



ISCC EU 202-4 FOREST BIOMASS ISCC PRINCIPLES 2 – 6



Copyright notice

© 2023 ISCC System GmbH

This ISCC document is protected by copyright. It is freely available from the ISCC website or upon request.

No part of this copyrighted document may be changed or amended. The document may not be duplicated or copied in any form or by any means for commercial purposes without the permission of ISCC.

Document Title: ISCC EU 202-4 Forest Biomass – ISCC Principles 2 – 6

Version 1

Valid from: 01 March 2023

Content

1	Introduction	4
2	Scope and Normative References	5
	ISCC Principle 2 – Environmental Responsible Production to Protect Soil, Water and Air	7
	2.1 Land management and management system	7
	2.2 Maintaining the production capacity and harvesting of wood and non-timber forest products	10
	2.3 Protection and promotion of biodiversity in forests.....	11
	2.4 Soil fertility	13
	2.5 Pest, disease and weed management.....	13
	2.6 Maintaining and improving water quality and quantity.....	15
	ISCC Principle 3 – Safe Working Conditions.....	15
	3.1 Training and competence.....	15
	3.2 Prevention and handling of accidents.....	16
	ISCC Principle 4 – Compliance with Human and Labour Rights and Responsible Community Relations.....	18
	4.1 Rural and social development.....	18
	4.2 Employment conditions	21
	ISCC Principle 5 – Compliance with Land Rights, Laws and International Treaties	25
	5.1 Compliance with applicable laws and treaties	26
	5.2 A written anti-bribery and corruption statement must be in place	26
	5.3 Any conflict of interest must be declared to ISCC	27
	ISCC Principle 6 – Good Management Practices and Continuous Improvement	27
	6.1 Economic stability.....	27
	6.2 Management.....	28

1 Introduction

Biomass used in food, feed, chemical and energy markets should be produced in a sustainable way. This means that the production of biomass should follow best environmental, social and economic practices. Areas, which are biodiverse or rich in carbon, which serve to protect threatened or vulnerable species, or which are of other ecological or cultural importance, need to be protected and should not be degraded or destroyed for biomass production. The objective of the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC) certification system is to contribute to the sustainable cultivation, processing and use of different kinds of biomass and their products. Thereby, ISCC contributes to the reduction of environmental impacts, the safeguarding of biodiversity and carbon stocks, more efficient resource use and climate resilience.

Sustainable production of raw materials

The ISCC EU System Document 202-3 “Forest Biomass – ISCC Principle 1” covers the legal requirements of Articles 29(6) and 29(7) of the Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (recast) (in the following referred to as RED II).¹ Thus, the requirements of ISCC Principle 1 for forest biomass ensure the legality of harvesting operations, forest regeneration, the protection of areas designated for nature protection purposes, that harvesting is carried out taking soil quality and biodiversity into account and to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the long-term production capacity of the forest.

ISCC Principle 1 covers legal requirements

ISCC certification goes beyond the legal requirements of the RED II as it covers additional ecological, social and economic requirements. These requirements are covered under ISCC Principles 2-6 for forest biomass and have been developed through a multi-stakeholder dialogue.

ISCC Principles 2-6 for ecological, social and economic requirements

ISCC Principles 2-6 are divided into ‘immediate requirements’, ‘short-term requirements’, ‘mid-term requirements’ and ‘best practice requirements’. The management systems at the forest sourcing area level (i.e. economic operators producing forest biomass) must be compliant with all requirements stated in ISCC Principle 1 and all immediate requirements of ISCC Principles 2-6 when it starts supplying sustainable material. The short-term requirements must be fulfilled after three years and mid-term requirements must be fulfilled after five years. Additionally, management systems at the forest sourcing areal level can choose to implement the ‘best practice requirements’ at any point in time. Best practice requirements fulfilled by a System User can be highlighted on Sustainability Declarations and/or certificates. Throughout this document, the respective level of implementation is stated under each requirement

Different levels of implementation

ISCC Principle 2 promotes the application of good management practices in forest management and covers the areas of soil, air, water and waste, and sets requirements to prevent the contamination, degradation and depletion of the environment due to agricultural and forestry production.

ISCC Principle 2

¹ By 31 January 2021, the European Commission shall adopt implementing acts establishing the operational guidance on the evidence laid down in Articles 29(6) and (7) of the RED II.

ISCC Principle 3 defines safe working conditions including health, safety and hygiene policies, training, the use of protective clothing and procedures in case of accidents.

ISCC Principle 3

Social standards are further specified under ISCC Principle 4, covering requirements for rural and social development, the rights of workers and local communities, based on but not limited to the core ILO standards.

ISCC Principle 4

ISCC Principle 5 requires that all biomass production shall take place in compliance with applicable regional and national laws and shall follow international treaties. In addition, complying with principle 5 shall ensure that a management system at the forest sourcing area level does not encounter conflicts of interest or is involved in any form of bribery or corruption.

ISCC Principle 5

ISCC Principle 6 describes the requirements of good management practices and measures for continuous improvement.

ISCC Principle 6

Compliance with the ISCC requirements is verified by independent third-party audits. ISCC provides audit procedures, checklists, and numerous other supporting documents to facilitate the implementation and verification of the ISCC requirements (see ISCC EU System Document 201 “System Basics” for further information).

Third-party audits

Non-compliance with the requirements under ISCC Principles 2-6 must be subject to corrections. All non-compliances must be included in the auditor’s action list for the respective management system at the forest sourcing area level. As long as non-conformities are not corrected, the issuance of a certificate is not possible. If non-compliances with the requirements of ISCC Principles 2-6 are detected during an audit, corrective actions must be implemented within a 40-day timeframe.

Non-compliances must always be corrected

The ISCC requirements are globally applicable. If required, additional guidelines to support the consistent application of ISCC in different regions with different species and technologies can be developed.

Global applicability

2 Scope and Normative References

The ISCC EU System Document 202-4 “Forest Biomass: ISCC Principles 2-6” applies to all kinds of forest biomass which shall be supplied as sustainable under ISCC.

Relevant raw materials

Forest biomass is biomass produced from forestry, including solid biomass such as trunks and bark, and non-timber forest products. Furthermore, the requirements apply to all forestry residues (e.g. branches, needles, tree tops, roots and stumps) occurring as part of any cultivation and harvesting operations and may include wood that has been discarded due to natural mortality.

Forest biomass

The term **management system** means an information management system run by an economic operator to demonstrate that biomass sourcing is in

compliance with the sustainability criteria at forest sourcing area level defined in Articles 29.6(b) and 29.7(b). The management system is operated by an **economic operator** to demonstrate that biomass sourcing is in compliance with the sustainability criteria at **forest sourcing area level** defined in Articles 29(6)(b) and 29(7)(b) of the RED II. The management system has to document management practices with relevance to the sustainability criteria that have been and are planned to be applied by forest managers/owners in the sourcing area. The management system ensures that information necessary to demonstrate compliance with all sustainability criteria is collected, verified, assessed, securely stored by the economic operator. The system needs to be accurate, reliable and protected against fraud.

The term (forest) **sourcing area** is defined as “the geographically defined area from which the forest biomass feedstock is sourced, from which reliable and independent information is available and where conditions are sufficiently homogeneous to evaluate the risk of the sustainability and legality characteristics of the forest biomass”. This definition implies that a “geographically defined area” means that the area of origin from which the forest biomass feedstock is harvested, is known and can be shown on a map, typically on the basis of administrative boundaries.²

The supply base comprises the sourcing area or assembly of all sourcing areas from which an economic operator sources its forest biomass feedstock.

Forest biomass can be produced in natural forests that are defined as being land areas spanning more than one hectare with trees higher than five metres and a canopy cover of more than 10% or with trees that are able to reach these thresholds in situ. Natural forests are composed of indigenous trees regenerated naturally, including both spontaneous and assisted natural regeneration. Natural forests are often rich in species and structure and are multifunctional, which means they are not solely focused on wood production but also provides further social and ecological services. Semi-natural forests are managed natural forests which, over time, have taken on a number of natural characteristics, including layered canopy, enriched species diversity, random spacing; or, planted forests which acquire more natural characteristics over time, including abandoned plantation forests that diversify with age and which experience natural regeneration of indigenous species.

Further, forest biomass can be produced in **plantation forests** that are defined as being intensively managed land of more than one hectare with trees higher than five metres and a canopy cover of more than 10% or with trees that are able to reach these thresholds in situ. Plantations forests are planted forest that are intensively managed and meet all the following criteria of planting and stand maturity: one or two species, even age class and regular spacing. Plantation forests are considered forest land unless they are defined as agricultural land in the applicable legal framework in the country of origin. Plantations forests are focusing on wood production and are not ideal in terms

² Article 2(30) of RED II

of ecological and social functions and natural forest management but are very productive and meet a large share of wood demand. Thus, they help to reduce the pressure on natural forest areas with a higher ecological and social level. Short rotation coppice is not regarded as plantation forest in this context. Biomass produced on short rotation coppice plantations has to be covered by the ISCC Principles 1 – 6 for agricultural biomass.

This document is valid in addition to the other ISCC EU System Documents.

ISCC Principle 2 – Environmental Responsible Production to Protect Soil, Water and Air

ISCC Principle 2 includes requirements with regard to the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, improvement of soil fertility and the application, handling and storage of fertilisers and chemical pesticides. The maintenance and improvement of water quality and quantity, reduction of GHG emissions and air pollutants and efficient energy management are also covered under ISCC Principle 2.

2.1 Land management and management system

2.1.1 Protection of land with high conservation value forests

The objective of ISCC is to protect high conservation value forest which are biodiverse and serve the protection of threatened or vulnerable species, or which have other ecological or cultural importance. The following land categories and their respective protection are of relevance for forest biomass production:

Primary forest and other natural forest areas are forest where native tree species grow and ecological processes are not significantly disturbed. These forests show no visible indication of human activity like economic use (e.g. wood harvest, forest clearance), fragmentation via infrastructure (e.g. streets), disturbance of the natural biodiversity (e.g. relevant presence of non-native species) or the last significant human intervention was long ago ensuring that the natural species composition and processes were restored. Further characteristics of primary forests are natural forest dynamics, such as natural tree species composition, occurrence of deadwood, natural age structure and natural regeneration processes. The area must be large enough to maintain its natural ecological processes in the long term. Excluded from this are activities performed by indigenous populations and other traditional sections of the population whose livelihoods depend on the use of forest products who have a minor impact on the forested land (e.g. collection of wood and non-timber forest products) not being considered clearly visible indications of human activity as long as the impact on the forest is low.

Species diversity forests and forest areas are non-degraded, species rich forest and forest areas or areas designated by the competent authorities as

*Sustainable
production
systems for
forest biomass*

areas of high biological diversity. Not degraded means not characterised by long-term loss of biodiversity due to e.g. overuse, mechanical damage to the vegetation, soil erosion or loss of soil quality.

Indigenous tree species are species that grow within their natural growing range in places and under climate conditions to which they are adjusted through their natural evolution without human intervention. This does not include tree species introduced into areas by humans where they never would have grown without human intervention and species that would not have grown in these places or under these climate conditions without human intervention even if these places are still within the wider geographic area in which the species is able to grow.

Areas designated by law or by the relevant competent authority for nature protection purposes and threatened or endangered ecosystems shall be protected. A distinction shall be made between the various areas depending on their size, conservation function and conservation objectives. The restrictions for their use can be determined on this basis. Biomass can be grown or harvested on land that serves nature conservation purposes as long as evidence is provided that the production of that raw material does not interfere with the stated nature conservation purpose.

With respect to land use change, the land-based sustainability criteria set out in System Document ISCC EU 202-3: “Forest Biomass: ISCC Principle 1” apply and must be taken into account.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.1.2 Management Plan

The management system at the forest sourcing area level must have a forest management plan or equivalent documentation relating with the size and the management intensity of the unit in place. The document shall promote the sustainable use and management of all areas of the unit.

The plan shall further cover the inventory, analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and adjustment and include at least:

- > A description of the current correlation of the unit
- > Long term goals for the ecological functions of the unit
- > The average annual allowable cut (AAC). The AAC should be calculated based on recognized methods for a period of years (usually ten years) is complied with. Or if in case of unforeseen circumstances, e.g. calamities or storms, the AAC can be adjusted
- > Budget planning for the implementation of the forest management plan

A map is available indicating essential areas and elements for the management of the unit. The ecological and social effects of the forest management are evaluated. The forest management plan shall be updated and revised periodically to incorporate the results of monitoring. Further, the implementation of the forest management plan is conducted by professional

*Sustainable
production
systems for
forest biomass*

office and field staff, whose expertise and knowledge are maintained by means of an effective and regular training programme.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.1.3 Conversion of natural and semi-natural forests to plantation forests

The conversion of natural and semi-natural forests after the cut-off date, January 2008 within the sourcing area of an economic operator to other forms of land use, including plantation forests, is not permitted.

Conversion of natural forests after the cut-off date is not permitted

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.1.4 Environmental impact assessment

The environmental impacts of new cultivation and harvesting areas, new buildings, and other constructions or systems, for the use of forest management purposes are assessed in an environmental impact assessment and are minimised where possible. The impact assessment considers the following aspects:

- > land and soil characteristics
- > rare and endangered species
- > potential off-site contaminants
- > neighbouring human settlements
- > water management projects (including water pollution and water availability)

If any of these activities are carried out, a report must be available to show that environmental aspects have been considered and negative impacts have been minimised where possible. If applicable, the plan needs to be continuously updated. Direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors are assessed in an appropriate manner:

Direct and indirect effects on different factors

- (a) Human beings, fauna and flora;
- (b) Soil, water, air, climate and the landscape;
- (c) Material assets and the cultural heritage;
- (d) Interaction between the factors referred to in points a, b and c.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.2 Maintaining the production capacity and harvesting of wood and non-timber forest products

2.2.1 Production capacity

The production capacity of all forest types represented in the management system at the forest sourcing area level shall be maintained. The wood production capacity of the site shall be taken into consideration for harvesting. The harvesting of stumps and roots is not allowed, unless these stumps have to be removed from the site for other reasons than wood or biomass production. Stumps and roots mean parts of the whole tree volume, excluding the volume of the above-stump woody biomass, considering the height of the stump as that at which the tree would be cut under normal felling practices in the relevant country or region. The annual allowable cut (AAC, the annual amount of timber that can be harvested on a sustainable basis within a defined forest area) shall not be exceeded on forest sourcing area level. AAC can be country-specific or applicable to smaller areas. This AAC is a very basic guidance to help maintain the long-term production capacity of the forest in a country. AAC can be derived from national forest inventory data or yield tables for example, or they can be prescribed by a local forest management authority.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.2.2 Illegal exploitation of timber and non-timber forest products

The management system at the forest sourcing area level 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.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.2.3 Harvesting

Harvesting shall be adjusted to the location, aiming to avoid unnecessary damages to the ecosystem, remaining trees and minimizing soil compaction. Selective harvesting is preferred. Driving shall be kept to a minimum. The following measures can be considered as options to minimize soil compaction, including:

- > Low internal tire pressure
- > Low wheel load
- > Wide tires
- > Large tire diameter

The reasons for clear cuttings must be documented and its environmental effect must be described. It must be ensured that no land use change occurs after harvesting and that rejuvenation takes place immediately after

harvesting, the adjacent parcels have a perennial tree stand that contributes to structuring the landscape and diversifying habitats and that corridors for wildlife are created or maintained.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.2.4 Road infrastructure

An adequate road infrastructure shall be established and maintained, minimizing damages to the ecosystem.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3 Protection and promotion of biodiversity in forests

ISCC aims to preserve and promote biodiversity in forests. The preservation and promotion of biodiversity is an essential aim of sustainable forest management under ISCC in order to preserve genetic diversity and the diversity of their habitats. The composition of tree species has a crucial influence on the biological diversity and characteristics of the forest as a habitat.

2.3.1 Natural regeneration and indigenous tree species

Natural regeneration and indigenous tree species shall be preferred for the cultivation of young stands and a relevant percentage of the management system at the forest sourcing area level must be able to revert to natural forest at a larger stage.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.2 Avoidance of damage or deterioration of habitats

If evidence is provided that the production of the raw material does not interfere with the protection of habits, harvest of forest biomass is only permitted if appropriate management measures are identified and implemented to avoid damage to or deterioration of habitats. Legal requirements related to the protection of species and habitats must be met, any constraints must be followed and damage to or deterioration of habitats or species prevented. Wild species or products from their natural habitat shall be gathered only when permitted by law and this shall be done only in a manner ensuring those species will continue to flourish in their natural habitat along with other species that normally depend on the gathered species. Illegal hunting, fishing, trapping or collecting activities are prohibited in these areas.

Protection of species and habitats during harvest

Existing ecological corridors and important landscape elements shall be maintained or, if necessary, restored to minimise the fragmentation of protected habitats. This shall take place in accordance with the type of terrain, wildlife and management practices.

Ecological corridors and landscape elements

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.3 Highly invasive species

The cultivation of highly invasive species shall be prevented. If species are officially prohibited in the country of operation, they shall not be used. Adequate tree species shall be selected for cultivation and regeneration.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.4 Cultivation of genetically modified (GM) trees

Genetically modified trees shall not be used.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.5 Harvesting of non-timber forest products

Exploitation and harvesting 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.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.6 Mixed stands

Mixed stands with tree species suited to the site conditions with the exception of naturally occurring pure stands shall be maintained or created.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.7 Rare and endangered species

Habitats of rare and endangered species shall be safeguarded. Endangered plant and animal species are defined as plant and animal species that at minimum are classified as threatened on the global International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list and on the IUCN guidance for the regional application of the IUCN red list.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.8 Deadwood

Trees and deadwood safeguarding the biodiversity of the forest shall be preserved and left in the forest. The amount of deadwood must correspond to the forest area.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.9 Burning

The burning of forest residues or parts of the forest is allowed only with the permission of the competent authority and only for the case that biodiversity of nature shall be promoted through the controlled use of fire. Adequate control measures must be taken.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.3.10 Inorganic litter

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

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.4 Soil fertility

Tree species should only be grown on suitable soils. In order to ensure a sustainable treatment of soils, good forest management practices, with respect to soil quality, soil contamination and soil erosion are addressed in the soil management. In general, topographic risks must be taken into account. Special attention has to be paid to coasts, river banks, sloping landscapes and erosion-sensitive areas. Any activity which decreases the quality and current status of the soil shall be avoided. Applied practices shall refer to:

- > Maintaining or improving soil structure
- > Maintaining or improving soil biodiversity

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.5 Pest, disease and weed management

2.5.1 Restrictions on chemical pesticides

The use of chemical pesticides is only permitted as the last option and only if ecological processes and the optimal deployment of sustainable alternatives prove insufficient. Chemical pesticides classified as Type 1A and 1B by the World Health Organization (WHO), chlorinated hydrocarbons as well as in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention (UNEP's Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Program list) are not permitted under ISCC.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.5.2 Usage of chemical pesticides are registered

All chemical pesticides applied must be officially registered in the country of use or permitted by the appropriate governmental organisation in the country of application where such official registration scheme exists. Where no official registration scheme exists, refer to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides. It must be documented and ensured that the producers are aware and observing any local restrictions on the use of chemical pesticides.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.5.3 Staff handling the chemical pesticides must be skilled and must apply the chemical pesticides appropriately

Where the chemical pesticide records show that the technically responsible person making the choice of chemical pesticide is a qualified adviser, technical competence should be demonstrated by official qualifications or specific training course attendance certificates.

Where the chemical pesticides records show that the technically responsible person making the choice of chemical pesticides is the producer, experience must be complemented by technical knowledge that can be demonstrated via technical documentation such as relevant technical literature on products or specific training course attendance certificates.

Technical knowledge

The competent person should be able to show that important parameters have been taken into consideration before applying chemical pesticides. This includes following visual inspections, taking into account economic thresholds of pest/disease and weed occurrence, weather forecasts and local knowledge. As a result, precautionary measures shall be applied to protect workers, neighbouring communities and the environment. The use of non-chemical solutions instead of chemical pesticides should be favoured.

The person applying the chemical pesticides /the person responsible must follow the label instructions. All requirements, in line with the respective labelling and the ISCC criteria (personal protective equipment (PPE), storage, handling, maximum amount etc.) for the products used must be followed. There must be clearly documented procedures which regulate all the re-entry intervals for chemical pesticides applied to the crops according to the label instructions.

Follow label instructions

If chemical pesticides are applied near populated areas or water bodies, appropriate distances must be maintained. The FAO Guidelines on Good Practice for Aerial Application of Pesticides should be considered when chemical pesticides are applied aerially.³ During the application of chemical pesticides, the weather conditions (e.g. wind speed, wind direction, temperature) should be examined and taken into account in order to minimise drift. The person applying the chemical pesticides/the person responsible must be able to show that good management practices have been used during spraying and that weather conditions have been considered. All application equipment must be calibrated and documented evidence for maintenance are available.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.5.4 Handling, disposing and storing of chemical pesticides

In case of the justified, reasoned and documented use of chemical pesticides, the handling, disposing and storing of these products (as well as fertilizers and waste) are described in very much detail in ISCC EU System Document 202-

³FAO "Guidelines on Good Practice for Aerial Application of Pesticides", <http://www.fao.org/3/y2766e/y2766e00.htm>

02 “Agricultural Biomass ISCC Principles 2-6”, chapter 2.7 and 2.8 and must be complied with.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.6 Maintaining and improving water quality and quantity

2.6.1 Water Balance

The water balance and quality of water in the management system at the forest sourcing area level and downstream outside the unit are at least maintained and where necessary improved.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

2.6.2 Natural watercourses

Natural watercourses (such as streams, rivers, or other routes), water bodies, riparian zones and their connectivity are to be maintained and be protected.

The management system at the forest sourcing area level knows the status of riparian vegetation/tree species around watercourses, water bodies and wetland, which shall be maintained. Damages during timber harvesting activities shall be avoided in the vicinity of watercourses and water bodies but if there is any, it shall be restored.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

ISCC Principle 3 – Safe Working Conditions

ISCC Principle 3 covers requirements to ensure safe working conditions at the management system at the forest sourcing area level. This refers to training and competence of workers for certain tasks, the prevention and handling of accidents and the protection of workers. All units must have qualified workers and must ensure that the respective qualification is renewed and maintained through regular trainings. The following requirements must be complied with.

3.1 Training and competence

3.1.1 Records are kept for training activities and attendees

Workers responsible for certain tasks economic operator at the forest sourcing area should participate in job-specific training activities. Training should include the following topics:

- > Training(s) concerning safe working conditions for harvesting timber;
- > The handling of chemical pesticides and other hazardous chemicals;

- > Waste management;
- > The handling of PPE for chemicals, fuels, gas and electricity.

A record is kept for training activities for workers including the topic covered, the trainer, the date and the attendees. Evidence of attendance is required. If useful, it is possible to collaborate with training programs for the local population.

*Record-keeping
for training*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

3.1.2 Certificates of competence are available for dangerous of complex work

All workers handling and/or administering chemicals, disinfectants, harvesting machinery, biocides or other hazardous substances and operating dangerous or complex equipment as defined in the risk assessment must have trained and obtain certificates of competence and/or details of other such qualifications. Records must identify workers who carry out these tasks and show certificates of training or proof of competence.

*Qualifications for
dangerous works*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

3.1.3 All workers have received adequate health and safety training and have been instructed according to the risk assessment

Workers should be able to demonstrate competency in responsibilities and tasks through visual observation. If at the time of audit there are no ongoing activities, there must be evidence of instruction. At least one worker/person responsible with first aid skills should be available whenever there are any management activities taking place (e.g. during harvest, chemical pesticides application etc.).

*Competence of
workers*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

3.2 Prevention and handling of accidents

3.2.1 The economic operator has a written health, safety and hygiene policy and procedures including issues of risk assessment

The risk assessment should be conducted by the economic operator that includes important health and safety risks, such as the use of liquid fuels, lubricants, machines, generators, boilers, pumps, power tools, electrical installations, power lines and, where appropriate, measures of food safety (e.g. clean, dry, and if applicable, cooled storage facilities). Within the risk assessment, risks connected with transporting, storage, handling, spillage and disposal of the materials named above shall be considered.

*Competence of
workers*

The health, safety and hygiene policy must at least include the points identified in the risk assessment. Policy measures could include, inter alia, accident and emergency procedures, hygiene procedures, and dealing with any risks identified in typical work processes, such as e.g. the handling of chemicals.

Risk measures

The health, safety and hygiene policy shall also include specific health and safety issues for women. The policy must be made clearly understandable for all workers, reviewed and updated when the risk assessment changes.

Regarding all implemented health and safety requirements, a warning system including legally permitted sanctions should exist for workers who do not fulfil the health and safety requirements. Complete and maintained first aid kits and procedures (including records and evaluations of accidents) according to national regulations and recommendations must be available and accessible at all permanent sites and available for transport to the vicinity of the work. First aid medical services must be provided in case of emergencies.

*Implementation
of measures*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

3.2.2 Work-related accidents are covered by contracts or received adequate compensation

Workers who are unable to carry out their regular activities due to an occupational/ work-related accident are protected by contract or receive adequate compensation.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

3.2.3 Workers are equipped with suitable PPE

Workers are equipped with suitable PPE in accordance with legal requirements and/or label instructions or as authorised by a competent authority. Complete sets of PPE for certain work (e.g. handling chemical pesticides, working with electric equipment) are available and are used to ensure compliance with label instructions, legal requirements and requirements as authorised by a competent authority. They are in a good state. Examples of PPE are chainsaw protective pants and shoes, protective overalls as well as appropriate respiratory, ear and eye protection devices. The use of PPE is mandatory during the handling and application of toxic substances (e.g. chemical pesticides) or while carrying out other hazardous tasks.

*Suitable
protective
clothing*

Dirty, torn and damaged PPE and expired filter cartridges should be disposed of. Single-use items have to be disposed of after one use. All the PPE, including replacements filters, should be stored in a well-ventilated area which is physically separate from chemical pesticides and any other chemicals in order to prevent contamination of the PPE.

*Cleaning of
protective
clothing*

*Disposal of
protective
clothing*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

3.2.4 Potential hazards are clearly identified

Permanent and legible signs must indicate potential hazards, e.g. waste pits, fuel tanks, workshops, access doors to the chemical pesticides/fertiliser/ any other chemical storage facilities as well as the treated tree. Warning signs must be placed where appropriate.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

3.2.5 Restrictions related to hazardous activities are followed

Young workers (15-18), pregnant or breast-feeding women, disabled workers or workers who suffer from chronic or respiratory diseases must not undertake hazardous work that jeopardizes their health, safety. All persons who have been injured or are ill must not perform activities that are detrimental to their health and safety or that of other workers. Instead, they shall be offered alternative work.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

3.2.6 Accident procedures and equipment are available

An accident procedure must display the basic steps of primary accident care and be accessible by all individuals within ten meters of the chemical pesticides/chemical storage facilities and designated mixing areas. Procedures and equipment must be available to deal with accidents and chemical spills (including chemical pesticides, fertilisers and fuels).

*Accident
procedures*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

ISCC Principle 4 – Compliance with Human and Labour Rights and Responsible Community Relations

ISCC Principle 4 includes requirements related to basic human and labour rights as well as provisions for responsible community relations. Criteria cover rural and social development with regard to the responsibility of the economic operator towards surrounding communities. Further, employment conditions are elaborated that are based on but not limited to core ILO standards. The following list of requirements must be covered.

4.1 Rural and social development

4.1.1 A self-declaration on good social practice regarding human rights is available

*Commitment to
good social
practices*

A self-declaration on good social practice regarding human rights must have been communicated to the workers. The economic operator and the workers' representative must have signed and displayed a self-declaration assuring good social practice and the human rights of all workers. The self-declaration must be in a language appropriate to the workers and surrounding communities. This declaration contains the following:

- > a commitment to the ILO core labour standards
- > respect for a living wage

- > respect for the social environment
- > respect for legal land titles
- > sufficient compensation for communities
- > commitment to solving social conflicts
- > commitment to fair contract arrangements
- > commitment to reduce key economic, environmental and social impacts

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.1.2 Negative environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts are avoided

All environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts for surrounding areas, communities, users and landowners are taken into account. Local historical, cultural and spiritual properties and sites are protected. Prior to the audit, the auditor has to identify negative environmental, social and cultural impacts. This can be done in the form of a desk-based research, including internet research with the help of identified buzz words in combination with the economic operator (or related System User).

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

Where there is an indication found for negative environmental, social and/or cultural impacts in context of the management system at the forest sourcing area level, a participatory social impact and legal compliance assessment shall be conducted where all relevant stakeholders, including local communities and indigenous people, are engaged. A report about this assessment shall be made publicly available in a language appropriate to surrounding communities.

Stakeholder involvement

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

On the basis of that report, an action plan to address the impacts identified and to ensure continued dialogue with surrounding communities is in place. Negative impacts must be avoided or, if this is not possible, minimised, restored and/or compensated. The action plan will be verified during the audit, including the consultation of relevant stakeholders during the audit.

Degree of obligation: short-term requirement

Documents of regular meetings with communities (with two-way communication) and local government with listed risks and/or impacts and evidence of minuted negotiations or resolution processes must be compiled.

Degree of obligation: mid-term requirement

4.1.3 Provision and disclosure of information

The economic operator shall provide adequate information to relevant stakeholders on legal, social and environmental issues related to the ISCC requirements. The information must be presented in an appropriate language and must be accessible to stakeholders. Information include e.g. management procedures comprising the results of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes, human rights policies, results of participatory social impact and legal compliance assessments, etc. There are communication channels (written sign or website with the following information: email, cell-phone, mailbox) that adequately enable communication between the operator and the community. The communication channels have been made known to the local communities.

Commercially sensitive and confidential information as well as details relating to customers and/or suppliers and personal information shall remain confidential.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.1.4 Unit residents have access to basic services

All people on the premises of the management system at the forest sourcing area level must have access to clean food storage areas, designated dining areas, hand washing facilities safe and potable water, and hygienic toilets.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.1.5 All children living on the unit have access to quality primary school education

All children of primary schooling age (according to national legislation) living on the premises of the management system at the forest sourcing area level must have access to primary school education, either through provision of transportation to a public primary school or through adequate on-site schooling.

Degree of obligation: best practice requirement

4.1.6 Workers and affected communities must be able to make a complaint

A complaint form and/or procedure must be available at the forest sourcing area level, on which workers and surrounding communities can make a complaint. The procedure should allow for complaints to be made anonymously, yet also allow verification of validity of the complaints. Workers and surrounding communities shall have been made aware of its existence and shall be able to make complaints or suggestions at any time.

The unit shall engage with affected stakeholders and document measures taken to resolve appearing disputes. Complaints must be dealt with in a timely manner. Complaints and their solutions from the last five years must be documented and accessible.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

Local labour tribunals should be recognised by the unit if these are the mechanism chosen by workers for raising grievances.

Degree of obligation: best practice requirement

4.1.7 Mediation is available in case of social conflict

An independent mediator should be assigned by name and address the elected person of trust.

Degree of obligation: best practice requirement

4.2 Employment conditions

4.2.1 There is no forced labour on the forest sourcing area level

There must be no use of forced, bonded or involuntary labour.⁴ Workers shall not be forced to hand over their identity cards or passports to the economic operator's management or any other third party. If workers voluntarily surrender their passports to the employer for safekeeping, they shall have unrestricted access to their identity cards or passports. Access must be free of charge, but documented. An agreement on the safekeeping of passports shall be available in written form, in a language understood by the worker. Retaining workers' salary, property grants or other grants from them or illegal or excessive deduction of fees from wages for disciplinary purposes, personal protective equipment, deposits for accommodation or tools is prohibited.

*Forced labour
and retaining
salary, property*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.2 There is no child labour

Child labour at the forest sourcing area level is prohibited, as well as all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery. The minimum age must comply with all local and national legislation as well as with ILO Conventions 138 and 182. No minors are to be employed at the forest sourcing area level. Documents must include records of workers' dates of birth and documented evidence that the employer is aware of relevant legislation.

*Children and
young, pregnant
or disabled
workers*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.3 There is no discrimination

There shall be no indication of discrimination (distinction, exclusion or preference) practiced that denies or impairs equality of opportunity, conditions or treatment based on individual characteristics and group membership or association. A publicly available equal opportunities policy including identification of relevant/affected groups in the local environment must exist.

*Equality of
opportunities*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

⁴ In line with ILO Conventions 29 and 105

4.2.4 Employment conditions comply with equality principles

Evidence is available that the management system at the forest sourcing area level provides equality of opportunity and treatment regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, nationality, social origin or other distinguishing characteristics. All workers receive equal remuneration for work of equal value, equal access to training and benefits and equal opportunities for promotion and for filling all available position.

*Equal
employment
conditions*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.5 Respect and ensure gender equity

Special attention shall be paid to ensure that women and minority groups can participate meaningfully in meetings and negotiations in order to articulate/communicate their concerns/ideas. In all stakeholder consultation processes, including the FPIC, women and minority groups shall be appropriately included and their voices equally heard and respected.

*Equal participation
in meetings and
consultations*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.6 Regular employment is available wherever possible

Employment relationships shall be established through national law and practice. The employment of contract or temporary workers for permanent or ongoing tasks, e.g. to eliminate or reduce pay and benefits, shall not take place. This can be supported by a regular assessment of ways to promote the use of permanent and local labour.

*Employment
relationships*

Degree of obligation: best practice requirement

4.2.7 Workers are treated with dignity and respect

The company shall not engage in or tolerate the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, verbal or physical abuse or sexual harassment or any kind of intimidation of workers. No harsh or inhumane treatment is permitted. A policy to prevent sexual and all other forms of harassment and violence shall be implemented and communicated to all levels of the work force and service providers.

*Punishment or
abuse*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.8 All workers are to be provided with fair legal contracts

All workers are to be provided with fair legal contracts in written form and in the languages understood by workers and explained carefully to them in case of low literacy. Copies of working contracts must be able to be shown to the auditor for every worker indicated in the records. Both the worker as well as the employer must have signed them. Personnel records for each employee must be kept for at least 24 months. Where a registration system exists, copies of working contracts must be registered with the labour authority of the country of production. In those countries where there are no requirements for formal

*Signed working
contracts*

labour agreements between workers and employers, alternative documented evidence of a labour relationship must be present.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.9 The employment conditions of individual workers comply with legal regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements

Employment conditions shall comply with legal regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements, whichever is higher, (e.g. on working hours, breaks, rest days, overtime, deductions, sickness, holiday entitlement, paid leave, maternity leave, reasons for dismissal, period of notice, working from home, wages, etc.). They must be documented in the working contract in the languages understood by workers and explained carefully to them by the manager or supervisor in case of low literacy.

Conformity of employment conditions

Records must indicate that regular weekly working hours do not exceed 48 hours. This criterion is not applicable for supervisors or management. Every six sequential days of work, workers should receive at least one day off. Overtime, in excess of 12 hours per week, shall be voluntary and is only allowable if it happens in extraordinary, limited periods where there are time constraints or risks of economic loss (e.g., during harvest or planting) and where conditions regarding overtime in excess of 12 hours per week have been agreed between workers and management. Overtime shall always be compensated at a premium rate, in accordance with local and national laws or sector agreements. Workers should be informed about overtime work in a timely manner.

Working hours

Workers who take maternity leave are entitled to return to their employment subject to the same terms and conditions employment as before. They must not be subject to any discrimination, loss of seniority or deduction of wages. For further guidance on the protection of maternity, ILO Convention 183 can be consulted⁵.

Maternity leave

Conditions of employment should follow negotiations with trade unions or similar organisations if they are available.

Pay slips document the conformity of payment with at least legal regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements. Wages and overtime payment documented in the pay slips must be in line with legal regulations (minimum wages) and/or collective bargaining agreements (whichever sets the higher standard). If payment is calculated per unit, workers (on average) shall be able to gain the legal minimum wage within regular working hours. Any deductions from wages, e.g. for recruitment fees must be documented, and an agreement in accordance with the law must be signed by the worker. A process to prevent workers' debt as a result of the recruitment process shall be in place and be regularly monitored.

Pay slips

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

⁵ See also ILO 183, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C183

4.2.10 A living wage is paid which meets at least legal or industry minimum standards

The company's pay slips demonstrate that living wages meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and are sufficient to meet the basic needs of workers and to provide some discretionary income. Gross wages are paid to workers at least monthly.

Payment

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.11 An elected worker or a workers' council represents the interests of the workers

In case of a site over 1000ha: An organigram is in place including the named person responsible for the interest of workers. This person shall be able to represent the interests of the workers and to communicate complaints to the management.

Representation of workers

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

In addition, a worker or a workers' council elected freely and democratically is in place. Documentation is available to demonstrate that a clearly identified, named person of trust and/or a workers' council representing the interests of the workers to the management is elected by all workers and recognised by the management.

Degree of obligation: best practice requirement

4.2.12 Labour organisations and collective bargaining are allowed for negotiating working conditions

All workers are free to establish and join labour organisations of their own choice or to organise themselves to perform collective bargaining. Workers must have the right to organise and negotiate their working conditions. There should be evidence (workers' interviews with self-selected/anonymous workers) that the employer supports the establishment of worker committees and worker organizations in which the workers elect representatives that can operate without interference or influence by the management, owner or group manager. There is evidence of acceptance of collective bargaining agreements. Trade union members are guaranteed the opportunity to fulfil their tasks at least outside of regular working hours. Workers exercising this right should not be discriminated against or suffer repercussions. The employment conditions regarding freedom of association and collective bargaining are in accordance with all national and local legislation and ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

Labour organisations

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.13 There is a person responsible for workers' health, safety and good social practice

An organigram is in place including the responsible person for workers' health, safety and good social practice.

Competence of represent

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

The responsible person demonstrates awareness and/or access to national regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements concerning: gross and minimum wages, working hours, union membership, anti-discrimination policy, child labour, labour contracts, holiday and maternity leave, medical care and pension/gratuity, and regular two-way communication.

Degree of obligation: short-term requirement

4.2.14 The management communicates openly with workers

The management must hold regular two-way communication meetings with their workers where issues affecting the business, or which are related to worker health, safety and welfare can be openly discussed. At least two meetings a year are to be held between management and workers. Matters related to the business and workers' health, safety or welfare should be discussed without fear, intimidation or retribution. Records from such meetings should be kept and the concerns of the workers recorded. The elected person of trust should assign an independent mediator by name and address.

Continuous communication with workers

Degree of obligation: best practice requirement

4.2.15 Records on all workers and employees are available

Records should clearly demonstrate an accurate overview of all workers and employees (including seasonal workers and subcontracted workers) working at the forest sourcing area level. The records must indicate full names, a job description, date of birth, date of entry, wage and the period of employment. Records must be accessible for the last 24 months.

Record-keeping of employees

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

4.2.16 Working times and overtime are documented

There is a time recording system that makes daily working time and overtime on a daily basis transparent for all workers and employers. Working times of all workers during the last 24 months are to be documented. Rest breaks/days should also be documented during peak seasons.

Record-keeping of working times

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

ISCC Principle 5 – Compliance with Land Rights, Laws and International Treaties

ISCC Principle 5 aims to secure land rights and to ensure that all practices of the management system at the forest sourcing area level are in line with the respective laws and international treaties. Therefore, compliance with the following requirements is needed. The “Legitimacy of land use” is already covered in ISCC EU 202-3 “Forest Biomass: Principle 1”.

Sustainable production systems for forest biomass

5.1 Compliance with applicable laws and treaties

There is awareness of, and compliance with, all applicable local, regional and national laws and ratified international treaties. The producer should be able to demonstrate awareness of their responsibilities according to the applicable laws. Applicable laws shall be complied with. They apply to:

*Legitimacy and
legal
commitment*

- (1) Nationally and internationally protected areas as referred to in ISCC Principle 1
- (2) Environmental impact assessments
- (3) Soil conservation and management, soil fertility (relating to, for example, the application of fertilisers, manure and chemical pesticides, the contamination and the accumulation of hazardous substances in soils)
- (4) The handling of fertilisers and chemical pesticides
- (5) Water conservation and management (relating to, for example, abstraction, use and discharge of irrigation water, protection of water bodies, water quality)
- (6) Energy use and related emissions and air pollutants
- (7) Reuse, recycling and disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste
- (8) Health and safety of workers
- (9) Rights of permanent and temporary workers (e.g. overtime work, paid holiday-, sick- and parental leave)
- (10) Rights of local communities and indigenous groups

The company should be familiar with the relevant legislation and should remain informed about changes to legislation.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

5.2 A written anti-bribery and corruption statement must be in place

There is a prohibition on any and all forms of bribery, corruption, extortion or embezzlement. Adequate procedures are in place to prevent bribery in all commercial dealings undertaken by the economic operator. This must be confirmed by signing a statement not to offer or accept bribes or engage in any other form of corruption. Awareness for the topic should be raised in trainings.

*No bribery, no
corruption*

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

5.3 Any conflict of interest must be declared to ISCC

All and any conflict of interest in any business dealings with ISCC, of which the economic operator is aware, will be declared to ISCC prior to entering in a business relationship in order to allow ISCC the opportunity to take appropriate action. Any ownership or beneficial interest in a System User's business by a government official, representative of a political party or an ISCC worker are declared to ISCC prior to any business relationship with ISCC being entered into.

No conflicts of interest

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

ISCC Principle 6 – Good Management Practices and Continuous Improvement

The rationale behind ISCC Principle 6 is to ensure good management practices at the forest sourcing area level and to facilitate the continuous improvement process.

6.1 Economic stability

6.1.1 Basic economic documentations

Records shall be kept with respect to yields, costs, income and profitability of the economic operator.

Record-keeping

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

6.1.2 Business plan

Economic operators shall develop a business plan that reflects a commitment to long-term economic viability. Market requirements as well as risk mitigation strategies (e.g. of drought, price fluctuations, changing climate) shall also be taken into account.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

The plan includes measures and activities to support the long-term economic viability of the unit. It shall take into account social and environmental principles, e.g. the sustainable optimisation of yield and input efficiency. Risk mitigation strategies should include the analysis of potential impacts on the production system due to the changing climate as well as potential improvement measures.⁶

Business plan

The measures described in the plan shall be integrated into the overall business planning and be operationalised step-by-step.

Degree of obligation: short-term requirement

⁶ See also FAO "Climate risk assessment and management in agriculture", <http://www.fao.org/3/i3084e/i3084e06.pdf>

A business plan is applicable to a single economic operator. Small-scale economic operators in lower income countries should at least be able to explain verbally how their activities contribute to the long-term economic viability of their management system at the forest sourcing area level.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

6.2 Management

6.2.1 Establishment of a recording system for each unit of production

A recording system should be established for each unit of production. These records must be kept systematically and up-to-date and should be available for at least five years. Current records must provide a history of biomass production of all production areas.

Record-keeping

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement

6.2.2 Commitment of continuous improvement for each unit of production

The management regularly monitors and reviews all activities and takes actions to continuously improve management with respect to environmental, social and economic sustainable development. This includes the compliance with all ISCC short- and medium-term requirements according to the given timeline and with the best practice requirements where possible. A plan shall be in place describing the measures taken to reach the different levels of compliance.

Improvement in activities

Degree of obligation: mid-term requirement

6.2.3 Subcontractors must fully comply with the ISCC sustainability requirements

Relevant subcontractors are enterprises that work on behalf of the economic operator.

If subcontractors are engaged, they must comply fully with the ISCC sustainability requirements and provide the respective documentation and information. Relevant subcontractors must be regarded in the audit. The economic operator must provide evidence of contracts with the subcontractor ensuring that the auditor has access to relevant information. The economic operator must also accept that ISCC approved certifiers are allowed to verify the assessments through an on-site audit where there is doubt.

Full compliance of subcontractors

The economic operator is responsible for monitoring the control points applicable to the tasks performed by the subcontractor by checking and signing the assessment of the subcontractor for each task and season contracted.

Degree of obligation: immediate requirement