Mpingo Conservation &Development Initiative

MCDI Tanzania Community-Managed Forests FSC Group

ED01 Group Administration Manual

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Introduction

This document sets out how the Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative Tanzania Community-Managed Forests FSC Group should be administered.

Background to the Organisation

The Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative (MCDI) is an independent NGO registered in Tanzania (Certificate of Compliance no. 1350). The organisation is named after the Swahili for East African Blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*), one of the most valuable timbers in the world. Mpingo is exported to the West in billet form (export of raw logs is illegal under Tanzanian law) for the manufacture of musical instruments, most notably clarinets, oboes and bagpipes, and also used locally for carvings.

MCDI has over ten years of experience, researching the ecology and exploitation of Mpingo, and – since 2004 – developing practical conservation activities around the species. MCDI has been predominantly operating in the south eastern part of Tanzania mainly Kilwa District nevertheless over the years, it has expanded its operations to other Districts Councils in Tanzania developing community managed forests under the national PFM programme.

What is Certification?

Buyers of wood products in the world market are becoming aware of the negative impacts caused by over exploitation of forests through unsustainable harvesting from indigenous forests. As a result more buyers are insisting on buying wood products ascertained to be coming from forests whose management practices are environmentally friendly, socially accepted and economically sound.

Producers wishing to satisfy these customers can do this through independent certification, which verifies that the wood product was produced in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner. After verification that good forest management practices has been applied a Forest Management (FM) certificate is issued to the producer

For products made from timber extracted from certified forests to be themselves sold as certified, the entire Chain of Custody (CoC) through which a log has passed to result in the final product on sale needs to be traceable. Thus processors such as sawmills and, in the case of the export market for Mpingo, instrument manufacturers, also need to be assessed and certified that they can maintain and respect integrity of the CoC so that the origins of any product can be traced back to a certified source. If all such conditions are met a certification label (an ethical badge) can be placed on the wood product to distinguish it from non-certified (less ethical) products.

Certification is thus a process to guarantee to discerning consumers that the products they are buying have been made from timber which comes from forests whose management practices are environmentally friendly, socially accepted and economically sound.

There are several different certification schemes at work in the world, but the MCDI has chosen to pursue the most rigorous of these; that run by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). MCDI is fully committed to uphold this most rigorous of standards as set out in FSC's Principles and Criteria.

FSC provide both Forest Management and Chain of Custody certificates, but the MCDI has obtained a both FM and COC certificate. Buyers of the wood, such as sawmills, who wish to maximise their return and sell their products as FSC certified will need to obtain a CoC certificate, but that is outside the scope of this document.

FSC themselves do not actually inspect individual forests certified under their scheme. Instead they assign this responsibility to accredited agencies. Such agencies are normally run on commercial or semi-commercial lines, and thus forest managers wishing to get certified must pay for the costs of an initial assessment and on-going monitoring by an accredited agency. This can be expensive for small scale producers, and particularly in the case of poor rural communities in the tropics.

In order to make the process of getting certified affordable for small forests and poor forest managers the FSC allows for Group certificates. Members of a group can thus spread the costs of certification and

ongoing monitoring between all members. A Group Manager undertakes responsibility for dealing with the FSC and accredited agencies on behalf of the group, and themselves assume the responsibility for assessing and monitoring group members to ensure compliance with FSC principles. The FSC accredited agency thus assesses the Group Manager's approach and procedures along with a sample of members in order to determine eligibility for certification. The MCDI aims to fulfil the role of Group Manager for community-managed forests in southern Tanzania.

Why Certify Community-Managed Forests in Tanzania?

Certification is one possible management tool for community forests. Current high rates of illegal exploitation mean that communities may find it difficult to sell timber for the full value of the government licence because loggers can easily obtain cheaper timber elsewhere. For communities therefore to receive the full benefit of timber sold from their forests a specific market must be found and developed for products made from eco-friendly timber so that loggers can make back the extra costs of paying the full licence fee. Certification is the means to access and secure that market against competitors who are not playing by the same rules.

Benefits for Members

The principle benefit which members shall accrue is the possibility to sell wood at a higher price because certified timber can be differentiated from non-certified timber, and demonstrably has been felled legally. In addition the MCDI will help communities to actively market their certified timber and to find customers prepared to pay premium price.

Group members shall also benefit from strong technical advice and continued support from the MCDI, although this shall not necessarily be withheld from communities which the MCDI has assisted but then opt not to enter the scheme.

Language Considerations

This is the English language master document for administration of the group. Many operations of the group will be conducted in Swahili. The Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative undertakes the responsibility of ensuring accurate translations, and additionally of ensuring that the various concepts outlined within this document are adequately explained in Swahili so that Tanzanian villagers with little formal education can understand them.

Definition of Terms

Allowable Cut – the quota of trees which can be sustainably felled in a set period of time as determined by a Harvesting Plan.

Approved Logging Supervisor – a type of Authorised Person responsible for overseeing safety and efficiency in logging operations.

Authorised Person – a person allocated specific responsibilities within the Group Certificate structure, see page 8.

Coastal Forest – is not mangroves but dense forest found in patches in a large zone running along the coast of East Africa, see *Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa* (Burgess & Clarke 2000) for more details.

CBD – the Convention on Biological Diversity.

CoC – Chain of Custody, the chain of owners leading from trees standing in the forest to a consumer product.

Control Document – a document which plays a formal role within the Group Certificate structure, and which is subject to tight controls when amended, see page 47.

DFO – the District Forestry Officer.

EIA – an Environmental Impact Assessment.

FBD – the Forestry & Beekeeping Division, part of the Ministry of Natural Resources & Tourism.

FMU – a Forest Management Unit; large forests or those with distinct heterogeneous parts maybe partitioned into two or more FMUs, each of which is managed separately.

Forest Manager – an individual or group of people who have control over and responsibility for managing one or more VLFRs.

FSC – the Forest Stewardship Council, a global body overseeing the system of forest certification with which this document is concerned. FSC's Principles and Criteria for wise forest management underpin all the rules and procedures set out in this document, and must be adhered to by all group members.

Group Manager – the person within the MCDI charged with managing the Group Certificate.

Hazard Land – a concept of the Land Act 1999, generally defining especially steeply-sloped land; logging on Hazard Land is forbidden under Tanzanian law.

HCVF – High Conservation Value Forest, an FSC concept, embodying all forests with significant conservation value, see page 11 for a more in-depth discussion.

Group Inspector – a type of Authorised Person empowered to undertake Monitoring Visits, and otherwise check compliance with Group rules and procedures.

MCDI– the Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative, Tanzanian registered NGO no. 1350.

A **Monitoring Visit** is a visit paid to a Group Certificate member for the purposes of checking compliance with the Group's rules and with FSC's Principles and Criteria.

No Take Zone – an area within the VLFR which is set aside for pure conservation, and where harvesting of forest resources is forbidden.

NTFP – Non-Timber Forest Product can include firewood and charcoal, and other forest products which consume wood.

PFM – Participatory Forest Management, the legal process in Tanzania under which rural communities can take control over their local forests.

Remedy Instruction (RI) – is the internal equivalent of a Corrective Action Request, – the means to deal with deviations from Group rules or FSC principles and criteria.

RTES – Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species.

Sales Code – a code uniquely defining an individual sale from a certified forest under this scheme, see section *Combined Sales Record* for more details.

Tanzania – the United Republic of Tanzania.

A **Village** is a rural community in Tanzania registered as a Village under the Local Government (District Authorities) Act 1982. A Village has its own elected **Village Government** and officers.

VLFR – a Village Land Forest Reserve, an area of forest within a Village (or several Villages) which has a management plan approved under the Tanzanian Forest Act 2002 as a VLFR.

VNRC – Village Natural Resources Committee, the sub-committee of the Village Government with responsibility for over-seeing management of community-owned forests.

Outline of Group Operations

Internal Structure

Figure 1 below outlines the internal structure of the group. The Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative will hold the certificate on behalf of the entire group. Individual Community Forest Managers can apply for one or more forests under their control to join the group when they meet the conditions for joining. Membership is voluntary, and not all communities who receive assistance from MCDI in developing PFM need apply. Whilst members of the group, Forest Managers must follow the Rules of Group as set out in this document for all forests subject to the membership agreement, and follow any Remedy Instructions issued to deal with deviations from the rules. Forest Managers can remove any forests of theirs from the group subject to the stipulations herein of the minimum period of membership.

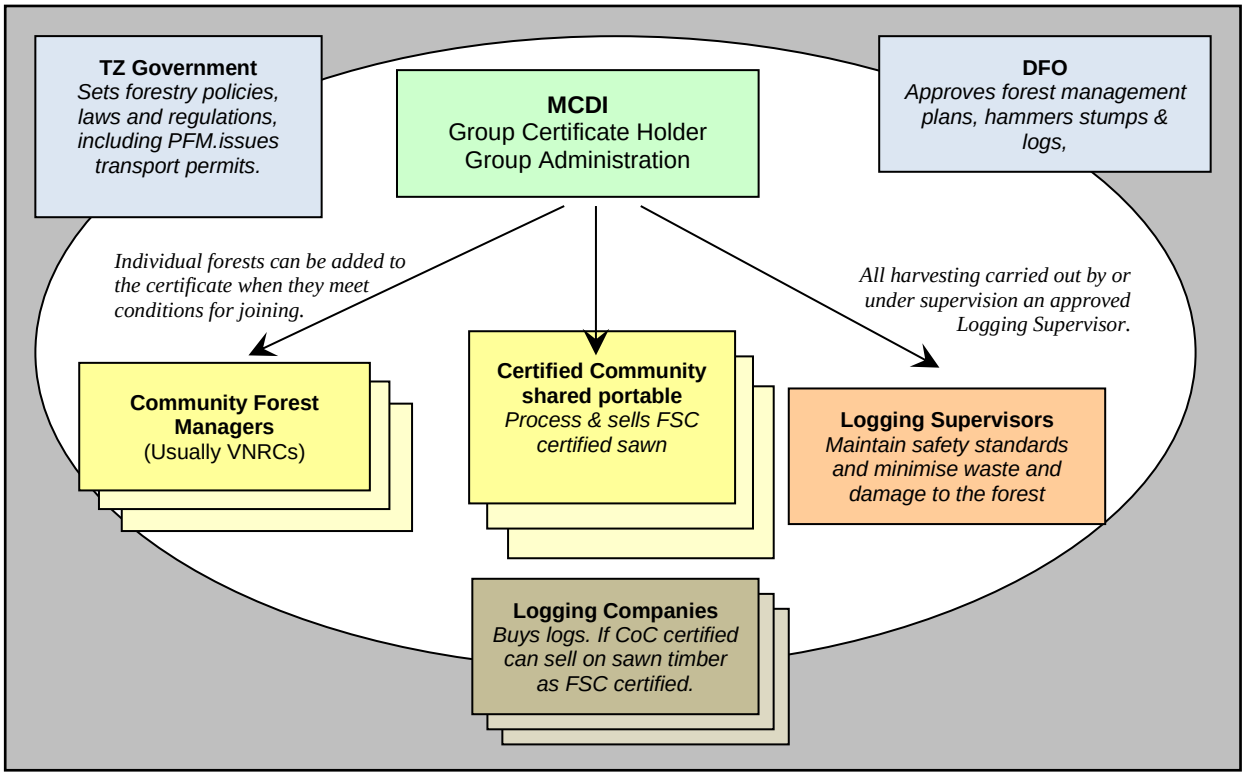

Figure 1.Structure of Group.

The group structure allows for the responsibility for ensuring safe practice during logging and timber operations. No tree felling or timber processing can take place without an approved Logging Supervisor or sawmill operator being present.

MCDI commits to adhere to FSC Principles and Criteria in the Management Unit, and to related FSC Policies and Standards. The Organisation has a written policy commitment not to receive bribes of any description and not to tolerate any form of corruption.

Group Management

The Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative is the legal entity which holds the Group Certificate, and in addition will fulfil the role of Group manager and administrator. That is to say MCDI will be responsible for administering the Group, ensuring the Group meets all requirements to get and then retain an FSC Forest Management Group Certificate, advising and supporting group members, and following up on Remedy Instructions that are issued to individual members. In fulfilling this role MCDI

shall follow the rules and procedures set out in this document and keep complete records of all such official activities it carries out in relation to management of the Group.

Specifically MCDI (Group Manager) will be responsible for:

- Control, issue and revision of group documentation and procedures.
- Control and issue of technical information to group members.
- Establishment of inspection and monitoring schedules and procedures.
- Maintenance of the Register of Members.
- Maintenance of the Remedy Instruction register and ensuring implementation of corrective action and ensuring that details of preventative action are communicated to all group members.
- Coordination of internal communication between members and preparation and revision of information for applicants and group members.
- Coordination of external communication between the group and regulatory authorities, government departments and stakeholder groups such as the Forestry Working Group of the Tanzania Natural Resources Forum.
- Keeping records of biodiversity patrols.
- Keeping records of Forest Management Plans and harvesting plans on behalf of group members.
- Provide training to Group Members.
- Assess the risk to workers of particular tasks and equipment, and take all reasonable measures to reduce or eliminate such risks.
- Make sure group members are aware of monitoring results/other sources of information that affect their ability to effectively manage VLFR.

MCDI will also be responsible for managing external relations on behalf of the Group. In particular it shall make efforts to find buyers for certified timber from group members' forests and, where appropriate, assist these customers to obtain FSC Chain of Custody certificates in order to maximise the benefits of certification. In fulfilling this role MCDI will not have exclusive rights to sell timber from members' forests, but will provide a sales route for those members who wish it.

Group members will be responsible for:

- Adhering to commitments set out in Forest Management Plan and Bylaws
- Oversee harvesting operations, keeping records of harvesting and payment receipts.
- Keeping Records of updated management plans and harvesting plans of their respective Forest Management Units.
- Preparation of annual budgets and work plans.
- Collect and maintain records of illegal or unauthorized activities, forest patrols and biodiversity and health and safety practice.

Authorised Persons

MCDI will designate **FM/CoC Certification Group Manager**. He or she will be the principle contact point for group members and external inquirers. The Group Manager will always be reachable on enquiries@mpingoconservation.org, or via MCDI's head office in Kilwa (PO Box 49, Kilwa Masoko, Tanzania,

However for simple logistical the Group Manager will not necessarily be able to carry out all tasks and therefore individual actions maybe delegated to other MCDI staff members. The Group Manager, in consultation with the MCDI Management Team, shall decide to which staff members certain responsibilities maybe delegated. There shall be three categories of authorised person:

- **Assistant Manager** who shall be empowered to represent the Group Manager in all dealings with Group Members in one or more specified Districts.
- **Inspectors** who may carry out Pre-Entry Inspections, Monitoring Visits, check on RI resolutions, and investigate complaints at the request of the Group Manager or an Assistant Manager.
- **Group Administrator** who shall be empowered to receive communications from members and issue letters of acknowledgement and the like.
- **Logging Supervisor** who shall be empowered to supervise logging operations to ensure they are carried out safely, cause minimal damage to the forest, and minimise waste produced.

Details of authorised persons shall be maintained in *Form EF08 List of Authorised Persons*. Only Logging Supervisors may be non-employees of MCDI. Training requirements for Logging Supervisors are set out in *SD07Procedures for Timber Harvesting*.

Size of Group

The Group Manager must be confident that they can effectively oversee and monitor new applicants for membership before accepting their application to join. The Group Manager should bear in mind the following criteria in judging this:

- What financial resources MCDI has to support additional Members.
- What staffs are available. The number of Members per authorised **Inspector** should not exceed 10.
- The distance from MCDI's office to the prospective Member and the number of vehicles available to visit them.
- Level of understanding and experience of the prospective Member, and hence the expected level of support they will need.
- What other support the prospective Member has, e.g. from other NGOs.
- Level of assistance required to support the current Group Members.

Legal & Regulatory Compliance

Legal and regulatory compliance is an important requirement of FSC certification (principle no.1). The following laws of Tanzania are particularly important with respect to forest management on village land:

- Land Act 1999
- Village Land Act 1999
- Forest Act 2002
- Environmental Management Act 2004
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2003
- The Wildlife and Conservation Act 2009
- The Local Government Act, 1982
- The Beekeeping Act, 2002

These are reflected in various rules of the group such as H5and H8which deal with hazard land and the display of public notices of harvesting licences respectively, and R5 which deals with EIAs prior to road construction. The Forests Ordinance (Cap. 389) made in the Government Notice no. 506 published on 15/09/95 provides the essential detail on minimum buffer zones around watercourses, although for major rivers this has since been superseded by the Environmental Management Act.

Tanzania is signatory to the following international treaties of relevance:-

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

By giving local communities an incentive to look after the forests in their vicinity MCDI is already contributing to Tanzania's efforts to meet its obligations under the CBD; biodiversity is much more likely to be conserved in a general forested landscape than in a degraded one. In particular this group certificate is only open to members managing their forest as natural forest.

In Southern Tanzania the most important terrestrial areas for biodiversity are the patches of East African Coastal Forest that are to be found on hill tops and along some river valleys. See the section on Biodiversity Protection below for more details.

International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)

According to the United Nations repository of multi-lateral treaties, Tanzania (as of September 2008) is neither a signatory to ITTA 1994 nor a negotiating party to ITTA 2006.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

No species listed in appendix I of CITES are to be found in anyDistricts MCDI is working, *Dalbergia melanoxylon*, MCDI's flagship species, and *Khayaspp are species listed in* on Appendix II due to their recent decline. Any species listed in Appendix I of CITES will automatically be banned from harvesting in group certified forests, and MCDI will undertake to provide to the Tanzanian government any data it requires for reporting of harvesting of Appendix II listed species.

International Labour Organisation Conventions

Tanzania is a member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Following the Wood Mark Global Standard for FSC certification of Forest Management the following ILO conventions were checked for relevance and applicability:

29 Forced Labour Convention (1930) – ratified by Tanzania in 1962

87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to organise (1948) – ratified by Tanzania in 2000

97 Migration for Employment Convention (1949) – not ratified by mainland Tanzania

98 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (1949) – ratified by Tanzania in 1962

100 Equal Remuneration Convention (1951) – ratified by Tanzania in 1962

105 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957) – ratified by Tanzania in 1962

111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958) – ratified by Tanzania in 2002

131 Minimum Wage Fixing Convention (1970) – ratified by Tanzania in 1983

138 Minimum Age Convention (1973) – ratified by Tanzania in 1998 (also see associated Recommendation 135)

141 Rural Workers' Organisations Convention (1975) – not ratified by Tanzania

142 Human Resources Development Convention (1975) – ratified by Tanzania in 1983

143 Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (1975) – not ratified by Tanzania

155 Occupational Safety and Health Convention (1981) –not ratified by Tanzania

169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) – not ratified by Tanzania

182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999) – ratified by Tanzania in 2001

17 - Workmen's Compensation (Accidents) Convention (1925)-ratified by Tanzania in 1962

Those ratified by Tanzania are already part of Tanzanian law and the basic provisions will be familiar to most people, so the Group Manager will pay additional attention to those conventions not yet ratified by

Tanzania. Other conventions ratified by Tanzania (34 in total as of September 2008) were briefly reviewed in drawing up this manual, and no other relevant conventions were found.

Specific requirements of these conventions are reflected in the Rules for Members – sub-section Labour Standards. There are no marginalized indigenous or tribal peoples in south-eastern Tanzania in which the Group Certificate initial members are located.

Health & Safety Training

Health and safety issues are of paramount concern during harvesting operations as set out in rule H11 and *SD06 Health & Safety in the Forest*. Responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Group standards in this respect lies with the Logging Supervisors. In order to become an Approved Logging Supervisor a logger must have:

- A certificate of completion (SL10) for MCDI's course in Safe Felling Procedures.
- Have attended a brief refresher course in both of the above within the last year.
- Satisfy the Group Manager that they are a competent Logging Supervisor.

A logger satisfying all of the above shall be entered into the *EF08 List of Authorised Persons* as an Approved Logging Supervisor. Should the Group Manager become concerned about a Logging Supervisor's ability to fulfil their duties or their honesty in doing so then their approval may be withdrawn which shall be explained by letter.

It shall be the responsibility of the Group members to pay the costs of hiring an Approved Logging Supervisor. Supervisors shall be empowered to supervise their own work or that of their own team, but should inform the Group Manager in advance.

Biodiversity Protection

The Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative consider most natural forest in Tanzania to be of High Conservation Value. This is especially true of the forests in south-eastern Tanzania where all the Group's current members are located (as of October 2008). The forests here can be roughly divided into two categories, although there is substantial cross-over:

- East African Coastal Forest (EACF) and its variants
- Miombo woodland (both open and closed canopy variants)

The EACF, which are found in scattered patches across south-eastern Tanzania, are a biodiversity hotspot of global importance with significant populations of rare and endemic species, qualifying it as a High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) habitat according to FSC guidelines. The more widespread Miombo woodlands harbour significant populations of endangered large mammals such as the African Wild Dog (*Lycaonpictus*), the African Elephant (*Loxodontaafricana*) and Lion (*Pantheraleo*), and therefore also qualify as HCVF.Therefore for the purposes of FSC certification all forest within certified VLFRs in south-eastern Tanzania will be considered as HCVF.

MCDI notes that, in general, prior to development of PFM and declaration of a VLFR, any group certified forest would have been subject to minimal management over the last twenty to thirty years, and significant unregulated logging. Thus rare, threatened or endangered species (RTES) present in the forest will have had to survive over that period with substantially lower standards of management. Thus, by and large, specific policies or interventions to support RTES present in group certified forests will not be necessary since, by definition, the current management will in every respect be at least no worse than the previous management practices such as they existed.

Miscellaneous Group Policies

Some requirements of FSC certification will be managed purely at the group level by MCDI. Detailed below are significant group policies in this regard.

Diversification

The initial focus of the group certificate prior to 2013 was the sale of certified logs of *Dalbergia melanoxylon* for the manufacture of musical instruments in the UK, EU and elsewhere, as a clearly identified market already exists for this products. However there are many more species of hardwood to be found in southern Tanzania's forests. MCDI will seek markets for these and aim to broaden the markets served by certified forests. MCDI will also encourage beekeeping and assist in marketing honey and any commercially viable NTFPs which are readily obtainable in certified forests.

Technical Monitoring & Adaptive Management

MCDI firmly believes in the principles of adaptive management. There are still many unanswered questions with regards to the sustainable management of Miombo in south-eastern Tanzania, and the impact of selective logging on forest integrity and biodiversity. The earlier that FSC certified status can be obtained for community-managed forests the better as it will lock in benefits for communities, and thus strengthen support for the project. However, conversely MCDI recognises that it has a duty to refine the techniques and methods used in managing the forests, and it expects over time to produce much more sophisticated models to guide the communities in their management decisions. This administration manual and the associated Swahili document *SD01 Rules of Membership* will thus be regularly updated to reflect current knowledge of best practice as per Group membership rule*D1*0 Forest management plans produced under Tanzania’s Participatory Forest Management programme have duration of five years. There is thus ample opportunity to incorporate necessary adjustments into management plans when they are renewed.

How to Join

Requirements for Membership

J1. Membership of the Group is at present only open to Village Governments in Tanzania. The Village Government must have a properly constituted Village Natural Resources Committee (VNRC) in line with the laws of Tanzania. Membership applies only to VLFRs managed by the VNRC within the Village concerned.

J2. In order for a Forest Manager to join the Group they must be able to demonstrate that they can maintain forest management that meets the requirements of the Group Certification Scheme and the FSC Principles and Criteria.

J3. Except in extraordinary circumstances, and for the duration of their Group membership, Forest Managers must commit to maintaining existing forest cover on all land zoned as forest over which they have some management control, even where it occurs outside the particular area of forest to be certified.

a) This particularly applies to land marked on the Village Land Use Plan as forest.

b) Possible extraordinary circumstances could include:

i. Changes to the Tanzanian Forest Act 2002 or other relevant national laws by the Government of Tanzania which restrict or revoke the management control of the Forest Manager over land zoned as forest;

ii. Changes to the location ofVillage boundaries, resulting in land previously designated as forest falling beyond the jurisdiction of the Forest Manager;

iii. The arrival of new outside investors requiring substantial areas of land who are supported by the Government of Tanzania and who are prepared to pay a fair and reasonable price for the land.

c) Possible unacceptable circumstances could include factors within the control of the Forest Manager, such as:

i. Conversion of land zoned as forest for other land uses (e.g. agriculture or settlement) by the Forest Manager when suitable alternative undesignated forest land is available and detailed in the Village Land Use Plan.

d) The Group Manager shall determine whether, for the purposes of this Group Certificate, such circumstances are truly extraordinary, and what allowances should be made.

e) Where a Village Land Use Plan is changed to reduce the area of forest this must be approved by a meeting of the full Village Assembly, and a copy of the meeting minutes together with a letter setting out the reasons for the change must be lodged with the Group Manager, who will respond within one calendar month.

J4. VNRCs must comply with Tanzanian government regulations for a minimum of one third of members being women, and must have at least on representative from the closest sub-village(s) to any forest managed under the Group.

J5. Forest Managers must have received adequate training for their role. MCDIoffers training to community members interested in forest management; the full curriculum is detailed in *ED03 VNRC Forest Management Training Curriculum*. Community members who attend one or more lessons are listed in *EF13 Register of Trained Community Forest Managers*, while those who complete the course are provided a copy of *SL09 Certificate of Course Completion – Forest Management for Communities*.

a) At least half of the members of the VNRC must have completed the course.

b) At least one person on each forest patrol team must have completed the course.

J6. Forest Managers must make an upfront commitment in good faith to join the Group Certificate for a minimum of five years, even if this may necessitate renewing the VLFR management plan during this time. Forest Managers must make every effort to meet the requirements of the Group Certificate over this minimum period of membership.

Forest Eligibility Criteria

J7. Only areas of forest which are managed as a Village Land Forest Reserve (VLFR) under Tanzanian law can be included in the Group Certificate. The village in whose land the VLFR falls must have a Village Land Certificate or other documents acceptable under the Tanzanian Village Land Act 1999 showing they have the rights and control over the land.

J8. For a VLFR to be eligible it must satisfy the following:

a) Trees (woody plants) must be the dominant vegetation.

b) Have at least 20% canopy cover with average canopy height at least 5m; both open and closed variants of Miombo woodland are allowable but not grassland areas with dotted trees.

c) Be predominantly natural vegetation. The Group is not open to plantation forests.

d) Vegetation should be mostly local, native species.

e) Not have been significantly degraded in the past five years that is no land should have been cleared for agriculture, and there should have been no significant charcoal burning or other major resource utilisation.

f) Recent commercial logging is not a reason for declaring ineligible a VLFR, but it will inevitably lead to lower revenues in the first few years until stocks recover.

J9. The VLFR must also be subject to a current management plan which:

a) Is valid under the Tanzanian Forest Act 2002 and all associated notices and ordinances, and which has at least two years left to run.

b) Is compatible with FSC Principles and Criteria. *SD05 Explanation of Applicable FSC Principles and Criteria* outlines the main points which community Forest Managers need to follow.

c) States maintenance of forest cover as a long term goal.

d) Sets aside at least 10% of the VLFR as a No Take Zone where no exploitation of forest resources will take place. Once established No Take Zone cannot be shifted unless in exceptional circumstances, and explicit written approval is required from the Group Manager.

e) Contains a map showing (at a minimum) the VLFR and No-Take Zone boundaries, as well the extent and distribution of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs).

f) Prescribes special management and monitoring procedures that shall be implemented to ensure the integrity of HCVFs and to ensure that forest operations are not having a detrimental effect on HCVF health and local wildlife.

g) Takes into account all customary uses of the forest including those of sub-villages and neighbouring villages, and does not infringe upon the rights of any local indigenous or marginalized people.

h) Prohibits any form of agriculture and livestock grazing within the forest.

i) Lists the principle forest resources under active management, including timber species and any NTFPs.

j) Management plans which are based on the current version of *SD02 Village Forest Management Plan Template* shall generally be considered to satisfy the top two conditions.

k) VNRCs must have passed all appropriate rules as bylaws by the Village Assembly, and the approved by the District Council.

J10. Although standard VLFR management plans only last for five years, there must be no existing long term plans to convert the VLFR to other uses. Villages' Participatory Land Use Plans shall be taken as important evidence of this commitment. Where the Land Use Plan does not show the land as forest the Forest Manager must convince the Group Manager it is indeed their intention to maintain the land as forest, and support this with a written commitment.

J11. The VLFR must also have a valid Fire Control Plan that complies with the requirements of rule R31. Fire Control Plans that are based on the current version of *SD09 Fire Control Plan Template* shall generally be considered to satisfy this condition.

J12. Each separate VLFR which is certified must remain within the group certificate for a minimum of five years. Members are not allowed to switch which VLFR is certified during the minimum period of membership.

Joining or Adding new Forests

Procedure for Joining

A Forest Manager who satisfies the above conditions may join the group by following the procedure set out below.

J13. Contact the Group Manager at MCDI to signal their intention to join.

J14. A representative from the MCDI will then discuss it with the Forest Manager. They will together check whether the Forest Manager and VLFR under consideration meet all the requirements. In particular the discussion will cover:

a) Introduction to the Group.

b) Introduction to the FSC. *SD05 Explanation of Applicable FSC Principles and Criteria* can be used as a basis for this.

c) Conditions of membership.

d) Summary of procedures for joining, adding and withdrawing forests, and expulsion.

e) Brief overview of harvesting, monitoring, RIs, record keeping, and complaints procedure.

J15. The MCDI Group Manager will then issue a letter outlining the results of the meeting:

a) If the applicant is not deemed eligible to join the letter will explain why.

b) If the applicant is deemed eligible the letter will set out a time-table to full membership including all the steps listed below.

J16. A file will be opened for the prospective member. (Letters of rejection sent in accordance with the above will be kept in a single file.)

J17. The Group Manager will arrange for an MCDI Inspector to visit the prospective member and their VLFR. During this Pre-Entry Inspection the MCDI Inspector will:

a) Present a copy of the current *SD01 Rules of Membership*, and explain each of the rules.

b) Inspect the forest which the applicant Forest Manager wishes to include in the scheme.

c) Complete *Form SF01 Pre-Entry Inspection Checklist* together with the applicant Forest Manager.

d) Make clear and discuss with the Forest Manager any instances of non-compliance with Group rules or requirements, and agree a time-table for any corrective actions.

e) Assess whether any timber species have suffered severe (>66%) stocks depletion in the last ten years and therefore should be subject to the ten year moratorium set out in rule H1.

f) Contains a map showing (at a minimum) the VLFR and No-Take Zone boundaries, as well the extent and distribution of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs).

g) Prescribes special management and monitoring procedures that shall be implemented to ensure the integrity of HCVFs and to ensure that forest operations are not having a detrimental effect on HCVF health and local wildlife.

h) If the MCDI Inspector judges there are no Urgent or Major Remedy Instructions which must be fulfilled before membership, he/she will then assist the Forest Manager to complete the joining forms:

i. Form SF02 Application to Join

ii. Form SF03 Adding a Forest

i) Upon returning from the visit the MCDI Inspector will complete *Form EF02 Pre-Entry Inspection Report* and file it with the completed checklist and application forms.

j) The MCDI Group Manager will then issue either:

i. *Letter SL01 Notice of Passing Pre-Entry* should the applicant be ready to join. This will outline any agreed Minor Remedy Instructions and a time-table for completion.

ii. *Letter SL02 Notice of Pre-Entry Failure* indicating the Urgent and Major Remedy Instructions which must be addressed before the application can be re-considered.

k) If the Pre-Entry Inspection is failed, the MCDI will carry out a repeat inspection when the applicant informs the MCDI they have fulfilled all Urgent and Major Remedy Instructions identified in the last Pre-Entry Inspection.

J18. Upon receiving the forms *SF02 Application to Join* and *SF03 Adding a Forest* the MCDI will check all information contained therein for accuracy, and verify the applicant is eligible.

J19. If everything is satisfactory the MCDI will assign the Forest Manager a membership number and a sub-certificate code for the VLFR, and send them a copy of *Letter SL03 Notice of Membership Acceptance* outlining the above information, together with copies of the countersigned application forms, and enclose a copy of *SD08 Outline of Complaints & Appeals Procedure*. Membership will begin one week from the date of the letter to allow time for delivery.

J20. The Group Manager will update the Register of Members & Forests and inform the certification body of the new member and forest within one month.

J21. As part of the process of joining members agree to follow all applicable group rules as set out elsewhere in this manual.

J22. Once a new member expands or change the size of an existing VLFR or expelled from the Group, the Group Manager will update the Register of Members and inform the certification body one month after changes have been verified on the existing VLFR size. Incase of exceptional changes after one month the group manager will inform certification board immediately.

Procedure for Adding Forests

J23. A Forest Manager may apply to add further forests under their control to the Group Certificate.

a) Each forest must first pass a Pre-Entry Inspection as set out in step J17 above.

b) The Forest Manager must then complete and sign *Form SF03 Adding a Forest* for each such VLFR to be added.

c) The MCDI will then issue *Letter SL04 Notice of Forest Acceptance* including details of the new a sub-certificate code for the VLFR concerned.

d) The VLFR will be included in the Group Certificate one week from the date of the letter to allow time for delivery.

e) The Group Manager will update the Register of Members & Forests and will inform the certification body of the new VLFR.

Removing Forests & Leaving the Group

Procedure for Withdrawing a Forest

J24. A Forest Manager may withdraw any VLFRs under their control from the group scheme at any time subject to one calendar months' notice, once the VLFR has completed the minimum five years within the certificate.

J25. A Forest Manager must withdraw a forest on land which has been transferred out to Public Land by order of the President of Tanzania under Village Land Act 1999 Part III.

J26. In order to withdraw a forest the Forest Manager must complete *Form SF04 Notice of Forest Withdrawal*, stating clearly their reason for withdrawing the VLFR, and submit a signed copy to their nearest MCDI office.

J27. The one month's notice commences from the day the signed form is submitted. The Forest Manager shall not harvest or sell any forest products from the VLFR being withdrawn during this notice period.

J28. The MCDI will cancel the sub-certificate code the day the notice period expires, and notify the Forest Manager accordingly. The Group Manager will update the Register of Members & Forests and inform the certification body immediately.

J29. Should the Forest Manager subsequently wish to include again the withdrawn VLFR in the group certificate they will have to follow the standard procedure as set out above to add a VLFR, and the VLFR will receive an entirely new sub-certificate code.

Procedure for Leaving

J30. Except where members are expelled for failure to fulfil their obligations, see Expulsion from the Group below, Forest Managers may entirely withdraw from the Group at any time subject to one calendar months' notice, and the minimum five year period of membership. Forest Managers wishing to do so should request and complete *Form SF05 Notice of Leaving Group*, stating clearly their reason for leaving, and submit a signed copy to their nearest MCDI office.

J31. The one month's notice commences from the day the signed form is submitted. The Forest Manager shall not harvest or sell any forest products from any certified VLFRs during this notice period.

J32. The MCDI will cancel the group membership and all the Forest Manager's sub-certificate codes the day the notice period expires, and notify the Forest Manager accordingly. The Group Manager must then update the Register of Members & Forests and inform the Certification Body.

J33. Former members who left the group voluntarily may only apply to rejoin if they can demonstrate that their forest management has continued to be consistent with the FSC Standard during the period of non-membership.

Expulsion from the Group

J34. Expulsion is the ultimate sanction for members who do not follow the rules of the Group. Members will be expelled in the event that they either:

a) Do not allow access to their VLFRs to MCDI staff, certification body representatives and FSC representatives for the purposes of ongoing monitoring and surveillance.

b) Fail to address non-compliances within the agreed time.

c) Make false claims or misuse the group or FSC name or logo.

J35. In the event that one or more of the above conditions for expulsion should apply the MCDI will implement the following procedure:

a) If the member has failed to close out a RI within the time permitted as set out in the group procedure on Remedy Instructions then the expulsion process must begin.

b) The Group Manager should send the member *Letter SL05 Notice of Impending Expulsion* outlining the reason for the threat of expulsion and the procedure to be followed.

c) Once the expulsion procedure begins the member may not market or sell any product as certified, nor make any claims about the forest management being certified.

d) The member has 30 days in which to lodge an appeal against the expulsion.

e) If no appeal is received within 30 days, then the member is expelled.

f) If the member appeals, then the appeals process is followed as set out in the *Complaints and Appeals ProcedureSD08*

g) Once a member has been expelled the Group Manager must update the Register of Members & Forests and inform the Certification Body immediately.

h) Former members who were expelled from the group will not be eligible to apply for re-entry for at least one year.

J36. If a group member repeats the same non-compliance more than twice in a row, the member will be given a warning letter and will be under supervision for a period of 12 months.

J37. If a group member repeats the non-compliance during the observation period, then the member will be expelled from the membership, refer to condition number J35(b-f)

J38. If a member is able to confirm by providing progress reports to the group manager for the correction of the non-compliances after being expelled from the group for a period of 1 year, he must follow the procedure to apply for re-joining the group, refer to condition number J13

Rules for Members

All group members agree to abide by the following rules. Procedures for dealing with deviations by one or more group members from these rules are set out in the section on Instructions below. The document *SD01 Rules of Membership* contains a precise Swahili translation of these rules. Rule numbers will be preserved under this translation to allow easy identification of issues.

General Rules

R1. Members are required to continue to manage forests included in the Group Certificate in accordance with the FSC Principles and Criteria. *SD05 Explanation of Applicable FSC Principles and Criteria* outlines the main points which community Forest Managers need to follow.

R2. Members must follow all applicable Tanzanian laws and regulations including District ordinances.

R3. Management of the VLFR should be predominantly natural with minimalist Silvicultural intervention.

R4. The following activities shall be banned in the VLFR:

a) Forest clearance for whatever reason, except in relation to road building, see below.

b) Regular access by domesticated livestock.

c) Use of chemical pesticides and herbicides.

d) Use of biological control agents except where specifically authorised in writing by the Group Manager.

e) Use of Genetically Modified Organisms.

f) Cultivation of exotic species except those which are commonly found in Miombo woodland.

g) Driving vehicles along watercourses.

h) Storage or disposal of flammable fuels.

i) Disposal of rubbish or waste.

R5. Activities, including road construction, which may destroy part ofVLFRs,are generally only permitted where they are required by the District Council. Where this is not the case an application must be made in writing for the Group Manager to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed road or other modification using form SF09. This assessment should be carried out within three months of the request being received, and all costs of the assessment must be borne by the Member unless waived by the Group Manager. The assessment must either be conducted by a Group Inspector or an independent assessor approved by the Group Manager. The Group Manager may refuse to accept a poorly conducted assessment, in which case reasons will be given in writing. If approval is granted the area of forest thus cleared should be minimised, and road construction designed to minimise the environmental impact.

R6. Members are responsible for:

a) Ensuring that all operations (carried out by employees or contractors) meet the requirements of the Group, FSC Principles and Criteria, and all applicable Tanzanian laws and regulations including District ordinances and Village bylaws.

b) Following the management plans submitted with each application to include a VLFR in the group certificate.

Maintaining all necessary documentation and records kept up-to-date in line with the section on MCDI will put all substantive communications in writing. Unless specified otherwise in this manual and

associated document Group Members may opt to use verbal means or written correspondence according to their preference, and as they deem appropriate to the situation.

Both the Group Manager and Group members shall keep full records of everything set out below for a minimum of five years.

c) Member Records .

d) Implementing agreed Remedy Instructions in line with agreed schedules.

R7. At least one monitoring visit will be made to each member per year as set out in the section below. All members are required to undergo the monitoring visit and to address any non-compliance which are identified. Members may also be visited by the Group Auditors during the Group's annual assessment, and possibly by External Stakeholders. Members shall afford full cooperation to all internal and external monitors.

R8. Members consent to the Group Manager making publicly available the Management, Harvesting and Work Plans applicable to certified VLFRs, and providing copies to interested stakeholders.

R9. Members must seek constructive resolution to all conflicts and respond constructively to stakeholders. Any land disputes affecting a certified VLFR must be dealt with in strict accordance with the Land Act 1999 and Village Land Act 1999.Disputes internal to a Village should follow Tanzanian government procedures for resolving village disputes. All harvesting of forest products must be suspended from affected VLFRs during dispute resolution. The Group Manager will keep a record of all disputes in *EF07Complaint Register*

R10. All area boundaries pertaining to the VLFR must be marked with a line of paint at about breast height (1.3m) around the trunk of each tree along the boundary, as follows. The recommended paint colour to use is given in brackets, but this is less important.

a) Unclear VLFR external boundary (blue)

b) No Take Zone (yellow)

c) Hazard land and other areas deemed unsuitable for harvesting as per ruleH4(red)

d) VLFR external and No Take Zone boundaries must be clearly marked from the beginning and the markings maintained by the Forest Manager. Areas excluded from harvesting can be demarcated on an *ad hoc* basis as required during harvesting.

R11. When a management plan is renewed (the normal duration is five years) it must be submitted to the DFO &MCDI for approval.

a) Plans which follow or are based upon the latest version of *SD02 Village Forest Management Plan Template* shall generally be considered to be acceptable.

b) Revised plans should explicitly reference results of monitoring, state lessons learned, and any changes made as a result.

c) The Group Manager shall indicate approval or non-approval of management plans submitted for his/her assessment within one calendar month, and informs the Forest Manager in writing of his/her conclusions.

d) Should an incompatible management plan come into force the Group Manager will immediately issue an Urgent Remedy Instruction to address the non-compliance.

R12. Group Members should produce an annual work plan and budget for each VLFR under their management and lodge a copy with the Group Manager upon finalisation. Form *SF13 Annual Work Plan and Budget Template* can be used for this purpose, but other formats are also acceptable. Normally annual work plans and budgets should follow the fiscal year. Budgets should reflect expected income less income taxes as and when the members start paying taxes.

R13. At the end of the fiscal year, and prior to drawing up a new work plan and budget for the year forthcoming, each Group Member should complete an annual report of the year just ended,

including a financial statement showing income and expenditure against budget. Form *SF22 Annual Report Template* can be used for this purpose, but other formats are also acceptable.

R14. In managing a VLFR, Group Members are expected to spend up to 50% of income derived from the VLFR to cover expenses incurred during management, such as patrolling and implementing fire control measures.

a) Where sufficient income has not been realised Group Members may be exempted from certain expensive and/or labour intensive requirements at the Group Manager's discretion.

b) The Group Manager will communicate such exemptions by issuing letter *SL08 Notice of Exemption from Required Management Activities*.

c) MCDI's standard schedule of payments to community members will be used to evaluate whether sufficient budget is available to cover the cost of labour required to implement forest management activities.

R15. VNRCs whose members are changed after election should inform the Group Manager as soon as is reasonably possible, giving the names of those committee members who have left and those who have joined. Where the number of trained personnel drops below the minimum requirements set out in J5.a) then sufficient number must be enrolled in the course at the next available opportunity. Where the VNRC has sufficient funds this additional training will be at their expense.

R16. Members should keep accurate and up-to-date accounts of their certified VLFR(s) separate from unrelated activities; in particular VNRC accounts should be separate from the main Village Government accounts.

R17. Members must inform the Group Manager as soon as possible of any material information of relevance to their Group membership or the inclusion of any VLFRs under their control.

R18. Any Group Member may request a change to one or more Group Rules or Procedures by writing to the Group Manager. The Group Manager will reply by letter within one month stating, with reasons, whether he/she believes:

a) The request is not feasible and will not be given further consideration.

b) The request is reasonable and will be considered in the next Annual Process.

c) The request is both reasonable and urgent, and will be acted upon as soon as possible.

R19. If a member discovers that they have been subjected to sexual harassment and discrimination, they must report it by filling in the form SF30 sexual harassment and discrimination complaints to the group manager.

R20. SD10 Procedures for sexual harassment and gender discrimination during the implementation of forestry activities, is a guide that will be used to explain the steps to follow in matters of sexual harassment and gender discrimination to comply with safety regulations

Unauthorized Harvesting

R21. Members must make a reasonable effort to ensure that unauthorised harvesting of forest resources does not take place from certified VLFRs under their control. This includes:

a) Establishment of bylaws by the Village.

b) Frequent patrolling to detect unauthorised felling and apprehend offenders.

i. Patrolling should occur at least twice a month, and more often if the VLFR is easily accessible without detection, i.e. if there are access routes which do not pass through the Village.

ii. Patrol records should be kept and made available for inspection during monitoring visits.

iii. Patrols should be scheduled on an irregular basis so that offenders cannot predict when the next patrol should occur. Only the patrol team should know in advance when a patrol is due to take place.

c) Persons caught felling or extracting forest resources without authorisation should be prosecuted under the appropriate bylaws and their punishment recorded.

R22. Should a Member detect unauthorised harvesting of forest resources in certified VLFRs under their control they should inform the MCDI immediately and complete *form SF 21 Notification of Unauthorised Harvesting* and file it in the village and provide copy to MCDI.

R23. Unauthorised felling of timber subject to a Harvesting Plan can affect the sustainability of the Allowable Cut specified in the plan.

a) Unauthorised felling will be deducted from the Allowable Cut except where the felling has been detected and reported to the MCDI, and as long as:

i. The total unauthorised felling for that species over the duration of the Harvesting Plan does not exceed 50% of the Allowable Cut,

ii. And, in the opinion of the Group Manager, the Member has made a reasonable effort to prevent the unauthorised felling.

b) Unauthorised felling which has not been reported to the MCDI but which is detected in a subsequent monitoring visit will automatically be deducted from the Allowable Cut.

c) Where an Allowable Cut has already been completed, any deductions will be made from the Allowable Cut under the next Harvesting Plan.

d) *SL07 Notice of Deduction to an Allowable Cut* will be issued to a Member required to make a deduction to their Allowable Cut.

R24. Unauthorised extraction of forest resources not subject to a Harvesting Plan will lead to a Remedy Instruction being raised unless it is non-commercial, small scale, not persistent, and, in the opinion of an MCDI Inspector, not likely to change the character of the forest in the VLFR.

R25. Persistent failure to control unauthorised harvesting of forest resources from a certified VLFR will lead to a Major RI being raised, and harvesting of those species affected being banned.

Fire Management

R26. Members must demonstrate an ongoing commitment to controlling and reducing the incidence of destructive fires in the forest, but it is understood that this is a big, labour intensive task, so full-scale fire control will not be expected prior to a VLFR being added to the group certificate.

R27. In order to limit unnecessary carbon emissions boundaries will not be cleared around Member's forests. Instead fire will be controlled through a comprehensive programme of early burning focusing primarily on a VLFR's borders, with extra controlled burns across well-known fire entry points, as well as along roads, tracks and paths that pass through the VLFR.

R28. Members should early burn all VLFR borders plus both sides of all regularly used roads, tracks and paths that pass through the VLFR each year to a minimum width of 100m within two months of the end of the rainy season in each village.

R29. Early burning inside the forest is another important fire control measure to reduce the risks of a catastrophic inflagration should fire penetrate the borders as will inevitably happen from time to time. However, Group Members will not be expected to undertake this additional task until after they have received their first significant payment for the sale of certified timber from the VLFR.

a) In any year following such a payment the group member should carry out early burning. Where budget allows the entire VLFR should be subjected to a controlled early burn in line with FBD recommended practice.

b) Rule R14will be used to determine the minimum extent of the VLFR that must be subject to early burning.

c) Firebreaks burned during early burning should vary from year to year so as to ensure the same areas are not burned every year and to avoid excessive build up of combustible material in unburned areas.

d) No early burning should take place in evergreen forest.

R30. Members are expected to make reasonable efforts to fight fires inside certified VLFRs and to prevent the deliberate lighting of fire within their VLFRs.

R31. Early burning is necessarily a complex undertaking. E.g. different parts of the forest dry out at different speeds after the end of the rains and so need burning at different times. For this reason each Member shall be required to produce a fire control plan for their forest. This plan should:

a) Include a map showing those areas of the forest most susceptible to fire, common fire entry points, and typical direction of fire spread. This map does not need to be scientific or to scale so long as it shows the rough location of key relevant features, and in particular all regularly used roads, tracks and paths that pass through the forest.

b) Make provision for additional early burning around the most dangerous fire entry points; this burning could take place either inside or outside the VLFR.

c) Identify which areas of the forest dry out quicker than other areas and therefore the order in which different parts of the forest are to be burned. The plan should specify the expected schedule after the end of significant rains over which early burning will be implemented.

d) Describe how early burning inside the forest boundaries will be managed in accordance with the requirements of rule R29.

e) Be compatible with FSC Principles and Criteria, and the National Forest Act of 2002 and its accompanying regulations.

R32. Map of the forest showing areas that early burning was done should be prepared after early burning is done for the purpose of avoiding repeating the same area the next year. The map

shouldn’t be very technique but should be able to identify important features. Important features could be roads, animal tracks and tracks that are used while visiting the forest.

R33. Additional, unannounced monitoring visits may be made to check that Fire Management rules are being followed.

R34. Due attention should be paid during all early burning operations to all health and safety procedures of these group rules.

Labour Standards

R35. Forest Managers will not:

a) Use forced or compulsory labour.

b) Use child labour – that is anyone under the age of 18, the minimum age of work in Tanzania.

c) Discriminate in terms of gender, religion, political affiliation, race, tribe, nationality or skin-colour in their use of labour.

d) Use unskilled labour for jobs requiring proper training, e.g. logging.

e) Hire people who are clearly not physically fit to work in the forest.

R36. Forest Managers will respect the rights of forest workers and community members to organise and to collective bargaining.

R37. Forest Managers employing full time staff will respect the national minimum wage in Tanzania.

R38. Forest Managers shall make a reasonable and proportionate effort to care for health and safety of their work force. That is to say they should make ensure that people involved in forest management activities such as chain saw operators and saw mill operators properly use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

R39. Forest Managers shall ensure that during Annual Work planning and budgeting, a budget line for buying or replacement of PPE is considered.

R40. All the rules in this Labour Standards sub-section apply generally to the Forest Manager, and not just to forest operations. E.g. Village Governments which are members of the Group Certificate should not make use of child labour when building new schools or roads.

R41. In interpreting these minimum Labour Standards the Group Manager will make reasonable allowance for what is established practice in the area with respect to the fact that Forest Manager membership of the Group Certificate is restricted to exactly the sort of vulnerable people which most Labour Standards aim at protecting.

R42. All people working in the forest, including Forest Managers and Loggers, should be a member of either:

a) The Tanzanian government's National Health Insurance scheme.

or

b) A private health insurance scheme.

R43. If a member fails to pay for health insurance for the natural resources committee and it is proven that the member does not have the financial capacity, the member should write a letter of request for financial support to the relevant village government authority or to the Group Manager (MCDI).

R44. If the relevant village government authority or the group certification manager (MCDI) does not have the financial capacity at that particular time, the member will be allowed to continue with the activities of managing the forest until the member gets money to pay for health insurance.

R45. Any personal injury which occurs in the VLFR should be reported to the Group Manager within 30 days using form*SF11 Report of Personal Injury*. The Group Manager will keep a record of all reported personal injuries in *EF09 Register of Personal Injuries*. In the case of a death or serious injury the incident must be reported to the relevant authorities as defined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2003. Accident and injury reports will be reviewed each year as part of the annual documents review process see D10.

R46. A complete first aid kit containing all items required as listed in *SD06 Health & Safety in the Forest* should be available in the village at all times, and should be taken to the forest during logging operations. A minimal portable first aid kit, as also defined in *SD06*, should be taken along on all forest visits and patrols by the Forest Manager. Wherever possible teams working in the forest should be accomplished by a trainer first aider; *SD06* defines specific occasions when this is an absolute requirement.

R47. Clean and safe drinking water must be provided to anyone engaged in hard physical labour in the forest; clean water from the main source in village is sufficient.

R48. All reasonable precautions should be taken to avoid people working in the forest coming into contact with dangerous animals such as elephants. Where workers need to stay out overnight in the forest, such as for bird monitoring, they should stay in a designated safe place and light a fire. Groups working in the forest during the day should leave before dangerous animals become active.

R49. Forest Managers shall not allow or permit a pregnant employee or employee that is nursing a child to perform any forest work that will be a danger to her health or the health of her chiding Forest patrols, harvesting, early burning and other forest related activity as stated in Tanzanian Employment and labour Act (Section III/D/33(5))

Harvesting Forest Products

H1. Members shall only allow harvesting of timber resources from certified VLFRs under their control in line with Harvesting Plans which have been approved by the DFO and by MCDI as being compatible with the Certificate.

a) Harvesting plans must treat each species separately unless specifically authorised in writing by the Group Manager otherwise. Such authorisations will only be issued based on sound ecological principles, and will only apply to common species.

b) Harvesting plans may divide the VLFR into one or more coupes and may apply only to specific coupes or to the entire VLFR according to the Forest Manager's preference.

c) Harvesting plans must be based on the minimum felling girths for reserved species as stipulated in the Tanzanian forest regulations.

d) Harvesting plans must be based on a recent (no more than one year old at the time the harvesting plan is written) and valid assessment of timber stocks in line with *ED02 Group Guidelines on Forest Assessment and Sustainable Harvesting*.

e) The estimate used to determine the allowable cut must be the lower 75% confidence limit, that is the estimate of stocks which, based on the assessment data, one can be 75% confident that at least that amount of stocks exists in the forest.

f) No harvesting shall be allowed of a species which has been heavily logged in the VLFR over the previous ten years (heavily logged is defined as estimated stocks depletion exceeding 66%). Species disqualified under this rule shall be determined by a Group Inspector at pre-inspection before a forest is accepted into the Group. The Inspector's decision shall be based on conversations with the Forest Manager and visits to the forest. It may be appealed by writing to the Group Manager.

g) Harvesting Plans must be compatible with FSC Principles and Criteria, and the National Forest Act, 2002 with its regulations.

h) The Allowable Cut specified in a Harvesting Plan must conform to the definition of sustainability as set out in *ED02 Group Guidelines on Forest Assessment and Sustainable Harvesting*.

i) The MCDI recommends but does not require that Harvesting Plans be based upon the current version of *SD03 Forest Harvesting Plan Template*.

j) The Group Manager shall indicate approval or non-approval of a Harvesting Plan submitted for their assessment within one calendar month, and informs the Forest Manager in writing of their conclusions.

H2. Clear felling shall be prohibited in the VLFR, with only selective felling on a species-by-species permitted.

H3. Harvesting of dead trees is not permitted due to the valuable role they play in provision of nesting habitat for wildlife.

H4. Harvesting shall generally take place during the dry season months of June to November, though the Group Manager may issue exceptions to this rule in writing. No log extraction shall take place from areas where soils are saturated. Logging also shall not take place when winds are too high, making logging dangerous.

H5. No harvesting shall take place on:

a) Land which would qualify as Hazard Land as defined in the Village Land Act 1999 Part III, even where the Minister of Lands has not declared the land to be Hazard Land, but in the opinion of the Group Manager it would qualify as such..

b) On steep slopes exceeding a 30° angle from the horizontal (a 50% gradient).

c) Within 60m of a water source, or the bank of a permanently flowing river, or one which is normally permanently flowing. The Group Manager will maintain a list of the rivers considered as such that pass through the VLFR of each Group Member (form EF10).

d) Within 20m of a spring or the banks of any regularly flowing stream or 30m of the banks of any regularly flowing Small River. The VLFR Management Plan should specify any such springs or watercourses.

e) Within a buffer distance (from the banks) equal to the width of any gully formed by ephemeral wet season stream, e.g. not within 2m of the banks of a gully which is 2m wide.

f) Within 60m of areas of cultural importance which are identified in the Management Plan.

g) Inside the VLFR No Take Zone as defined in J9.d).

H6. Where a significant proportion of the VLFR must be excluded from harvesting as a result of rule H4 the Harvesting Plan should note this and calculate the Allowable Cut only for the area in which harvesting is permitted.

H7. All areas in the general vicinity of a harvesting operation in which harvesting is forbidden should be clearly marked as per rule R10 before harvesting operations commence.

H8. Details of approved requests for harvesting timber from a certified VLFR must be posted on the village notice board(s) at least two days before harvesting takes place. This notice should include:

a) Who made the request (name of the company and their representative).

b) When request received, date of meeting approved, and dates harvesting expected to take place.

c) How much timber is to be cut (estimated number of logs and rough estimate of volume in cubic metres).

d) Expected volume/logs to be sold

e) Expected income / price paid for the timber.

H9. At least one representative from the Member must be present during each logging operation to ensure compliance with these rules.

H10. In order to ensure good stock retention and maintenance of genotypic diversity no more than 50% of the harvestable stock of a species and of each size group as defined in the harvesting plan should be felled within a localised area. This should be achieved by automatically excluding every second tree (of the species and size group under consideration) from selection. This exclusion of standing trees must occur prior to selection by the buyer, who may choose not to buy every (odd-numbered) tree offered to them, but who may not substitute a previously excluded tree for one which has been offered as a candidate for felling.

H11. All timber harvesting in Group certified VLFRs must occur safely, efficiently (i.e. with minimal waste), and with minimal impact on surrounding vegetation.

a) *SD07 Procedures for Timber Harvesting* sets out the standards to be followed in all timber felling operations.

b) At least one Approved Logging Supervisor must be present in order to ensure the standards are followed correctly. Cost of logging supervisor should be paid by the VNRC

c) Where an external customer has particular quality concerns the Group Manager should ensure these are communicated to the attending Logging Supervisor.

d) The Logging Supervisor will complete *Form SF08 Safe Timber Harvesting Checklist* and hand the signed form to the Group Manager upon completion of the harvesting.

e) The Group Manager will check the completed checklist and raise a RI if one or more non-compliances were recorded.

f) The Forest Manager and Logging Supervisor should between them complete form *SF20 Harvesting Record* to ensure the harvest complies with harvesting quotas and as a reconcilable record of the first stage in the chain of custody.

H12. Members may not allow logs to leave the VLFR without both the logs and the stumps being hammered by a Forestry Officer from the District Council as required under Tanzanian law. It is expected that normally the buyer will pay the costs of this.

H13. Upon felling, hammering and marking, newly felled logs must be transported from the VLFR, and at the earliest opportunity, to the final destination. Final verification must be done at the village before the logs leaves the Village. At the point of final check in the village every single log and branch should be checked against measurements recorded on form SF20 prior to sale.

H14. Waste should be minimised in any harvesting operation.

a) The height of residual stumps should be no more than 30cm except where access to the trunk was difficult.

b) All branches of merchantable volume should be removed at the same time as removing the logs; this is because the sale is by standing tree volume where by the buyer buys the whole standing tree, therefore it is their responsibility to take everything at once.

c) Remaining non-merchantable branches should, where possible, be sold to any other buyer.

H15. Timber felled in the VLFR but not yet sold or collected by the buyer should be stored at a landing site which is clearly labelled and distinct from other certified VLFRs and from non-certified forest so as to maintain clear segregation of timber and keep the chain of custody intact. Unsold timber should not be moved from the village landing site without written permission from the Group Manager.

H16. Members should encourage buyers to collect their timber from the landing site as soon as possible. Members may wish to enforce this by stipulating in sales agreements a maximum period, e.g. three months, for payment to be received after which storage fees may be charged or ownership of the logs shall automatically revert to the Member to be resold.

H17. Members may only authorise commercial harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) from certified VLFRs under their control where that harvesting is in line with the approved Forest Management Plan.

H18. Members shall give priority to buyers that are village residents that will be able to pay competitive price of forest resources.

H19. Members shall make sure any mobile sawmill and chainsaws shall not be used in the Village Forest without a permit from the District Forest Officer.

H20. Members will ensure that no harvesting takes place without proper health and safety measures for the chainsaw operator, as outlined in the *SD05 Health and Safety Manual*. The logging supervisor will be responsible for completing Form SF08 – Safe Timber Harvesting Checklist to meet the required health and safety standards during harvesting.

Processing Timber

H21. Ordinarily felled logs should be either transported out of the forest unsawn to the Village Landing Site from where they should be sold or further processed and then sold or they can be processed using portable sawmill at a specified predetermined landing and processing site but with proper supervision

H22. An Approved and trained Sawmill Operator needs to be present to ensure appropriate health and safety precautions are implemented during timber processing.

H23. The sawing process should yield at least 50% of the logs by volume as usable planks (and thus at least 33% of the original standing tree volume), with no more than 50% abandoned. Such waste should be firewood

H24. Where processing of sawn timber takes place the Forest Manager should additionally complete SF 29*Timber Processing Form* one per species, as an audit record to ensure integrity of the chain of custody.

Pit-Sawing

H25. Ordinarily felled logs should be transported out of the forest unsawn to the Village Landing Site from where they should be sold. However, an exception is made for buyers from the local area that may be permitted to saw timber using pits within the certified forest at the Forest Manager's discretion.

a) Such sales will only be permitted for buyers harvesting no more than 20 cubic metres in a year.

b) The maximum number of pit- saws shouldn't exceed (3) for each harvesting

c) The amount that will be allowed to be processed in the VLFR per year using pit saw should not exceed 50 m3.

H26. Harvesting for pit-sawing is subject to all the same rules as set out for larger harvests. In particular an Approved Logging Supervisor needs to be present to ensure health and safety precautions are implemented, logging should not occur where previous logging has happened stock retention (H10) and waste-minimization (H14) rules are followed.

H27. Environmental disturbance should be minimised when digging the pit:

a) No pit should be dug within areas where harvesting is forbidden under rule H5.

b) No trees with CBH larger than 10cm should be cleared either to dig the pit or clear the path from felled trees to the pit.

c) The pit should be between 1.5m-2m and 1m-3m deep. The depth of the pit will depend on the size of logs

d) The pit should be completely filled in after use, and soil tamped down so as not to create a hidden hazard for people or wild animals.

e) The pit should be constructed in areas that will not involve cut trees incase there is a need to cut tree; the trees should be recorded as part of the harvest. Using branches of targeted timber trees for this purpose is encouraged to minimise additional felling, but poles of a commonly occurring non-timber species may be felled if using branches are not an option.

f) Incase more than one pit saw has been dug, the distance required between pitsaw to the another shall not exceed 1000 meters (1km)

H28. All sawn timber should be transported first to the Village Landing Site for verification before being taken elsewhere. This can be done without unloading from the truck or other transport so long as the Forest Manager is able to get sufficient access to complete the verification.

H29. In order not to generate additional complications in the chain of custody which could prevent easy reconciliation the pit-sawyer must commit to buying the entire harvest that is felled for pit-sawing (not just the volume that is sawn). However, the pit-sawyer does not have to saw it all up, and may transport some unsawn pieces out of the forest. It is up to the pit-sawyer to sell on any surplus he/she generates. No sawn timber should be left at the Village Landing Site. The sawing process should yield at least 30% of the original standing tree volume. Waste should be deposited in the bottom of the pit before it is filled in.

H30. Where pit-sawing takes place the Forest Manager should additionally complete form SF25, one per species, as an audit record to ensure integrity of the chain of custody.

Sales of Certified Forest Products

S1. Group Members may sell products from certified VLFRs either through MCDI or directly themselves.

S2. When selling through MCDI the quantities purchased, the sales price and other details are entirely up to the Group Member to agree with the buyer; the MCDI's only role is to act as a facilitator on behalf of Group Members. Ultimately all sales must be concluded by and are the responsibility of the Group Member, and they must ensure that all necessary paperwork is in order.

S3. Group Members should normally only sell certified products from four designated point of sale; could be within the VLFR or at the edge outside the VLFRs or at the delivery site or at the solar Kiln.

S4. Group Members selling certified produce must correctly identify to any enquirer:

a) The source of the products

b) Their status as 100% FSC certified (containing FSC trademark in the sale invoice)

c) The Group Certificate name (Mpingo Conservation & Development Initiative) and registration code (SA-FM/COC-002151)

d) Their own name and membership number

S5. These rules for sales of certified produce apply whether or not the buyer has a Chain of Custody certificate recognised by FSC.

S6. The following procedure should be followed for handling sales of logs.

a) Buyer formally applies in writing to the Village to buy timber from the VLFR. For larger companies this application will come in the form of a purchase order, other buyers may simply write a letter. The written application should state the volume of timber sought or number of trees which the buyer wishes to obtain.

b) The application is discussed by a joint meeting of the Village Council and the VNRC, and compared with the existing harvesting plan.

c) The Village responds to the buyer formally in writing giving the reasons for accepting or rejecting the application, attaching the meeting minutes.

d) If application is approved, a permit will be issued signed by the VNRC Chairman and the Village Chair and certified with the village stamp. The permit will indicate the number of trees that will be felled and the estimated volume, including branches.

e) This permit should be issued in quadruplicate with one original retained by the Village, and three further originals taken to the DFO for endorsement, together with a copy of the meeting minutes.

f) Of the three endorsed permits, one should be returned to the Village, one stays with the DFO, and one is for the Buyer's records.

g) The Village should additionally provide the Group Manager a copy of the endorsed permit, although in practice that task may be delegated to the Buyer.

h) The buyer will communicate with the VNRC to agree the dates when harvesting and purchase will take place, and should additionally inform the DFO and Group Manager.

i) Upon receiving such notification, the VNRC should immediately put up the notice of impending harvesting as required by rule H8.

S7. The following procedure should be followed for handling sales of timber

a. The Village will announce auction of timber sale for seven days in various locations: The auction announcement will also be posted on the Village notice board with the following information.

i. Date of Auction

ii. Type of tree species

iii. Different timber size

b. Buyers that are success in winning the auction should pay 25% of the price of timber immediately and the remain 75% will be paid after 30 days or if they can pay 100%.

c. After a payment is done the village and the buyer will enter into sales agreement.

S8. Form *SF21 Timber Sales Reconciliation* should be completed by the Forest Manager prior to completing any sale. This provides a record and explanation for the purposes of future auditing of any discrepancies between volumes requested and licensed, those actually felled, and the volume sold. Explanations for other relevant discrepancies, e.g. on dates of actual harvesting versus dates stipulated on the licence should also be entered on this form.

S9. In so far as it does not damage their legitimate economic interests in maximising returns from their forests, Members should look favourably upon customers from their village and neighbouring villages that are prepared to pay a competitive price for forest resources. Members may still enter into multi-year exclusive purchaser contracts with buyers – if both parties so wish – but should seek local input first and inform the Group Manager when they do so.

Sales Invoices

S10. All sales must be invoiced by use of *SF10 Invoice for Sale of Certified Produce* which should be issued by the Group Member and must contain an FSC trademark.

S11. Annexed to the invoice should be a detailed statement of all forest produce that are covered by the sale, e.g. species, size and dimensions of each log.

S12. Four copies of invoice form SF10 should be completed. These must be distributed as follows:

a) Buyer

b) Forest Manager's records

c) Village Notice Board (where it should be displayed for at least two weeks)

d) Group Manager

S13. Each copy of the invoice must be stamped by the Village stamp and signed by both the Forest Manager and Buyer.

S14. The invoice form SF10 must not be used for any purpose other than sales of products from certified VLFRs. Group Members must not sell as certified, or imply as certified, any forest produce emanating from outside certified VLFRs under their control.

General Advice on Sales

The following are a set of recommended steps for orderly completion of timber sales from group certified forests to the satisfaction of both buyer and seller that are designed to ensure expectations are clearly understood on each side. It is not a requirement of Group Members that they follow these, but may find that they are helpful for the avoidance of disputes during the sales process, and thus help to maintain good relations with buyers. However, should the buyer and seller so agree, they may depart from these additional procedures in any way they see fit.

S15. Before entering into any sale, the buyer and seller are advised to complete a sales agreement;

S16. Sellers may offer additional services as part of the sales agreement, e.g. hiring the Logging Supervisor. However, sellers are advised to be wary of taking upon commercial risk in such matters, and consider charging an appropriate mark-up where they do so. E.g. if it is not clear for how many days a Logging Supervisor will be needed sellers should err on the high side.

S17. Buyers are entitled to ask for any proportion of the sale to be remitted upfront, but should beware that such demands may put off some buyers.

a) 50% is a reasonable request for a small harvest that will be quickly completed.

b) Larger sales based on lengthy periods of harvesting may involve smaller upfront payments, e.g. 25%, with the balance on each lorry-load paid before the logs are transported from the village.

c) It is reasonable to request 100% advances for any additional services the seller may provide the buyer.

S18. Sellers should be aware that buyers wanting to make large purchases and/or committing to purchasing substantial volumes for several years in a row, may request better terms than normal (e.g. services that would otherwise be paid for might be asked for free). This is normal commercial practice and it is appropriate to give reasonable consideration to such requests. However, sellers should beware of making unnecessary concessions and seek advice from the Group Manager should they come under strong pressure from buyers.

S19. Sellers should be aware of the unique products that they have to sell, and that buyers may have limited alternatives in sourcing such products elsewhere. However, they should equally beware that if they ask for unreasonable prices that buyers will consider them unreliable suppliers and refuse to do business with them.

S20. Buyers, or their agents, require various documents in order to transport the harvested forest products away from the village. Normally these documents would comprise:

a) Copy of initial purchase order (where appropriate)

b) Permit issued by Forest Manager

c) Invoice

d) Log statement annexed to the Invoice

e) Transport Permit

f) Up-to-date operating licence (for buyers registered as companies)

S21. Sellers should cooperate with buyers to complete the documentation listed above. However, it is ultimately the buyer's responsibility, or responsibility of their agent, to check that all their documentation is in order from onward transportation of the forest products, and that these documents are internally consistent.

Monitoring Procedures

M1. Every year at least one VLFR under the control of each Forest Manager Member shall be visited. This frequency may be increased if a Member has outstanding non-compliances which need to be closed out. The choice of VLFRs to be visited shall be made randomly unless the Group Manager has specific concerns about a particular VLFR.

M2. At the beginning of each year the Group Manager should roughly plan out a schedule of monitoring visits to Members on quarterly basis, and fill in *EF05Monitoring Schedule* accordingly, including the reasons for VLFR selection.

M3. When new Members are added they should be added to the schedule. New Members should normally receive their first monitoring visit within six months of joining the Group.

M4. The schedule should be regularly reviewed and revised as appropriate, and upcoming visits planned in detail.

M5. At the beginning of the quarter in which the monitoring visit is scheduled, the date for visiting each of the scheduled members should be decided and the member informed in writing. If any Members have legitimate reasons why the date selected is unsuitable, then an effort should be made to reschedule the visit. The actual date agreed should be entered into the schedule.

M6. In addition, each year the Group Manager should select which Members and which VLFRs should be visited early in the dry season (normally at the beginning of July) to check that rules on Fire Management are being followed.

Preparing for the visit

M7. The MCDI Inspector is responsible for making the detailed arrangements for the visit including ensuring that they know the location of the member's VLFRs and have arranged a convenient place to meet the member.

M8. In preparation for the monitoring visit, the Inspector should begin to fill in *Form SF07 Monitoring Visit Checklist*. In particular this should include:

a) Details of any outstanding RIs to be checked. The inspector should check the RI Register to confirm which RIs are still outstanding.

b) Issues raised as a result of monitoring visits elsewhere which may be relevant.

c) Details of any changes to management or VLFR since the last visit.

d) Details of any issues raised by stakeholders since the last visit.

e) Details of any major forest operations (logging and road construction) since the last visit.

f) Details of any changes to the law or the standard/group requirements since the last visit.

g) Details of the group requirements to be checked.

h) Details of any work from the VLFR annual work plan which is expected to be complete.

M9. At least one Sub-Section of the Group Rules listed in this document, and at least one general FSC Principle should be explicitly checked on each Monitoring Visit. The Inspector should agree with the Group Manager in advance which they should be based on the following criteria in descending order of importance:

a) Any specific issues about which either the Inspector or the Group Manager have reason to be concerned about should be prioritised.

b) Any rule checked and compliance found satisfactory within the last two years should not generally be re-checked.

c) Every rule and FSC Principle should be explicitly checked in at least one Member's VLFR each year. The Group Manager is responsible for ensuring this cross-sectional approach is followed and it is recorded in *EF05Monitoring Schedule*.

d) Group Rules should normally be checked together by Sub-Section, e.g. it makes more sense to check all of the Group Rules pertaining to Fire Management rather than some from Fire Management and some from Harvesting Procedures.

e) All other issues being equal Sub-Sections of Rules and FSC Principles for checking should be selected randomly or on some systematic basis which does not take into account differences between Members.

M10. Once the checklist has been completed, the Inspector should check that there is enough time scheduled for the visit and inform the member of any special requirements such as the need to meet with additional stakeholders.

Carrying out the monitoring visit

M11. The monitoring visit should be carried out using *SF07 Monitoring Visit Checklist*.

M12. Records of forest patrols since the last monitoring visit should be reviewed.

M13. Forest integrity in No Take Zone should be specifically checked on at least one monitoring visit every year.

M14. Areas of forest operations (generally logging and fire management) should be inspected for adverse impacts on the forest.

M15. If any existing Remedy Instructions are being monitored, then they should be dealt with as set out in the corresponding section below.

M16. If any new non-complianceis identified then new RIs should be raised according to the established procedure.

M17. Any other comments or issues should be noted on the Monitoring Checklist.

Follow-up after a monitoring visit

M18. Upon returning to the MCDI Office the Inspector should additionally complete *EF06 Monitoring Visit Report* and hand it together with *SF07* to the Group Manager for checking.

M19. A letter should be sent to the member confirming the outcome of the monitoring visit including details of any RIs or other issues which have been raised.

M20. All three documents should then be filed in the member's file, and the RI Register updated if necessary.

Remedy Instructions

Remedy Instruction (RI) is the best English translation of the Swahili phrase *Mpango wa Urekebishaji* which is term used in the Group for a Corrective Action Request (CAR), the standard method in FSC certification schemes for dealing with deviations from the certificate requirements.

Classification of RIs

I1. A Remedy Instruction is the means to deal with deviations from Group rules or requirements. There are 2 grades of RI which reflect the severity of the non-compliance. They are:

a) **Major** if the problem identified is serious enough that there is a high risk of it resulting in non-compliance with an FSC criterion, a requirement of the National FSC Standard (as and when it should be developed), or a Group Requirement. A maximum of 3 months will normally be allowed to implement Major RIs.

b) **Minor** if the problem is less serious as there is a low risk of it resulting in non-compliance with an FSC criterion, a requirement of the National FSC Standard (as and when it should be developed), or a Group Requirement. A maximum of 12 months will normally be allowed to implement Minor RIs.

I2. For tracking purposes every RI shall be assigned a code and numbered sequentially within the year it was raised, e.g. 2009-01, 2009-02 etc.

Raising RIs

I3. A RI is raised whenever a non-compliance with group requirements is identified. This will normally occur during routine monitoring visits, but the RI process should also be used if non-compliance is identified at any other time.

I4. The RI must be documented using *Form SF06 Remedy Instruction* and details recorded must include:

a) Administration details.

b) The nature of the non-compliance which should make clear the Group Requirement which is not being complied with and the evidence which showed the non-compliance exists.

c) The actions agreed to address the non-compliance.

d) The proposed date of close-out. This will normally be determined by the seriousness of the non-compliance, as outlined above.

e) The RI form should then be signed by the person raising the RI and by the Forest Manager responsible for the forest where the non-compliance has been identified.

I5. The Group Manager shall enter the details of each RI raised in *EF04 Remedy Instruction Register*.

I6. Where the Group Manager believes there is a significant risk of other members being similarly in non-compliance he/she will raise a supplementary RI against every other member thought to be of concern.

Closing-Out RIs

I7. The Group Manager is responsible for reviewing the RI Register at least once per month noting all RIs where the close-out date (the date for the proposed action to be completed) is approaching.

I8. When the close-out date is reached then either the person who raised the RI, or another person delegated by the Group Manager must assess whether the action has been taken, and whether it has been successful in addressing the non-compliance.

a) In the case of Urgent or Major RIs this will involve organising a specific visit to the site, or time in the office to verify documentation.

b) Action taken in response to Minor RIs can be verified during the next monitoring visit.

I9. If the visit or document review shows that adequate action has been taken, then the RI form should be completed and signed off.

I10. If the visit or document review shows that the agreed action has been taken but that it has been inadequate in addressing the non-compliance then the original RI from should be completed and signed off, and a new RI raised requiring a revised action. In such cases the severity level of the new RI should normally be one higher than the initial RI. An RI may never have its severity level lowered.

I11. The Group Manager shall then update the RI Register.

I12. If the visit or document review shows that the agreed action has not been taken then:

a) The Group Manager must be informed immediately.

b) The Group Manager must establish immediately whether there is any reason for the failure to close out the RI.

c) If there is a reason then the Group Manager should immediately contact the member to inform them that their membership has been suspended pending close-out of the RI.

d) The suspension period shall not usually exceed 1 month after which the expulsion procedure shall begin as set out above.

e) If there is no adequate reason for the failure to close-out the RI then the Group Manager shall begin the expulsion procedure immediately.

Complaints and Appeals Procedures

Complaints and Appeals Procedures

A summary of these procedures for members is given in *SD07 Outline of Complaints & Appeals Procedure*.

Complaints & Appeals Committee

A1. Each District will have a Complaints and Appeals Committee in which it has group members whose leader is a District Forest Officer (DFO).

A2. The Committee will be chaired by District Forest Officer, who will chair the committee in a respective district

A3. Other members shall be:

a) One or three Village Chairmen from group member's villages.

b) Up to two persons of professional standing co-opted by the Chairman who in his/her opinion are capable of contributing constructively to the committee's deliberations. These two co-opted members may change from one meeting to a next at the chairman's discretion.

c) Chairman of the village Association (If it apply)

d) Members of the Complaints and Appeals Committee shall be entered into the *List of Authorised Persons (EF08).*

A4. Members other than the Chairman may each send a nominated representative if they are unable to attend in person.

A5. At least two-thirds of members must be present for a quorum to be reached.

A6. MCDI will pay a sitting allowance in line with Tanzanian government rates to all committee members each time they meet, and cover any reasonable travel expenses.

Complaint against a Group Member

A7. When a complaint against a group member is received, either verbally or in writing, the Group Manager should be informed.

A8. The Group Manager should identify a person to be responsible for investigating the complaint, often this may be the Group Manager him/ herself.

A9. A copy of *SL06 Letter to Complainants* should be sent to the complainant.

A10. Details of the complaint should be entered on to *EF07 Complaints Register* by the Group Manager. The information entered on to the register should include:

a) The name and contact details of the person or organisation making the complaint (the complainant),

b) A description of the issue including the name of the member, the name of the forest and the issue raised. Any objective evidence provided should be noted.

c) The date the complaint was received,

d) The person to whom investigation of the complaint is allocated.

A11. The member against whom the complaint has been made should be informed in writing with details of the issue raised and the name of the person allocated to investigate. The member should also normally be told who made the complaint unless the complainant has asked to remain anonymous.

A12. The person identified to investigate the complaint should immediately begin the investigation which should be in two phases:

a) Firstly, establishing that the issue raised is covered by the Group Requirements (i.e. that the issue is relevant to the group), and if it is,

b) Secondly, collecting objective evidence to either support or refute the complaint.

A13. This process must be initiated within one week of receiving the complaint and concluded within one month of receiving the complaint unless the Group Manager makes an exception, in which case the complainant must be informed in writing.

A14. The outcome of the investigation should be documented and discussed with the Group Manager.

A15. If the investigation refutes the complaint, either because the issue is outside the scope of the group requirements, or because there is no objective evidence to support the complaint, then a letter should be written to the complainant clearly explaining this and the complaint closed out.

A16. If the investigation supports the complaint, then the member must be informed and, in discussion with the Group Manager and investigator, decide on what action should be taken to resolve the issue, including possible payment of compensation, and the appropriate level of compensation.

A17. If appropriate the complainant can also be involved in the process of identifying actions to resolve the issue. If they are not involved then they should be contacted in writing to explain what is being done and to invite feedback.

A18. The actions taken by the member should be monitored to ensure that they are implemented fully, and that they are adequate to resolve the issue. If feedback is received from the complainant this should be fed into the monitoring process.

A19. The Complaints Register should be filled in with details of the actions taken and the date the complaint was closed out.

A20. If the complainant is not happy with the actions taken then they can appeal as set out below.

Complaints against the Group Management

A21. When a complaint against the group management is received, either verbally or in writing, the Group Manager should be informed immediately.

A22. If the complaint is against a specific member of staff other than the Group Manager, then the Group Manager may allocate the investigation to him/herself and follow the same procedure as set out in the sub-section above: **Error! Reference source not found.**.

A23. A copy of *SL06 Letter to Complainants* should be sent to the complainant.

A24. If the complaint is against the group management in general and/or the Group Manager themselves then the complaint must be dealt with by the Complaints and Appeals Committee.

A25. The Chairman of the Complaints and Appeals Committee should be informed of the complaint and inform the Group Manager who will carry out the investigation.

A26. Details of the complaint should be entered on to the Complaints Register (EF07) by the Group Manager or the group administrator. The information entered on to the register should include:

a) The name and contact details of the person or organisation making the complaint (the complainant),

b) A description of the issue. Any objective evidence provided should be noted.

c) The date the complaint was received,

d) The name of the person to whom investigation of the complaint is allocated by the Chairman of the Complaints and Appeals Committee.

A27. The person identified to investigate the complaint should immediately begin the investigation which should be in two phases:

a) Firstly, establishing that the issue raised is covered by the certification requirements for the group, and if it is,

b) Secondly, collecting objective evidence to either support or refute the complaint.

A28. This process must be initiated within one week of receiving the complaint and concluded within one month of receiving the complaint unless the chairperson of the Complaints and Appeals Committee makes an exception, in which case the complainant must be informed in writing.

A29. The outcome of the investigation should be documented and discussed with the Group Manager.

A30. If the investigation refutes the complaint, either because the issue is outside the scope of the certification requirements, or because there is no objective evidence to support the complaint, then a letter should be written to the complainant clearly explaining this and the complaint closed out.

A31. If the investigation supports the complaint, then the Group Manager must be informed and, in discussion with the investigator, decide on what action should be taken to resolve the issue, including possible payment of compensation, and the appropriate level of compensation.

A32. If appropriate the complainant can also be involved in the process of identifying actions to resolve the issue. If they are not involved then they should be contacted in writing to explain what is being done and to invite feedback.

A33. The actions taken by the Group Manager should be monitored by the chairperson of the Complaints and Appeals Committee to ensure that they are implemented fully, and that they are adequate to resolve the issue. If feedback is received from the complainant this should be fed into the monitoring process.

A34. The Complaints Register should be filled in with details of the actions taken and the date the complaint was closed out.

A35. If the complainant is not happy with the actions taken then they can appeal as set out below.

Appeals

A36. Appeals may be lodged by either:

a) A complainant or the person against whom a complaint was made who is unhappy with the outcome of the complaint investigation.

b) A member who has been informed that they are being expelled from the group.

A37. The appeal must be made in writing within 30 days of receiving formal notification of the outcome of the complaint or the standard letter of expulsion and sent directly to the Chairman of the Complaints and Appeals Committee.

A38. The chairperson must inform the Group Manager immediately that an appeal has been lodged to allow preparation for an appeal meeting.

A39. The appeal must be dealt with at a meeting of the Complaints and Appeals Committee which must be held within 30 days of the Chairman receiving a written appeal.

A40. If the appeal relates to a complaint, the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made can be asked to submit information in writing or to attend the meeting to answer questions. The Committee can also request copies of documents or correspondence from the group management.

A41. If the appeal relates to an expulsion, the member being expelled and the inspector or anyone else from the group management involved in the monitoring visit can be asked to submit information

in writing or to attend the meeting to answer questions. The Committee can also request copies of documents or correspondence from the group management.

A42. The decision of the appeal committee must be documented in full as part of the meeting and signed by all Committee Members present. The decision shall include details and amounts of any compensation judged to be due.

A43. A copy of the decision must be provided to the Group Manager, the person lodging the appeal and, in the case of an appeal relating to a complaint, the other party in the original complaint.

A44. The decision of the Complaints and Appeals Committee is final, and any further appeal must be made directly to the certification body.

Records Maintenance

MCDI will put all substantive communications in writing. Unless specified otherwise in this manual and associated document Group Members may opt to use verbal means or written correspondence according to their preference, and as they deem appropriate to the situation.

F1. Both the Group Manager and Group members shall keep full records of everything set out below for a minimum of five years.

Member Records

F2. Group members must maintain complete records of all documents relating to the management of VLFRs which are included in the group certificate, including:

a) The forest management plan, and all amendments made to it.

b) All applicable bylaws and amendments made to them.

c) Details of any forest resources assessments.

d) Forest monitoring records.

e) Each and every harvesting plan formulated for the VLFR.

f) All meeting minutes of the (VNRC. Even where the meeting did not concern a certified VLFR the meeting minutes should be retained in order to maintain confidence that no relevant minutes are missing.

g) Every forest patrol record.

h) Every monitoring visit by the MCDI, and RI issued.

i) All visits to the VLFR made by government officials and communications from government officials received in relation to the management of the VLFR.

j) Every request made to harvest forest resources the VLFR, or to access the VLFR as maybe specified in the management plan, and the response to that request.

k) Every sale of certified products made.

F3. Group members must also maintain complete financial records of all transactions made in relation to certified VLFRs and their management. This includes:

a) All income received from sales of forest resources.

b) All income received from fines, including details of the offence committed.

c) All expenditures relating to forest management activities, such as paying patrol team members.

d) All profits taken, e.g. payment of profits made by a VNRC to the Village Council.

F4. All records kept should include the following information where relevant:

a) Date

b) Meeting attendees / patrol team members

c) Forest resources concerned; species and amount.

d) Payee (company name)

e) Financial sums involved.

F5. Group manager's financial records must be able to pass a simple audit, and this maybe checked during a monitoring visit. If there are significant inconsistencies amounting to more than 10% of annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher), then a Remedy Instruction will be issued.

F6. All records described above must be kept for at least five years.

Group Manager Records

F7. Maintaining complete records of all Group activities is a key responsibility of the Group Administrator under the supervision of the Group Manager.

F8. Both a physical (hard copy) and electronic record archives will be maintained. This applies to every letter sent, form filled, document issued, and letter received.

F9. Electronic scans should be made of paper forms filled and letters received to guard against loss of originals.

F10. The MCDI will maintain the following files:

a) Membership

i. One sub-file per member, sorted by membership number.

ii. Each member file will contain separate sub-files for each VLFR controlled by the member.

iii. The membership and VLFR sub-files will contain all documents associated with that member and VLFR, including copies of all sales invoices, all completed monitoring forms, Remedy Instructions, and general correspondence.

iv. An additional file for communication with prospective members who have not yet been accepted into the Group.

b) Management, with the following sub-files:

i. Logging Supervisors, containing all correspondence with Logging Supervisors in relation to the Group Certificate.

ii. Monitoring; this will contain only records of the Monitoring Schedule. All actual records of monitoring visits will be stored in the appropriate members' sub-files.

iii. RIs; again this will only contain the Register of RIs, with details of individual RIs being maintained in the appropriate members' sub-files.

iv. Control Documents; see the section below on Control Document .

v. Supporting Documents arranged according to applicable FSC Principle.

c) Complaints & Appeals, with separate sub-files for each complaint and appeal.

d) Communications with the Certification Body and their agents.

e) Sales Enquiries, with separate sub-files for each person or company who go through the MCDI in order to buy certified products. These should contain:

i. A copy of the buyer's FSC Chain of Custody certificate if they have one.

ii. All other correspondence with the buyer.

F11. The electronic archive will mirror in structure the physical files, with folders and sub-folders named identically to their physical counterparts.

F12. Upon receiving a newly completed form to file the Group Administrator shall check that the form has been properly filled out, and that no important information is missing.

Combined Sales Record

F13. In addition to the above files the Group Manager will maintain an Excel Spreadsheet listing every sale made from a Group certified forest based on copies of Sales Invoices received.

F14. This file will be kept in electronic format only, with an annual report being printed as paper copy.

F15. It shall record all sales by Member, location, species and year, along with associated details such as Sales Code, quantity sold and price paid.

F16. The Group Manager will provide access to this spreadsheet to accredited FSC auditors on demand to check audit trails.

Control Document Management

D1. All Control Documents which form part of the Group administration and are referenced in this manual will be subject to strict versioning control.

D2. Some Swahili language documents have English translations to allow FSC auditors to monitor the group effectively. While it is important that these are maintained together with the Swahili originals, they are not in themselves Control Documents, and are not subject to the strict procedure detailed below, and do not have their own control codes.

D3. All Control Documents are listed on EF11 together with their current version and date of last revision.

Control Code

D4. Each Control Document shall be assigned a unique control code made up of two letters and a two digit number. For instance the control code of this manual is ED01.

a) The first letter of the code shall indicate the language in which the document is written:

i. S – Swahili

ii. E – English

b) The second letter shall indicate the document's type:

i. D – Informational Document

ii. F – Form

iii. L – Standard Letter Template

D5. A Control Code shall not be re-used if a document is removed as obsolete during the Annual Review Process.

Types of Revision

D6. There are two types of revision which can apply to any Control Document:

a) **Major** Revisions reflect actual changes in meaning.

b) **Minor** Revisions incorporate only changes in wording and/or improved translations.

D7. Some documents, such as *SD01 Rules of Membership*, if subject of a Major Revision must be circulated to all Group Members together with a letter explaining the nature of the revision and its purpose. It is a matter for the Group Manager's discretion whether or not Group Members need to be informed of Minor Revisions to such documents; if they greatly clarify one or more points than it is appropriate that members be updated. Documents to which this rule applies are marked as Revision Sensitive in the Control Documents Annual Review Process Record (EF11).

Version Number

D8. Each Control Document shall have a two part version number, separated by a dot. The first number indicates the applicable major revision and the second the minor revision. For example 2.11 indicates major revision 2, minor revision 11. (Revision numbers are not restricted in the number of digits.)

a) For long documents like this where the version number is shown on the cover page and in the header of each subsequent page version numbers are set in Microsoft Word 2007 by selecting Prepare, then Properties under the top-left Office menu. In the new block that appears click the little arrow to the right Document Properties, select Advanced Properties, and then go to the Custom tab. Now click on the Version property in the bottom list, and enter the new value in the box above before clicking Modify and then OK. (You can check

the update was successful by right clicking on the version number on the front page, and selecting the option Update Field.)

b) In short documents where the version number only appears in the footer, the version number is controlled directly from the file name. You just therefore need to Save As under the new filename, right click on the version number, and select Update Field.

D9. The date of the last revision – i.e. the date that version was finalised – will appear after the version number on the first page of each document. This should update automatically in Microsoft Word, but remain fixed when the document is archived in Acrobat PDF format.

Document Reviews

D10. The Group Manager shall coordinate an Annual Review Process of all Control Documents, normally to take place in March-April.

a) The review process shall consider whether any new Control Documents need to be added, whether any existing ones need amending, and whether any Control Documents are now obsolete and should be removed from the list.

b) In implementing the review process the Group Manager shall complete *EF11 Control Documents Annual Review Process Record*.

c) As part of the review process the Group Manager shall also complete an annual risk assessment using form *EF15* in line with the requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2003. This risk assessment should incorporate a review of all accident and injury reports collected in the past year.

d) During the Annual Review Process each document does not need to undergo the full revision procedure as set out below, but simply given consideration as to whether that is appropriate.

e) The Annual Review will consider all requests for changes made by Group Members or other stakeholders over the course of the past year.

f) In addition the Group Manager will seek the input of all Stakeholders listed on *EF12 Register of External Stakeholders*.

g) During the Review Process the Group Manager should explicitly review any new laws, regulations or international treaties brought into force, or CBD action plans adopted in Tanzania over the preceding year for applicability and consider whether amendments to one or more Control Documents are required as a result.

D11. Control Documents may also be revised at any other time according to need, e.g. in relation to a request made by a Group Member under rule R17, or a Corrective Action Request made by the Group's External Auditors.

Procedure for Revisions

D12. When a Control Document is revised or updated the following procedure must be followed:

a) Create a copy of the current version for editing. Do not edit the archived version.

b) A new version number is assigned by the Group Manager who will decide what type of revision describes the changes made.

c) An electronic archive is made in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format with the new version number.

d) A hard-copy master is printed together with a copy of *EF03 Document Revision Record*.

e) The Group Manager completes and signs *EF03* in order to authorise the new version, and initials every page of the revised Control Document. They are then filed together in the Control Documents Archive.

f) Update the English language translation where appropriate.

g) Update the List of Control Documents on EF11.

h) All Group Officers should be informed immediately of the revision.

Stakeholder Consultation

C1. The Group Manager should consult interested External Stakeholders when documents undergo a Major Revision and during the Annual Review Process. It is not necessary to consult external stakeholders during Minor Revisions.

C2. External Stakeholders may register an interest in any or all Control Documents; these details are kept in *EF12 Register of External Stakeholders*.

C3. When any such Control Document undergoes revision the relevant Stakeholders should be sent an electronic or paper copy of the Control Document according to their preference.

a) Stakeholders will be asked to provide comments within one calendar month.

b) The document copy provided should highlight the proposed changes to facilitate the stakeholder review, and be accompanied by a copy of the completed (but un-signed) *EF03 Document Revision Record* which explains the proposed revision(s).

c) The Group Manager is empowered to ignore any comments not received within one calendar until the next Annual Review.

d) The Group Manager shall collate all edits to the Control Document proposed by External Stakeholders and circulate a proposed final version. Stakeholders shall then have a maximum of two weeks to raise significant objections before the new version is finalised and adopted. Where such objections should be raised this two week period will repeat a maximum of two times until agreement is reached. Any such issues not resolved by the end of this will be taken forward to the annual Forum for Discussion as described in C5.

C4. During the Annual Review Process the Group Manager will additionally solicit written feedback formal External Stakeholders on issues arising and impacts resulting from the implementation of forest management within the Group.

C5. At the end of the Annual Review Process the Group Manager will provide a Forum for Discussion of all issues raised. This forum, to which all External Stakeholders will be invited, will resolve any remaining areas of uncertainty or disagreement.

C6. The Group Manager may also consult External Stakeholders mid-year on any urgent, high impact issues arising in relation to management of forests within the Group Certificate.