

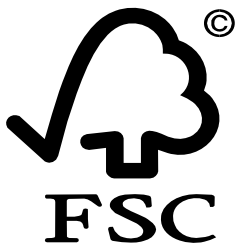
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**SmartWood**

*Practical conservation through certified forestry*

Forest Management  
**Certification Assessment**  
Report for:

Grodno Group FM  
In  
Grodno Oblast, Belarus

Report Finalized: 10 July 2006  
Assessment Date: 26 to 30 Sept 2005  
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Certificate issue date: 27 April 2006  
Certificate code: SW-FM/COC-1866

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## **ACRONYMS**

AAC	Annual Allowable Cut
CBM	Cubic Meter
CITES	Convention on Trade in Endangered Species
FMO	Forest Management Organization
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FMU	Forest Management Unit
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GRO	Grodno Regional Forest Board
HCVF	High Conservation Value Forest
HP	Harvest Plan
H&S	Health and Safety
NOV	Novogrudskij leskhoz
ILO	International Labour Organization
P&C	Principles and Criteria of the FSC
RBF	Regional Forest Board
SCH	Schuchinskij leskhoz
SFE	State Forest Enterprise

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the findings of an independent certification assessment conducted by a team of specialists representing the SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance. The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the ecological, economic and social sustainability of Grodno Regional Forest Enterprise Group forest management as defined by the Forest Stewardship Council.

This report contains four main sections of information and findings and several appendixes. The whole report plus appendixes I and II will become public information about the forest management operation that may be distributed by SmartWood or the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to interested parties. The remainder of the appendixes are confidential, to be reviewed only by authorized SmartWood and FSC staff and reviewers bound by confidentiality agreements.

The purpose of the SmartWood program is to recognize conscientious land stewardship through independent evaluation and certification of forestry practices. Forestry operations that attain SmartWood certification may use the SmartWood and FSC labels for public marketing and advertising.

Findings from a pre-condition verification audit conducted after the main assessment has been added to this report.

# 1. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE

## 1.1. Scope of the certificate

The certificate is a group certificate in accordance with SmartWood and FSC rules. The group had at the time of the assessment 5 members; all registered as State Forest Enterprises (SFE) according to the legislation in Belarus.

The scope covers all forested areas managed by these 5 SFE's (Grodnenskij leskhoz, Volkovysskij leskhoz, Schuchinskij leskhoz, Ostoroveckij leskhoz and Novogrudskij leskhoz) as well as sales of forest products harvested within these areas. The SFE-s have in all 4 processing facilities that will be covered by a separate certification report.

See more detailed information about the FMO and areas covered by the certificate in Appendix II and III.

## 1.2. Exclusion of areas from the scope of certificate

<b>X</b>	<b>Applicability of FSC partial certification and excision policy</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	All forest land owned or managed by the FME is included in the scope of this evaluation.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FME owns and/or has management involvement in other forest land/properties (forest management units) not being evaluated. Provide description of other forests below:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is any portion of the forest management unit (s) under evaluation for certification being excluded? If yes, complete all sections below.	
Comments / Explanation for exclusion:	Grodno Regional forest board is coordinating forestry related activities in Grodn region including both certified and non certified Forest Management Enterprises of the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus. The assessment only covers enterprises which have decided to participate in the first round of FSC certification in Belarus.	
Control measures	Seperate certificate is issued to each Forest Management Enterprise within the group including a specific sub code and the name of the group member.	
<b>Other Forest area</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Size (ha)</b>

All forest areas managed by the 5 members of the group are included within the scope of the certificate. Other SFE-s under the Grodno Regional Forest Enterprise are not currently included in the scope, but might be added later according to rules and procedures established by FSC and SmartWood. The Regional Forest Board decided to start the certification process with the current group members, but have expressed plans for later to certified other state forest enterprises.

The table below list all forest area managed by the regional forest board.

Forest Enterprise	Total Area	Forest Area	Russian names
-------------------	------------	-------------	---------------

Volkovisk	62,6	59,6	Волковысский
Grodno	58,7	55,5	Гродненский
Dijtlovo	80,3	74,8	Дятловский
Ivei	81,9	76,5	Ивьевский
Lida	102,4	93,4	Лидский
Novogrudok	96,4	91,2	Новогрудский
Ostrovetc	80,9	75,1	Островецкий
Skidel	55,9	52,6	Скидельский
Slonim	63	60,5	Слонимский
Smorgon	107,1	97,3	Сморгонский
Shuchin	99,4	93,5	Щучинский
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>888,6</b>	<b>830,0</b>	

\* Forestry Enterprises currently included in the certification group marked as green

## 2. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### 2.1. Certification Standard Used

The Grodno Regional Forest Enterprise was assessed according to the SmartWood Interim Standard for Belarus version 1.3 (25 July 2005). The standard has been based on the SmartWood Generic Standard combined with other draft FSC standards from the region as well as other national Interim Standards used by SmartWood in the region. The current version of the standard has been sent out for broad stakeholder consultation.

### 2.2. Assessment team and qualifications

#### **Team Leader Assessor Peter Feilberg (NEPCon, Århus, Denmark).**

Mr. Feilberg has a MSc. in forestry and has worked with certification since 1994. He has been coordinator of the Danish Working Group for Elaboration of FSC Endorsed Danish Standards. Further, Mr. Feilberg is the official designated FSC-delegate of NEPCon, which is an institutional member of the FSC. Presently, Mr Feilberg works as executive director of NEPCon and has been in charge of coordinating all NEPCon's certification activities since NEPCon joined the SmartWood network back in 1999. Mr. Feilberg has passed the SmartWood lead assessor training course in Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification and he has participated in more than 30 Forest Management and 50 Chain of Custody certification assessments.

#### **Assessor Dr. Heorhi A. Kazulka**

Dr Kazulka has comprehensive experience in forest ecology from his scientific work and for several years as employee of the State National Park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha", latest as Deputy General Director on Science and Research up to 2001. He has since been involved in a number of projects related to biodiversity conservation and forest ecology, and has publications on this issue. Dr Kazulka has participated in the WWF FSC training program in Romania in 2005.

#### **Mr. Alexandre Vintchevski (APB-BirdLife Belarus)**

Mr. Vintchevski has a MSc. in zoology. He studies ecology of birds since 1987. For 10 years he had work in Dept. of Biology of the Hrodna State University started as technician and finished as Senior lecturer.

In 1993 he became a founder member and President of the Western-Belarusian Society for the Protection of Birds (ZBTAP). In 1999 he was appointed as full-time Executive Director of APB-BirdLife Belarus, which became full Partner of BirdLife. Mr. Vintchevski was an initiator and co-ordinator of a number of International projects implemented in Belarus.

The last four years he had been involved in development of standards of sustainable forest management in Belarus. He is a member of the Belarusian Forest Certification Council, a member of the Forest Task Force of BirdLife International. As national expert Mr. Vintchevski participated in annual audit of FSC certified Smorgon forest enterprise in 2005.

#### **Søren Dürr, FSC Denmark, Director FSC Denmark**

Mr Pedersen has worked with FSC since 2002. He has been part of the Danish FSC Working group since 2003 and board member of the Working group since 2004. Since January 2005 he has been executive director of FSC Denmark.

Mr Pedersen has been part of several certifications in several countries in Europe. Educational background is Bsc in ecology from Aarhus University, Denmark.

**Saulius Adomavicius, Deputy Director, Druskininku State Forest Enterprise**

Mr. Saulius Adomavičius has completed studies at the Forestry faculty of the Lithuanian Agricultural University in 1990. Since then he has been working in various forest management positions. Mr. Adomavičius experience ranges from direct management to planning and evaluating forestry operations. He has worked with certification issues both as a forest manager representative and as a member of assessment team.

**2.3. Report peer reviewers**

Too be added later

**2.4. Assessment schedule (including pre-assessment and stakeholder consultation)**

Date	General Location* (main sites)	Main activities
26 September 05	Grodno RFB  Schuchinskij SFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial meeting with key staff of Grodno Region Forest Board.</li> <li>• Introduction meeting with key staff.</li> <li>• Stakeholder meeting</li> <li>• Interview with staff responsible for group COC and FM certification.</li> <li>• Initial meeting with key staff of Schuchinskij SFE</li> <li>• Interview with staff responsible for group COC and FM certification.</li> </ul>
27 September 05	Schuchinskij SFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit to district offices</li> <li>• Visit to saw mills</li> <li>• Field visit</li> </ul>
28 September 05	Schuchinskij SFE  Novogrudskij SFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting at SFE office</li> <li>• Continued review of documents and interview</li> <li>• Interview with stakeholders</li> <li>• Debriefing meeting</li> <li>• Initial meeting with key staff of Novogrudskij SFE</li> <li>• Interview with staff responsible for group COC and FM certification.</li> <li>• Planning of field visit</li> </ul>

29 September 05	Novogrudskij SFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit to district offices</li> <li>• Visit to saw mills</li> <li>• Field visit</li> </ul>
30 September 05	Novogrudskij SFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal team meeting</li> <li>• Stakeholder interview</li> <li>• Continued staff interview and document review</li> <li>• Interview to local media</li> <li>• Debriefing meeting.</li> </ul>
<p>Total number of person-days used for the assessment: 20 + pre-assessment = number of assessors participating 5 times total number of days spent for the audit 4 (including pre-assessment activities)  * Detail on sites visited provided in Appendix x.</p>		
<p>Pre-condition verification audit was conducted by Peter Feilberg and Alexandre Vintchevsky the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of March. During the audit <u>Grodno Regional Forest Board; Schuchin State Forest Enterprise Staff and Ostrovetc State Forest Enterprise Staff were visited.</u></p>		

## 2.5. Evaluation strategy

The main assessment started with a visit to the group manager – the Grodno Regional Forest Board in Grodno. At regional level focus were on the compliance with the FSC rules for group certification.

According to the FSC rules at least one third of the group members shall be visited during the main assessment. The Grodno Group FM has five members of which two, Schuchinskij SFE and Novogrudskij SFE were selected randomly for field visit.

The team selected a broad number of different sites representing different types of management activities and silvicultural practice. Special focus was on ongoing and recently completed activities in the forest, since these sites give a picture of the current management practice. Both area logged by own staff and by external logging company was visited. Furthermore, a number of sites important for local communities were visited as well as sites for conservation values. In all 28 sites were visited.

### List of management aspects reviewed by assessment team:

Type of site	Sites visited	Type of site	Sites visited
Workshop	2	Chemical storage	0
Planned Harvest site	1	Commercial thinning	4
Ongoing Harvest site	9	Riparian zone	1
Completed logging	17	Natural regeneration	3
Soil scarification	2	Nature Reserve	1
Planting site	1	Special management area	1
Felling by forest worker	17	Shelterwood management	1
Skidding/Forwarding	3	Sanitary cutting	1
Clearfelling	9		

The team visited additional 6 sites during the pre-condition verification audit with focus on ongoing operational by external logging company.

## 2.6. Stakeholder consultation process

The purpose of the stakeholder consultation strategy for this assessment was threefold:

1. To ensure that the public is aware of and informed about the assessment process and its objectives;
2. To assist the field assessment team in identifying potential issues; and,
3. To provide diverse opportunities for the public to discuss and act upon the findings of the assessment.

This process is not just stakeholder notification, but wherever possible, detailed and meaningful stakeholder interaction. The process of stakeholder interaction does not stop after the field visits, or for that matter, after even a certification decision is made. SmartWood and NEPCon welcomes, at any time, comments on certified operations and such comments often provide a basis for field assessment.

In the case of assessment of Ministry of Forestry, Grodno Region Forest Board prior to the actual assessment process, a public consultation stakeholder document was developed and distributed by email, FAX and mail to Belarus stakeholders. Furthermore, information on the upcoming assessment was sent out via NEPCon’s news list in 3 languages including Russian and English. Stakeholders were recommended to provide comments to the standard or information relevant to the assessment team.

A number of other stakeholders were interviewed during the assessment or directly involved on the team, which include the director of BirdLife in Belarus and a Belarussian Environmentalist Heorhi Kazulka.

<b>Stakeholder Type (NGO, government bodies, local inhabitant, contractor etc.)</b>	<b>Stakeholders informed (#)</b>	<b>Stakeholders consulted or providing input (#)</b>
News list in English	232	6
News list in Danish	26	1
Belarus stakeholder list	22	2
Russian stakeholder list	43	1
Interview with Belarussian trade union, nature conservation activists and NGO representatives.	6	6

### 3. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

#### 3.1. Stakeholder comments received

The stakeholder consultation activities were organized to give participants the opportunity to provide comments according to general categories of interest based upon the assessment criteria. The table below summarizes the issues identified by the assessment team with a brief discussion of each based upon specific interview and/or public meeting comments.

<b>FSC Principle</b>	<b>Stakeholder comment</b>	<b>SmartWood response</b>
<b>P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance</b>	Local authorities confirmed that the SFEs shows good compliance with the legislation.	No response needed
<b>P2: Tenure &amp; Use Rights &amp; Responsibilities</b>	No comments received	No response needed
<b>P3 – Indigenous Peoples’ Rights</b>	Not applicable in Belarus	No response needed
<b>P4: Community Relations &amp; Workers’ Rights</b>	Stakeholders confirmed a good relationship to the local communities and organizations. The SFE is a very important player in the local society for employment and local economy.	No response needed.
	Hunting representatives had good relations with the SFEs and were cooperating active with them.	No response needed.
	Trade union has branches at all SFE-s. Good relation with SFE. Collective agreement in place.	No response needed.
<b>P5: Benefits from the Forest</b>	No comments received.	No response needed
<b>P6: Environmental Impact</b>	Hunting organization works together on protection of important habitats.	No response needed
	The SFE-s does not have a system for identifying and protecting rare and endangered species.  The forest management carried out in the SFE-s is more nature friendly than the management of some protected areas in Belarus.	SmartWood agrees that the system on protection of rare and endangered species can be improved and raised major CAR 06/06 and several other CARs.  No response needed.
<b>P7: Management Plan</b>	No comments received.	

<b>P8: Monitoring &amp; Assessment</b>	No comments received.	
<b>P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest</b>	High Conservation Value Forest not systematically mapped.	SmartWood agrees in this point and raised Major CAR 06/06
<b>P10 – Plantations</b>	Not considered applicable in Belarus	

### 3.2. Main strengths and weaknesses

Principle	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good compliance with legislation and instructions.</li> <li>• Good protection against illegal activities.</li> <li>• Public commitment to FSC (1.6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicts between FSC requirement and legislation/instructions not clearly identified (OBS 01/06).</li> </ul>
<b>P2: Tenure &amp; Use Rights &amp; Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use rights documents.</li> <li>• Clear marking of borders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFE does not have full management control - external companies have rights to conduct harvesting (Major CAR 01/06).</li> </ul>
<b>P3 – Indigenous Peoples’ Rights</b>	Non applicable	Non applicable
<b>P4: Community Relations &amp; Workers’ Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good relation to local community</li> <li>• Important employer in local community.</li> <li>• Support to local community with infrastructure and fire wood.</li> <li>• Local communities get important income from collection of berries and mushrooms.</li> <li>• Good system for prevention of accident.</li> <li>• Well trained and qualified workers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and safety not fully implemented (CAR 02/06; OBS02/06).</li> <li>• Vaccination against tick borne encephalitis not systematic offered by SFE (CAR 03/06).</li> <li>• Involvement of stakeholders in management planning process can be improved (CAR 04/06).</li> <li>• Senior management in board of trade union (OBS 03/06)</li> </ul>
<b>P5: Benefits from the Forest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed financial information</li> <li>• Broad range of timber and non timber forest products.</li> <li>• Considering local needs</li> <li>• Assessment of NTFP.</li> <li>• Actual cut less than annual allowable cut.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some damage of damaging of residual trees during logging operation (OBS 05/06).</li> <li>• Damage of trees from resin tapping (OBS 04/06).</li> </ul>
<b>P6: Environmental Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing use of natural regeneration.</li> <li>• National fee system favors natural regeneration.</li> <li>• Increased focus on selective felling and group regeneration.</li> <li>• New drainage systems is not established and old not renovated (6.3)</li> <li>• Use of pesticides in the forest is well documented (6.6)</li> <li>• No use of biological control agents (6.8)</li> <li>• No use of fertilizers (6.6)</li> <li>• Own machinery in good conditions (6.7)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological issues is not covered in connection with harvest inventory (technological map, checking of site) (CAR 05/06)</li> <li>• Significant soil damage from extraction of wood on some sites (CAR 05/06)</li> <li>• System for identifying and recording of rare and endangered species lacking (Major CAR 06/06).</li> <li>• Protected areas not always clearly mapped (CAR 07/06)</li> <li>• Selective felling or felling in smaller groups are not preferred on wet soil types (CAR 07/06).</li> <li>• Forest area without any harvesting activities not clearly defined – shall</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No use of waste oil for chain saws (6.7)</li> <li>No big scale conversion of forest to other land uses (6.10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be 5 pct (CAR 11/06).</li> <li>Standing dead wood usually logged at final felling sites (CAR 09/06).</li> <li>No procedures implemented to ensure 10 biodiversity trees (large wind stable biological valuable trees) are left “forever” after final felling (CAR 10/06).</li> <li>Soil damage on logging sites – no limitation of driving and not optimal technology (OBS 06/07).</li> <li>Weak procedures for handling of environmental dangerous waste (OBS 07/06).</li> <li>Oil absorbents or spill proof tanks not always used for chainsaw fuel (OBS 08/06).</li> <li>Biodegradable oil not used for hydraulic and chain saws (OBS 09/06)</li> <li>Oil spil kit lacking in some forest tractors and other machinery (CAR 12/06)</li> <li>Increasingly use of exotic species in the forest (CAR 13/06)</li> </ul>
<b>P7: Management Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed management plan</li> <li>Solid procedures for calculation of Annual Allowable Cut.</li> <li>Including fire protection measures</li> <li>Provisions for periodical updating of management plan.</li> <li>Staff well trained in most aspects of the management plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited information of identification of endangered species and high conservation value forest (CAR 06/06; CAR 14/06).</li> <li>Training of ecological aspects can be improved (CAR 15/06).</li> <li>Lack of public summary of management plan lacking (CAR 16/06)</li> </ul>
<b>P8: Monitoring &amp; Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intensive and clearly defined monitoring and control system (8.1).</li> <li>Monitoring results considered and followed up (8.4)</li> <li>Well documented sales system (8.3).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring related to environment and ecological aspects can be improved (CAR 06/06; CAR 14/06).</li> <li>No procedures to ensure that illegally harvested and confiscated wood is not sold as certified (CAR 18/06).</li> <li>No public summary of monitoring results (CAR 19/06)</li> </ul>
<b>P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly defined rules for protected areas.</li> <li>Regular monitoring of protected areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient mapping of high conservation value forest (Major CAR 06/06).</li> <li>No comprehensive consultation process on High Conservation Value Forest (CAR 06/06).</li> </ul>
<b>P10 - Plantations</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Chain of custody</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sawmill uses only certified wood</li> <li>Simple production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of written procedures (CAR 17/06; Major CAR-COC-01/06)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training of staff not always documented and sufficient (CAR-COC-01/06; CAR-COC-04/06)</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge regarding the use of FSC logo (CAR-COC-03/06)</li> </ul>
<b>Group Certification Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong and qualified organization as group managers</li> <li>• Monitoring/control system defined covering many of the FSC requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures of adding new members lacking (CAR-COC-02/06)</li> <li>• Procedures for excluding members lacking (CAR-COC-02/06)</li> <li>• Monitoring and control system does not include all of the FSC requirements (Major CAR-COC-01/06).</li> </ul>

### 3.3. Identified non-compliances and corrective actions

A non-compliance is a discrepancy or gap identified during the assessment between some aspect of the FMO's management system and one or more of the requirements of the forest stewardship standard. Depending on the severity of the non-compliance the assessment team differentiates between major and minor non compliances.

- **Major non-compliance** results where there is a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant FSC criterion. A number of minor non-compliances against one requirement may be considered to have a cumulative effect, and therefore be considered a major noncompliance.
- **Minor non-compliance** is a temporary, unusual or non-systematic non-compliance, for which the effects are limited.

Major non compliances must be corrected **before** the certificate can be issued. While minor non-compliances do not prohibit issuing the certificate, they must be addressed within the given timeframe to maintain the certificate.

Each non-compliance is addressed by the audit team by issuing a corrective action request (CAR) CARs are requirements that candidate operations must agree to, and which must be addressed, within the given timeframe of a maximum of one year period.

CAR #: 01/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 2.1.1, 5.3.1; 5.3.2
Non-compliance: Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/>	Interview and field visit showed that external logging company (Lespromhos) has rights to harvest in their area and that their management showed major violation of several of the FSC requirements. SFEs has tried to ensure that the logging company works in accordance with the requirements, including monitoring, reporting, issuing penalties and court cases, however current practice of logging technique shows that these means have not been efficient.
Corrective Action Request:	
Group Manager and SFEs shall ensure that all activities, including activities performed by external companies conducting harvest operations, taking place on the area covered by the	

scope of the certificates follow the FSC requirements. Special attention shall be on:

1. harvesting technique (5.3.1),
2. equipment used (5.3.1),
3. avoiding of soil damage,
4. protection of regeneration and biological values,
5. health and safety practice including safety equipment (4.2.1; 4.2.5),
6. avoiding of damage to residual trees (5.3.1).
7. avoiding oil leakage from forest machinery (6.7.3)

In case external companies are operating on the territory covered by the scope of the certificate the companies shall confirm in written that they will follow the FSC requirements and allow inspection and control by the Group Manager, SFEs, the SmartWood program and the FSC.

The Group Manager and the SFEs shall establish procedures that ensure control of external companies compliance with the FSC requirements and that work are stopped in case of violations.

#### Timeline for Compliance: Prior to certification

##### Audit findings:

After the main assessment the director of RFB wrote to Lespromhos presenting the findings of the audit team and requested immediately actions to solve the problems. According to letter from Lespromhos (November 11, 2005) 6 new tractors will be purchased to replace caterpillar skidders and people responsible for violation have been punished. Furthermore, training has been conducted in training of people responsible for forest management.

In a second letter from January 2006, Lespromhos further agree that wood will not be logged without technological maps, waste oil will not be used, new equipment will be purchased, health and safety equipment will be purchased, loggers will be trained in better logging technique, new first aid kits will be provided.

Director of RFB requested in a follow up letter to the Lespromhos a clear commitment from the Lespromhos to follow all the FSC requirements.

Furthermore, all external companies logging on the territory of SFEs included under the scope of the certificate are now requested to confirm in written that they will observe the requirements of FSC. These requirements are available in Russian in all offices. This was verified during the assessment.

Finally, RFB and SFEs has updated their checking system of ongoing and completed logging site to include the requirements of FSC. In case the requirements are not observed companies have to pay a fine and corrective actions are issued. In case of continued violation the company will be reported to the ministry of forestry that has the power to withdrawn the company's license to operate in the forest. The team checked control acts and follow up requirement, and were impressed with the detailed description of FSC related non compliance.

The team visited three sites of ongoing logging, and 2 sites with completed logging. Of these 2 sites were harvested by external timber harvesting company. As noticed at the main assessment there seems to be a significant difference between quality for the work and compliance with the FSC standards for sites harvested by SFE's own staff and for sites

<p>harvested by external companies. External harvesting companies use old technology (skidding of whole trees with old wheel skidders) and basic requirements to health and safety was not observed. SFEs own harvesting team had new equipment.</p> <p>Even though the logging companies sign that they will observe all FSC requirements it is not currently happening in practice. On this background the team recommends to close the Major CAR and raise a new CAR requiring a clear commitment from senior executive of companies to observe the FSC requirements.</p>
Status: Closed
Follow-up Action (if applicable): CAR 20/06

CAR #: 02/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 4.2.5
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Field visit showed that workers were not equipped with required equipment. None had safety boots and cut-proof trousers. All had helmets with eye and ear protection. First aid kits were available on site.
<p>Corrective Action Request: Group manager and all SFEs included in the group shall ensure that all workers (both own staff and staff employed by external companies) involved in logging activities are properly equipped with required health and safety equipment which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) helmet with eye and ear protection,</li> <li>b) high visibility vest/jacket,</li> <li>c) safety boots,</li> <li>d) cut-proof trousers and</li> <li>e) first aid kit</li> </ul>	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 03/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 4.2.9
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not all staff has been offered vaccination against Tick-borne Encephalitis.
<p>Corrective Action Request: Group manager and all SFEs included in the group shall ensure that staff working in the forest is offered vaccination against Tick-borne Encephalitis.</p>	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 04/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 4.4.1
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The SFE does not have a system for enabling participation by local communities and stakeholders in the management planning process.
<p>Corrective Action Request: Group manager and all SFEs included in the group shall establish a system that ensures involvement and consultation in the management planning process by a local communities and stakeholders, such as representatives of local authorities, social and environmental NGOs, hunting associations, trade unions, schools, experts in flora and fauna, local wood industries etc.</p>	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

#: 05/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.1.1; 6.1.2
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The inventory and the technologic map does not include environmental considerations such as protection of micro sites of ecological importance, protection of standing and lying dead wood and trees left on logging site for biodiversity conservation. Furthermore, significant soil damage was observed at several sites where heavy machinery had been driving outside skidding trails. In general the network of trails included on the technological maps was not observed in practice.
<p>Corrective Action Request:</p> <p>Group Manager and all SFE's included in the group shall establish a system for evaluating assessment of environmental aspects in connection with planning of harvesting operation to ensure that aspects such as biodiversity trees (see 6.3), dead wood, micro habitats of special conservation values are considered.</p> <p>Furthermore, Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall ensure that only machinery appropriate to the site is used and that use of machinery is limited to established skidding/extraction trails.</p> <p>Finally, Group Manager and all SFEs shall ensure establish a monitoring system to ensure that these aspect are considered and followed in practice.</p>	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	
CAR #: 06/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.2.1 and 6.2.3; 9.1.1; 9.1.2; 9.2.1; 9.3.1
Non-compliance: Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/>	One SFE has mapped some rare and endangered species and protection zones are established. Another SFE had no mapping of rare and endangered species. The team found that procedures for identifying and recording rare and endangered species should be improved to ensure that these are systematically identified and mapped. Furthermore, stakeholders such as local environmental organizations, experts from research institutions and others that might have relevant information have not been consulted in connection with identifying habitats of high conservation values.
<p>Corrective Action Request:</p> <p>Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall establish procedures and elaborate a plan for identifying and recording habitats of rare and endangered species and other areas of High Conservation Value Forest (according to FSC definition) and for ensuring these are considered during management activities. The procedures shall cover consultation with relevant experts and conservation organizations as well as ensuring that staff members, who have knowledge of and are aware of such value are instructed to report and record them when found in the forest (see also CAR 07/06).</p>	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to certification.	
<p>Audit findings: The RBF has developed detailed guidelines due to the major CAR issued based on the findings of the main assessment. The guidelines covers all aspects of the CAR, except that "conservation organization" had been understand as the government body responsible for conservation and not NGOs involved in nature conservation.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Director of the RFB has issued an order to map high conservation values according to the guidelines.</p> <p>The team visited Schcuchin SFE. During the main assessment the SFE had no information on high conservation values such as habits of rare and endangered species. The SFE has after</p>	

the main assessment collected information from staff and verified old data. Based on this the information has been included in the SFE's GIS system and maps of areas with different conservation values have been prepared. These maps are available in head office and in forest districts. Furthermore, the director has issued an order requiring the identified areas to be protected.

At Ostrovets SFE information collected in connection with the management planning in 1994 have been included in on maps. New and updated information has been submitted to the authorities for approval in order to exclude sites from harvesting. The SFE plan this spring to have adds in newspapers informing that SFE is interested in collecting information on known habitats of rare and endangered species and asking readers to provide such information to the SFE.

Team concluded on this background that the CAR is met and can be closed.

Status:: Closed

Follow-up Action (if applicable):

CAR #: 07/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.2.5; 9.1.2
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conservation zones are not always mapped.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall ensure that all protected areas as well as know habitats of rare and endangered species are marked on maps available for the staff.	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 08/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.3.1
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Selective felling or regeneration in small groups is not preferred by the SFEs at special management areas such as wet soil types.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall prepare a strategy for increased use of selective felling or regeneration in small groups on wet site types.	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 09/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.3.6
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The SFE has no procedure and tradition for leaving standing and laying dead wood after logging operations. On logging sites inspected no standing dead wood were left.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall establish and implement procedures that ensure that old and hollow trees as well as standing deadwood and snags are left standing forever, unless their removal is justified by safety reasons or negative implications on forest health.	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 10/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.3.7
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The SFE has not procedure and tradition for leaving at least ten (5 in case of noble hardwoods) larger than average living trees per hectare, with consideration of their biological value that shall be left uncut forever on final felling sites.

Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall establish procedures that ensure that at least ten (5 in case of noble hardwoods) larger than average living trees per hectare, with consideration of their biological value will be left uncut forever on final felling sites.	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 11/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.4.3; 6.4.4; 9.1.1; 9.1.2
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The SFEs had not documented that 5 pct of the forest area is without timber harvesting (unless required to maintain or increase the conservation values and specified by written protection rules for the protected area).
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall protect representative samples of existing ecosystems on a minimum of 5% of their total forest area. The protected area shall be without any timber harvesting (unless required to maintain or increase the conservation values and specified by written protection rules for the protected area). The protected area shall be based assessment of habitats of rare and endangered species and other high conservation values (see also CAR 06/06)	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to second annual audit.	

CAR #: 12/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.7.1
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oil spill kit were lacking in forest tractors and other machines.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall ensure that all forest machinery is equipped with a proper kit for collection of oil spill.	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 13/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 6.9.1
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	One SFE had planted American oak replacing natural species.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall ensure stands of native species are not converted into plantations of exotic species such as American red oak.	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 14/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 7.1.1; 8.2.2
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The SFE has no description for monitoring of high conservation values.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall ensure that monitoring of rare and endangered species takes place.	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 15/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 7.3.1
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The SFEs has a comprehensive training program including many different aspects. Two to three persons have been on a special training course in connection with certification. However, the team found that some staff members lacked knowledge on the certification requirements especially regarding ecological issues, rules for group management and chain of custody requirements.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall ensure that all relevant staff are properly trained in implementing the FSC requirements. Special focus shall be on ecological issues such as biodiversity protection, values of dead wood, leaving of biodiversity trees and identification and registration of rare and endangered species as well as rules for group management and chain of custody requirements	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	
#: 16/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 7.4.1
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A public summary of the management plan covering the elements of criterion 7.1 does not exist.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall produce a public summary of the management plan covering the elements of criterion 7.1	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	
CAR #: 17/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 8.3.1; 8.3.3; SmartWood COC 5
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The SFEs do not have procedures for ensuring the FSC certification code and information that the forest products are certified as "FSC Pure" is included on invoices and waybills.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall establish written procedures that ensure that waybills and invoices include information on certified status of the products ("FSC Pure") and the Smartwood Certification Code (will be included on the certificate).	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to sales of certified products	
CAR #: 18/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 8.3.6
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The SFEs do not have procedures for ensuring the illegal harvested and confiscated wood is not sold as certified.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall establish procedures that ensure that illegal harvested and confiscated wood are not sold as certified.	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit	
CAR #: 19/06	Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 8.5.1
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A public summary of the monitoring results covering the elements of criterion 8.2 does not exist.
Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and all SFEs included in the group shall produce a public summary of the monitoring results covering the elements of criterion 8.2	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

CAR #: 20/06		Reference Standard #: FSC P&C 2.1.1, 5.3.1; 5.3.2
Non-compliance:		The RFB have got a letter from Director of external company that conduct harvest at the territory of the SFE confirming a number of steps that the company intent to take. These steps are closely related to compliance with the FSC requirements. However, the director does not confirm in written that the company intent to observe all relevant FSC requirement while working in FSC certified forest including allowing RFB, SFEs, FSC and Certification Bodies to inspect the activities of the company and issue corrective action requests if needed.
Major	Minor X	
Corrective Action Request:		
RFB shall obtain written confirmation form a senior executive (director) of the external timber harvesting companies operating on the territory of the SFE that confirm that the company will do best effort to observe all relevant FSC requirements including inspections by relevant authorities and organizations while conducting activities on FSC certified territory.		
Timeline for compliance: Prior to first annual audit.		

CAR-COC-01/06		Reference Standard #: GC8; SmartWood IV.C.1; SmartWood FSC Pure 9.
Non-compliance:		The Group Manager's procedures for monitoring of members compliance with the FSC COC requirements are not sufficient.
Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Minor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Corrective Action Request:		
Group Manager shall prepare and implement procedures that ensure that all group members are regularly monitored for compliance with all the applicable FSC requirements.		
This includes, but are not limited to:		
1. Procedures for monitoring group members' compliance with the applicable FSC Chain of Custody standard. Special attention shall be on.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That each sawmill included in the group have written procedures that covers all relevant aspects of the FSC Chain of Custody Standards;</li> <li>- That staff of each site are properly instructed and trained to understand the requirements and ensure compliance with the FSC COC rules;</li> <li>- That sales documents are properly marked with the SmartWood certification code and information that the material sold is classified as "FSC Pure".</li> <li>- That each Sawmill have a public available (on request) list of certified product offered including a clear statement that these products are "FSC Pure".</li> <li>- That all product labels include reference to the certified status of the product including the FSC certification code.</li> <li>- That all use of the FSC name and logo is in accordance with the FSC standards and have been approved by NEPCon/SmartWood.</li> <li>- That all documents related to certification is stored for minimum 5 years.</li> </ul>		
2. Procedures for issuing corrective action requests in case non compliances are identified including procedures for follow up on identified non compliances.		
3. Procedures for keeping records of monitoring activities and results.		
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to certification.		

<p>Audit findings:</p> <p>Director of RFB has issued an order requesting that the aspects mentioned in the CAR shall be included in the normal control of the sawmills at the SFEs. The RFB has a plan of control and the additional FSC requirements have been included in this plan. The control will take place once a year. Non compliances will be included in a special journal. In case non compliance is found CAR is specified and the director will define a proper punishment. A special column will indicate when the CAR is closed.</p> <p>Furthermore, the RFB has issued a document called “guidelines on the use of FSC logo on products” that include many of the Chain of Custody requirements. This document combined with a number of orders issued at the level SFEs seems to cover the needed aspects of requirements for written procedures.</p> <p>Furthermore, specific procedures has been established at Ostrovetc SFE based on the SmartWood FSC Pure standard.</p>
Status: Closed
Follow-up Action (if applicable):

CAR #: COC 02/06	Reference Standard #: SmartWood IV.C.1.c and IV.C.1.d
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Group Manager’s procedures for adding new members and excluding members from the scope of the certificate are not sufficient.
<p>Corrective Action Request:</p> <p>Group Manager shall prepare procedures for including new SFE in the group. These procedures shall ensure that Group Manager verifies all relevant FSC Chain of Custody requirement are met by SFE that wish to join the group. The verification shall include requirement for written instructions, training, sales of certified products and the use of the FSC logo.</p> <p>Group Manager shall furthermore prepare procedures for excluding SFEs from the group in case major non compliances with the certification requirements are identified.</p>	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to adding new members to the group and not later then first annual audit.	

CAR-COC-03/06	Reference Standard #: SmartWood FSC Pure 9
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Group Manager has not established and implemented a system ensuring that all use of the FSC and SW trademarks, as well as public information related to certification are in compliance with the FSC requirements and that layouts are submitted to SmartWood for review and approval.
<p>Corrective Action Request:</p> <p>Group Manager shall prepare and implement procedures that ensure that all use of the FSC and SmartWood trademarks and Logo, as well as public information related to certification are in compliance with the FSC requirements and is submitted to SmartWood/NEPCon for review and approval.</p> <p>The procedures shall ensure the “FSC 100%” label are used on product and that the FSC logo</p>	

is not used together with other on-product logo's or claim from other forest certification schemes.
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to any use of the FSC and SmartWood Trademark and not later than first annual audit.

CAR-COC-04/06	Reference Standard #: SmartWood FSC Pure 2.
Non-compliance: Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specific training requirement for keys staff responsible for ensuring compliance with the FSC standards have not been established and training have not been conducted.
<p>Corrective Action Request: Group Manager and group members shall prepare specific training requirements for key staff responsible for ensuring compliance with the FSC requirements. Special attention shall be given to staff responsible for monitoring of group members compliance with the requirements, staff responsible for preparing sales document, staff responsible for labeling of products and staff responsible for promotion of certified products.</p> <p>Group manager shall ensure that all key staff is trained according to the specific training requirements.</p> <p>Group manager shall ensure that all certification training activities are documented.</p>	
Timeline for Compliance: Prior to first annual audit.	

### 3.4. Follow-up actions by client to meet certification

### 3.5. Observations

**Observations** are voluntary actions suggested by the assessment team, but are not mandated or required.

Observation	Reference Standard #
OBS 01/06: Group Manager is recommended to ensure that conflicts or potential conflicts between the FSC requirements and national requirement are identified, analyzed, and resolved through consultation with relevant authorities and NEPCon/SmartWood.	FSC P&C 1.4.2
OBS 02/06: Group Manager is recommended to ensure that control of health and safety requirements for all personnel working at the area covered by the certification including staff employed by sub-contractors.	FSC P&C 4.2.2
OBS 03/06: SFEs are recommended avoid that senior management are members boards of trade unions in order to avoid conflict of interest in connection with negotiation of collective agreement.	FSC P&C 4.3.4
OBS 04/06: The team found that resin tapping is very damaging for the quality of the standing trees and not economic viable. The team is recommending the SFE to reconsider the use resin tapping in future. SFE is recommended to compare the full economic benefit of resin tapping with the full cost including damaging of the trees and weakening of the stand.	FSC P&C 5.3.1
OBS 05/06: On some logging sites the SFEs were marking borders	FSC P&C 5.3.1

on logging sites by axe on border trees. The bark is cut away, which might damage the wood. The SFE is recommended to mark border trees without damaging the wood.	
OSB 06/07: It is recommended that both technological maps and felling permit specify if the site is suitable for all weather harvesting or only winter harvesting when the soil is frozen.	FSC P&C 6.5.1
OBS 07/06: It is recommended to elaborate clear procedures for handling and disposal of environmental dangerous waste such as chemicals, containers, waste oil and other not organic waste.	FSC P&C 6.7.1
OBS 08/06: SFEs are recommended to ensure that appropriate oil absorbent kit or spill-proof tanks will be used at chain saws filling points	FSC P&C 6.7.4
OBS 09/06: SFEs are recommended to use biodegradable oil for chainsaws and for hydraulic oil in forest machinery.	FSC P&C 6.7.5

### 3.6. Certification Recommendation

Based on a thorough field review, analysis and compilation of findings by this SmartWood assessment team the FMO has demonstrated that their described system of management is being implemented consistently over the whole forest areas covered by the scope of the evaluation,.. SmartWood concludes that FMO's management system, if implemented as described, is capable of ensuring that all the requirements of the certification standards are met across the scope of the certificate in case the raised Corrective Action Requests are properly addressed. A FSC/SmartWood Forest Management and Chain of Custody (FM/COC) Certification can be issued when the Regional Forest Board has agreed to the stipulated minor corrective action requests.

In order to maintain certification, the FMO will be audited annually on-site and required to remain in compliance with the FSC principles and criteria as further defined by regional guidelines developed by SmartWood or the FSC. The FMO will also be required to fulfil the corrective actions as described above. Experts from SmartWood will review continued forest management performance and compliance with the corrective action requests described in this report, annually during scheduled and random audits.

## 4. CLIENT SPECIFIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 4.1. Ownership and land tenure description

All area managed by the SFE in the Grodno region is owned by the state.

### 4.2. Legislative and government regulatory context

Forest management and forest use in the Grodno region is based on relevant forest legislation, and follow governmental standards for sustainable forest management and forest use. These standards have been developed mostly by the Institute "Belgiproles" in cooperation with other scientific and educational institutes.

The Grodno Regional Forest Board and the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus is responsible for sustainable management and use of the forest including reproduction, conservation and protection.

The Grodno Regional Forest Board consists of the Management Department which is responsible for separate branches such as forest and hunting management, science, human resources, wood processing, timber trade within the region.

Under the Grodno RFB is 11 State Forest Enterprises (SFE), each responsible for the forest management within an appropriate territory. Harvesting mature forest stands as final felling is under strong limitation in accordance with annual allowable cut.

The SFEs, the Regional Forest Board, and nature protection agencies ("the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment protection of the Republic of Belarus"; "Inspection of Fauna and Flora Protection at the President of the Republic of Belarus" and their local branches) monitor the compliance with the felling rules.

Most of SFEs have one or two own timber processing plants. Hunting rights are rented to hunting associations, the SFEs or private companies. Non-timber forest products (mushrooms, berries, fruits, sap, medicinal plants) are freely accessible and are used by local population for own needs free of charge, while commercial collection a subject to a fee according to legislation.

### 4.3. Environmental Context

**Forest** – the dominant vegetation type on the territory of Belarus. Forest covers more than 71,6 thousand km<sup>2</sup>, that is about 34,5 % of the territory of the country. Forest vegetation can be characterized as following: boreal species in the northern part of the country, to the south their quantity and ecological meaning decreases and replaces with nemoral, atlantic and pontic (steppe) species.

According to geo-botanical peculiarities Belarus forests relate to the following 3 sub-zones:

- oak-dark coniferous , southern taiga (broadleaved-spruce) forests;
- hornbeam-oak- dark coniferous , sub- taiga (spruce-hornbeam) forests;
- broadleaved-pine (hornbeam-oak-pine) forests.

**Pine forests** on the territory of Belarus occupy about 48 thousand km<sup>2</sup> and is the main forest formation in the country. Most of the pine forest is 50-55 years old.. According to ecological peculiarities pine forests of Belarus are divided into following 3 groups:

- 1) Pine forests on moraine fluvio-glacial and old alluvial sands;
- 2) Pine forests on rich sub-sand and sub-clay rocks;
- 3) Pine forests on swamps and peat bogs.

Such tree species as *Betula pendula*, *Betula pubescens*, *Quercus robur* and some others also can be found in Pine forests.

**Spruce forests occupy about** 6,9 thousand km<sup>2</sup> and that is about 9,6 % of all forest in the country. The spruce forest is more often met in the north of the country (about 70 % of all spruce forests of the country).

**Broadleaved-pine forest** is spread everywhere. In the northern part of the country broadleaved oak spruce forest is dominant, in the middle of the country – broadleaved pine spruce forest and in the southern part – broadleaved pine forest.

#### 4.4. Socioeconomic Context

##### Interaction with local population or stockholders

The forests serve local population as places for rest, collecting of non-timber forest products, hunting, fishing and as wood reservoirs. The forest is still very important for collecting of NTFP for local people – especially berries and mushrooms. These forest products compose an important part of the food in rural areas. Furthermore, sales of these products generate income to the local population. The SFEs as such including the timber processing facilities are very important for employment in some areas.

##### Key stakeholders

Main stakeholders include the district and regional boards of the Belarusian society of hunters and fishers and the bodies dealing with nature protection. Trade unions, village and district administrations and various public organizations, such as societies of the veterans, foresters, BirdLife etc are also important stakeholders involved. Most of them work at a local or regional level. Scientific institutions under the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, such as Institute of Forest, Institute of Experimental Botany, Institute of Zoology, and educational institutions, such as Belarusian State Technological University, Belarusian State University are also stakeholders involved in some aspects of forest management. Timber harvesting and wood processing enterprises, both the private and the branches of the Belarusian Industry-Trade Concern "Bellesbumprom" are the main purchasers of round wood from the SFEs.

##### Wood processing and production marketing

Many of the SFEs have own wood processing facilities. In most cases smaller and medium size sawmills with old frame saws specialized in cutting small and medium dimension logs often of

low quality. Major products are pallet wood and garden products. A few SFEs have more modern equipment including kiln drying facilities.

According to local legislation all sawmill logs shall be processed within Belarus, while pulp wood can be exported. Local private and state owned wood industries process the longs that are not exported as pulp wood.

## APPENDIX I: FSC Reporting Form: Detailed FMO information

(NOTE: To be prepared by the client prior to assessment, Information verified by assessment team)

### SCOPE OF CERTIFICATE

Type of certificate:	Group Forest Management Certificate.		
SLIMF status:	no SLIMF		
Number of group members (if applicable): 5			
Total number of Forest Management Units FMUs: 5 (if applicable, list each below):			
Division of the FMUs within the scope:			
	# of FMU-s	total forest area FMU group	
< 100 ha		ha	
100 – 1000 ha		ha	
1000 – 10 000 ha		ha	
> 10 000 ha	5	398 000 ha	
SLIMF FMUs		ha	
List of each FMU included in the certificate:			
FMU	FMU Owner	Area (thousands ha)	Forest Type
Grodnenskij leskhoz	State	58,7	Semi natural
Volkovysskij leskhoz	State	62,6	Semi natural
Schuchinskij leskhoz	State	99,4	Semi natural
Ostoroveckij leskhoz	State	80,9	Semi natural
Novogrudskij leskhoz	State	96,4	Semi natural
Product categories included in the scope (note: use FSC product category classification system):			
Type of product:	Description		
High quality logs			
Low quality logs			
Firewood			
Green Lumber			
Honey			
Berries			
Mushrooms			
Other:			

### FMO INFO

Location of certified forests	Latitude: 53N degrees 10 minutes-53N degrees 55 minutes Longitude: 23E degrees 50 minutes - 26E degrees 30 minutes
Forest zone	Temperate
Management tenure:	Public

Number of FMO employees:	Approximately 1800 in all
Number of forest workers (including contractors) working in forest within the scope of certificate:	Approximately 1200

### Annual allowable cut

SFE Name	Annual allowable cut (cbm)	Actual harvest in last year (cbm)	Projected harvest for next year (cbm)
Grodnenskij leskhoz	16000	16000	16000
	49700		30700
Volkovysskij leskhoz		45000	
Schuchinskij leskhoz	59900	56600	59900
Ostoroveckij leskhoz	36500	32900	36500
	81700		81700
Novogrudskij leskhoz		63600	
<b>Total</b>	<b>243800</b>	<b>214100</b>	<b>224800</b>

### FOREST AREA CLASSIFICATION

Total certified area	398.000 ha
Total forest area in scope of certificate	398.000 ha
Forest area that is:	
Privately managed	ha
State managed	398.000 ha
Community managed	ha
Area of production forests (areas where timber may be harvested)	395.880 ha
Area without any harvesting or management activities (strict reserves)	0 ha
Area without commercial timber harvesting and managed only for production of non-timber forest products or services	2120 ha
Area classified as plantations <sup>1</sup>	0 ha

Area or share of the total production forest area regenerated naturally	1 182 ha
Area or share of the total production forest area regenerated by planting or seeding	1 636 ha
Area or share of the total production forest are regenerated by other or mixed methods (describe)	612 ha

Conservation values present in the forest (High Conservation Value Forests or HCVF) and respective areas		
HCVF Attributes	Description:	Area (ha)

<sup>1</sup> According to FSC definition “plantations” in this context should be understood as forest areas lacking most of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems as defined by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship, which result from the human activities of either planting, sowing or intensive silvicultural treatments.

	Location on FMU	
A forest contains globally, regionally or nationally significant: concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia)		<b>90,1</b>
A forest contains globally, regionally or nationally significant: large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance	No	-
They are in, or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems	A number of species on the Belarus red data book are found and mapped within the area. A larger protected area has been established.	42643
They provide basic services of nature in critical or unique situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control);	Water protection zones are established along rivers in accordance with national legislation.	<b>120059</b>
They are fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).	All forest area within the SFE-s is important for local communities for collecting of berries and mushrooms.	<b>398.000</b>

## APPENDIX II: Public summary of the management plan

**(NOTE: To be prepared by the client prior to assessment, Information verified by assessment team)**

Main objectives of the forest management are:

The forest in Grodno is managed for multiple purposes including production of wood, non timber forest products, recreational services for the local population, nature conservation and protection of water resources.

Timber productions are of a significant economical importance in the Grodno Region. The forest is first of all a source of wood for the local market and for export. Belarus legislation and regulations aim at ensuring local processing and limiting export of round wood in order to ensure as much value added production at the local market as possible.

The forest is also very important as a source of obtaining non-timber forest products like berries, mushrooms, medicinal and technical raw materials etc. Local population often visits woods of the Grodno Regional Forest Board to have rest and pick non-timber forest products. All forest areas are open for local population for collecting of NTFP for own use. Many NTFPs are also harvested in commercial scale, processed and sold on the local market or for export. Collection of NTFP provides an important source of income for especially the people in the rural areas.

To ensure good conditions for recreation and outdoor life, green zones are established around all cities and towns. Water-protection zones are established along rivers and lakes. Finally, protection zones without clear felling are established along all major roads.

A number of protection areas are established within the forest in Grodno region. The protection rules are defined in cooperation with local environmental authorities. Protection zones are established at habitats of rare and endangered species according to national legislation.

Forest composition: Coniferous trees are pre-dominant, they cover 73% of all stands. 62% of them are pine forests. Birch stands cover 14% of all stands, aspen – 2% and alder – 7%. 3% is covered by oak stands.

Description of Silvicultural system(s) used:

The forest management activities of the SFEs are under control of the state with the Regional Forest Board as the responsible body. Furthermore, nature conservation and environment protection activities of the SFEs are monitored by several other governmental bodies.

The silvicultural system practiced by the SFEs follows the traditional Belarussian system dominated by small clear cuts (<10 ha) followed by soil preparation and regeneration with native species – mainly spruce, pine and birch. The regeneration method can either be planting, natural regeneration or a combination of both. Other silvicultural practices, such as selective logging, shelter wood regeneration and regeneration in small groups are practiced to various extents by the SFEs. It is an official policy to increase the area under permanent forest cover to 50 pct over a 15 year period.

Pesticides are only used to a very limited extent and only in nurseries and in connection with mass outbreak of insects.

The SFE has a significant production of non timber forest products including mushrooms, berries,

resin, honey, game and other products.

<b>Silvicultural system</b>	<b>% of forest under this management</b>
Clearfelling (clearcut size range )	85 %
Shelterwood	15 %

Harvest methods and equipment used:

Manual felling with chain saw is used in most cases, but harvesters have been used by some SFEs. Branches often cut with axes. Tractors are used for skidding and forwarding. In some case bulldozer for extraction, this can cause significant soil damage.

Estimate of maximum sustainable yield:

The annual allowable cut is regulated yearly according to legislation and results from permanent forest inventory. All Belarus is covered by permanent plots that are measured annually.

See Appendix I for estimation of Annual Allowable Cut.

Explanation of the assumptions (e.g. silvicultural) upon which estimates are based and reference to the source of data (e.g. inventory data, permanent sample plots, yield tables) upon which estimates are based upon.

During the preparation of the management plan the felling age is determined depending on species, stand condition and age, as well as soil type. The time of felling of an individual stand is regulated by the age of the stand, depending on the tree species and in accordance with site productivity.

Annual allowable cut (AAC) is calculated annually by the body preparing the forest management plan. For the commercial forests, AAC is calculated based on age classes using mathematical models.

Protection areas are extracted from AAC calculations.

Information on harvested volumes is well documented and updated every month in an electronic database, including site description, species, quantities, assortments, logging date, etc.

Forest management organizational structure and management responsibilities from senior management to operational level (how is management organized, who controls and takes decisions etc.)

The Belarus forest sector is build up as a hierarchical system with Ministry of Forestry having the overall responsibilities for management of the state forest in Belarus. The area is subdivided into 6 regions each with a Regional Forest Board as responsible for the forest management within the region. Grodno Regional Forest Board is the group manager for the present certification. Under the Regional Forest Board is a number of State Forest Enterprises that are legal entities responsible for the forest management within their area. These are again subdivided into Forest Districts. The current group consists of 5 State Forest Enterprises.

Structure of forest management units (division of forest area into manageable units etc.)

As described above the Grodno Regional Forest Board is a head body that comprises 11 forest

enterprises. The forest enterprise is divided into a number of forest units (Forestry). The forestry is divided into Forest Districts, while the lasts consist of Forest Sectors with compartments using a grid system and each compartment is subdivided into sub compartment. The stand level inventory and the management plan include data on the level of sub compartment.

**Monitoring procedures** (including yield of all forest products harvested, growth rates, regeneration, and forest condition, composition/changes in flora and fauna, environmental and social impacts of forest management, costs, productivity and efficiency of forest management)

The SFEs in Belarus have a well developed and strict monitoring and control system in place with monitoring of many different aspects involving several different governmental bodies.

Information on yield of all forest products harvested is available through harvesting and sales statistic with monthly, quarterly and annual summaries.

Growth rates, regeneration, forest conditions, composition/changes in flora and fauna is covered by the stand level management planning inventory and through the permanent forest inventory with a grid net of permanent sample plots measured annually. Furthermore, monitoring of fauna is taking place in cooperation with hunters and hunting associations.

Social impact can be directly monitoring by the SFEs being one of the most important employer in the rural areas of Belarus. Furthermore, the SFEs area is very important for collection of berries, mushrooms and other NTFPs, which contribute significant to the local economy. The stand level inventory includes a detailed inventory of these resources.

Cost, productivity and efficiency is monitored through the financial accounts.

**Environmental protection measures, e.g. buffer zones for streams, riparian areas, etc., protection measures for Rare Threatened and Endangered Species and habitat**

Belarus has detailed regulations for establishment of buffer zones along rivers, and for establishment of protection zones around habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species and habitats. All SFEs have to follow these regulations.

Furthermore, most SFE has a number of protected areas and areas with special management. The protection regulations of such areas are prescribed by the local environmental authorities. The level of protection varies from strictly protected areas to areas where most normal forest management activities can take place – however often without final felling or clear cut.

