

Indicator 6.1 The forest manager holds the legal right to use the forest.

Indicator 6.2 The forest manager complies with all obligations to pay taxes and royalties.

² Small forest management units (<500ha) are exempt from this requirement. ILUC risks must be calculated using the LIIB methodology and requirements (LIIB = Low Indirect Impact Biofuels) or an equivalent method. The methodology shall be evaluated every three years (if there is sufficient cause to do so) and modified to incorporate any improvements.

Indicator 6.3 Anti-corruption legislation is observed. If no anti-corruption legislation exists, the forest manager takes alternative anti-corruption measures proportionate to the scale and intensity of the management activities and the risk of corruption.

SDE+ Principle 7: Biodiversity is maintained and where possible enhanced

Indicator 7.1 Sites with high conservation values and representative areas of the forest types that are found in the forest management unit have been identified and are protected and where possible enhanced.

Indicator 7.2 Measures have been taken to protect endangered plant and animal species and, if applicable, to increase the populations and enhance the habitats of these species.

Indicator 7.3 The conversion of forests within the forest management unit to other forms of land use, including wood plantations, is not permitted unless:

- the area concerned is small which means the total converted area over the years is no greater than 5% of the area of the forest management unit on benchmark date 1 January 2008; and
- it clearly leads to long-term advantages for nature conservation; and
- there is no damage or threat of damage to sites with high conservation values.

Indicator 7.4 In the case of wood plantations, there is a preference for native species, and a relevant percentage of the plantation must be able to revert to natural forest at a later stage.

Indicator 7.5 Exploitation of non-timber forest products, including products from hunting and fishing, is regulated, monitored and controlled, among others to safeguard the maintenance of the biodiversity in the forests.

SDE+ Principle 8: The regulating effect and the quality, health and vitality of the forest are maintained and where possible enhanced

Indicator 8.1 The soil quality of the forest management unit is maintained and if necessary improved, with special attention to coasts, river banks, erosion-sensitive areas and sloping landscapes.

Indicator 8.2 The water balance and quality of both groundwater and surface water in the forest management unit and downstream outside the forest management unit are at least maintained and where necessary improved.

Indicator 8.3 Important ecological cycles present in the forest management unit are preserved, including carbon and nutrient cycles.

Indicator 8.4 Unnecessary damage to ecosystems is prevented by applying reduced impact logging and the most suitable road construction methods and techniques for local conditions.

Indicator 8.5 If fires are used to achieve forest management objectives, such as regeneration of specific tree species, then adequate control measures have been taken.

Indicator 8.6 The forest management measures are designed to prevent and control diseases and pests where these form a threat to natural capital.

Indicator 8.7 The use of chemicals is only permitted if ecological processes and the optimal deployment of sustainable alternatives prove insufficient. Pesticides classified as Type 1A and 1B by the World Health Organisation and chlorinated hydrocarbons are not permitted.

Indicator 8.8 The accumulation of inorganic waste and litter is prevented or such waste and litter is collected, stored in approved areas and disposed of responsibly.

SDE+ Principle 9: The production capacity for wood products and relevant non-timber forest products is maintained in order to safeguard the future of the forests

Indicator 9.1 The production capacity of all forest types represented in the forest management unit is maintained.

Indicator 9.2 The forest management unit is sufficiently protected against all forms of illegal exploitation of timber and non-timber forest products, including hunting and fishing, illegal establishment of settlements, illegal land use, illegally initiated fires and any other illegal activities.

SDE+ Principle 10: Sustainable forest management is achieved through a management system

Indicator 10.1 The forest management system is designed to achieve the objectives of a forest management plan and covers the inventory, analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and adjustment cycle.

Indicator 10.2 A forest management plan is drawn up that at least includes:

- a description of the current condition of the forest management unit;
- long term goals for the ecological functions of the forest management unit;
- the average annual allowable cut per forest type and, if applicable, the annual allowable harvest of non-timber forest products based on reliable and current data;
- budget planning for the implementation of the forest management plan.

Indicator 10.3 Essential elements for the management of the forest are indicated on maps.

Indicator 10.4 The implementation of the forest management plan is periodically monitored and the ecological effect of the forest management is evaluated.

Indicator 10.5 The forest management plan is implemented by professional office and field staff, whose expertise and knowledge is maintained by means of an effective and regular training programme.

5.2 Sustainability requirements for Categories 3 and 4 feedstock

SDE+ Principle 2: Soil quality shall be maintained and where possible improved

Indicator 2.1 Best practices are applied for the maintenance or improvement of the soil and soil quality in relation to production, or the management objectives as these have been included in a management plan.

5.3 Sustainability requirements for Category 5 feedstock

There are no sustainability requirements for Category 5 feedstock.

6 Definitions

Terms are as defined by RVO in the *SDE+ sustainability requirements for solid biomass (Section 7)*.

6.1 The following definitions are to be used in application of this Instruction Document:

(Timber) harvest The volume (including bark) of all trees, living or dead, with a diameter of more than 10cm at breast height, that is harvested annually in a forest or forested area. This includes all harvested trees, regardless of whether they are removed from the area or not. Used as a reference for the carbon debt criterion. (JRC)

Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) The volume of wood that is allowed to be annually harvested within a predefined area, normally expressed in cubic metres of wood per year. The calculation of the AAC must take account of landscape values, forest types, protected areas and infrastructure and it may not exceed the net annual afforestation in the long term. (TPAS)

Biodiversity 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 part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (TPAS)

Branch A sprout of a stem or trunk or a secondary trunk or stem that branches off the main trunk or stem. Used as a reference for the carbon debt criterion. (JRC)

Chain of Custody A set of rules, procedures and documents (on company level) that are used to provide a link between the source of a material and the point in the chain where a claim is made on the characteristics of that material. (ISO 13065:2015, 3.7)

Chemicals Substances that are potentially hazardous to health or the environment or that could potentially cause material damage (NTA8080).

Consignment A quantity of biomass that is used for energy production and that has uniform physical and sustainability characteristics. A consignment may consist of several truckloads or shiploads, as long as the characteristics of the biomass are uniform. The mass balance requirements do not prohibit mixing of similar materials, and hence a single physical delivery could also involve several different consignments. E.g. a shipload of wood from the US and Canada could comprise 2 separate consignments of biomass.)

Conversion (of natural forest) Human activity that results in the conversion of a natural forest into another form of land use. (TPAS)

Ecological cycles Natural processes whereby elements that occur in various forms are continually exchanged between the various compartments of the ecosystem, including the nutrient, carbon and aquatic cycles. (TPAS)

Ecological functions The ecological functions that the forest fulfils, including climate regulation, erosion control, soil formation, water retention, carbon storage, water purification, pollination and maintenance and development of the existing biodiversity.

Endangered species Plant and animal species that are at least classified as 'endangered' in the international Red List of the IUCN and in the IUCN's guidelines for the regional application of the Red List. (TPAS)

Forest Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban use. Used as a reference for the carbon debt criterion. (FAO)

Forest management Planning and executing activities aimed at the management and use of forests and other forested areas in order to achieve predefined economic and/or social and/or cultural and/or environmental goals. (TPAS)

Forest management unit One or more forest stands containing natural forest, planted forest or another types of forest that is managed as a single unit.

Forest manager The owner, concessionaire or person who in some capacity or other is responsible for the management and exploitation of a forest management unit. (TPAS)

Habitat An area or type of area where an organism or population occurs naturally. Legal right to use (of the forest manager) The right, granted by a government authority, to carry out forestry activities in a certain area. (TPAS)

Natural forest Forest that has a natural origin and is developed naturally without the intervention of man.

New bioenergy plantation system A plantation system that is specifically developed for the production of biomass for energy generation, whereby rapidly growing tree species (e.g. willow, poplar, eucalyptus and acacia) are planted in dense plantations and harvested in short rotation periods. These systems include: (i) Short Rotation Coppicing systems, whereby the new crop grows from the stumps of the previous harvest, with rotations of between 2 and 10 years and (ii) short rotation forestry plantations using tree species that can be harvested within 20 years or less.

Non-wood forest products All forest products other than wood, including materials harvested from trees such as sap and leaves, and other plant, animal or plant-animal products. (TPAS)

Peatlands Areas with soils containing at least a 40cm deep layer of peaty material in the first 80cm of the soil.

Production forest A forested area primarily intended for the production of wood, fibre, bioenergy and/or non-wood forest products.

Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) Harvesting techniques and methods developed to prevent unnecessary damage to the forest, environment and the wood itself, as well as creating safer working conditions for the foresters.

Residues (primary, secondary or tertiary) Primary residues are biomass that is processed directly on the logging site (e.g. logs, wood chips, pellets and harvest residues). Secondary residues are residual products from wood processing (sawdust, bark etc.). Tertiary residues are post-consumer residues.

Rotation period:

Clearcutting The period between planting and the final cut.

Selective logging The period between two harvests. The period between two harvests is also called the cutting cycle (this is about 30 years in the tropics).

Roundwood Unprocessed wood from a tree trunk excluding branches, stump and roots. Used as a reference for the carbon debt criterion.

Selective logging Logging method used in unevenly aged and usually mixed stands of forest from which trees are harvested periodically, whereby the forest as a whole remains standing indefinitely (i.e. no clearcutting takes place).

Semi-natural forest A forest in which natural processes have an important influence on the development of the forest (even if the forest was originally planted).

Stump The part of the tree that remains attached to the roots after felling. Used as a reference for the carbon debt criterion. (JRC)

Sustainable forest management The management and use of forests and other forested areas in a manner and with an intensity that ensures that they retain their productivity, biological diversity, regeneration capacity and vitality, as well as the capacity to fulfil the relevant economic, ecological and social functions now and in

the future at the local, national and global level, whereby carbon stocks are maintained or increased over the long term and no damage is caused to other ecosystems. (TPAS)

Thinning The selective or systematic harvesting of trees from a more or less uniformly aged forest with the aim of increasing the trunk diameter and health of the remaining stand of trees.

Thinnings Wood obtained from trees harvested as part of thinning activities.

Wetlands Land that is permanently or semi-permanently covered or saturated with water. Used as a reference for the carbon debt criterion. (EU-RED)

Wood plantation Forest consisting of uniformly aged trees of a single or a few species, usually exotics, planted or sown in a uniform pattern, with the aim of producing wood products.

6.2 Other sources of information

<https://english.rvo.nl/sites/default/files/2017/07/SDE%20Sustainability%20requirements%20for%20solid%20biomass.pdf>

Additional guidance on interpretation is as defined by RVO in the *Additional guidance on the sustainability requirements* and at the RVO website, *Sustainability criteria for solid biomass*. <https://english.rvo.nl/subsidies-programmes/sde/sustainability-criteria>