



**Naturland Standards  
for Organic Forest Management**

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**CONTENTS**

**Preface**

**Objectives**

**General**

**Prerequisites for the conclusion of a producer contract**

**Producer contract**

**Standards**

**Documentation and inspection**

**Conversion**

**Certification**

**Labelling and marketing**

**Organic Forest Use**

**Stocking up with indigenous trees**

**First afforestations**

**Treatment of floor**

**Forest use and forest protection**

**Hunting**

**Opening up forests, harvesting, storage of timber**

**Use of fertilizers and synthetically produced chemical preparations**

**Natural dynamics**

**Reference areas**

## **1. Preface**

A general trend towards nature-oriented forest use has been discernible in the forestry industry in the last few years. This has come about because the disadvantages in large-scale commercial logging and the insect blights and disastrous storms of the last few decades have necessitated a rethink in how our forests should be treated in the long term. Consideration of organic principles must eventually lead to turning away from clearcutting and forests of one age group. Selective use of individual trees or at most groups of trees, allows sustained forest communities to come into being instead.

An organically managed forest shall be composed in the long term of trees indigenous to the area. This kind of management produces forests with a high biotope value and optimal conditions of growth, growing stock and quality, at low commercial risk and without having to use a great deal of external energy.

The most important principle in implementing organic forest use is to set up reference areas, which are not used commercially.

## **2. Objectives**

Organic forest use serves to sustainably produce valuable timber and, equally importantly, to protect natural diversity and natural dynamics.

At the same time it is indispensable to ensure that the forest performs its multifarious protective and social functions in the long term.

## **I Miscellaneous**

### **1. Prerequisites for the Conclusion of a Producer Contract**

Prior to the conclusion of a producer contract, the association must be given the opportunity to inform itself thoroughly about the external and internal conditions about the production unit concerned.

The interested production unit is obliged to provide any information necessary for the judgement of the conversion conditions. This includes particularly the method of production uniting that has been practiced up to now (use of mineral fertilizers, management of synthetically produced chemical pesticides, floor management etc.), the economic situation of the production unit and the environmental conditions (sources of potential contamination, e.g., sewage sludge, traffic or others have to be reported before the conversion can begin). In the case of possibly detected contamination with dubious or harmful substances, analyses have to be carried out prior to the conclusion of a producer contract. These analyses may show that a producer contract is possible only in connection with specific conditions or not at all. A complete description of the areas of land worked on by the producer and of the production and storage sites has to be made.

The sustainable natural forest management is based on a regular inventory taking and target-oriented planning. Therefore, planning data appropriate to the size and the intensity of use of the production unit quoting the objectives of the production unit (e.g. forest management plan, expert's opinion, etc.) will have to be presented and/or prepared and agreed with Naturland.

### **2. Producer Contract**

By signing the producer contract, the producer agrees to the obligation of keeping the Naturland Standards and extending the conversion to all areas of the production unit that are managed or used under his responsibility (conversion of the entire production unit).

The conclusion of a producer contract is possible anytime throughout the year.

The conclusion contract does not entitle the enterprise to the use of the associations trademark. A separate contract has to be concluded for this.

### **3. Standards**

These standards are binding for all production units that have concluded a producer contract with Naturland e. V. (registered association). They have been tested and put into practice in this form. If single regulations or parts of these standards should not be applicable under different climatic conditions, the Naturland standard commission has to work out an adaptation/extension of the standards that has to be passed by the assembly of delegates.

It is always the latest version of the standards passed by the standard commission, that is in force.

The Naturland association will inform the contractual producers about changes.

If the standards are changed, a deadline for the interim period can be set, by which these changes have to be carried out by the producer.

Violations of the standards will be prosecuted according to the sanction catalogue (producer contract appendix IV).

The validity of higher state laws and regulations remains untouched by these standards.

### **4. Documentation and inspection**

For the purpose of documenting the management, up-dated records have to be kept (e.g. production unit questionnaire) and to be reported to the association. Records will also have to be kept for product flow and product sales according to the standards and conditions of the Naturland association.

The existing planning data agreed with Naturland will have to be used. Compliance will have to be documented.

The compliance with the standards will be checked by announced and unannounced on site visits and inspections by representatives of the Naturland association. These representatives must be given full access to and insight in all relevant information concerning the production unit. On request, all documents concerning the management of the production unit have to be shown, and all respectively relevant questions have to be answered.

## **5. Conversion**

A transition phase as in agriculture is not necessary, since the forest concerned can be used in accordance with the standards immediately, and the development of non-indigenous stands in a forest composed of indigenous trees requires decades.

If the enterprise conducts agricultural and horticultural operations, and so forth, as well as forestry operations, these sectors must begin conversion over not later than the fifth year after the contract with Naturland has been concluded (the conversion being made by the whole enterprise).

The persons entrusted with the management in practice must be able to prove an adequate forestry education or submit evidence of their ability and qualification otherwise.

## **6. Certification**

The Naturland certification commission acknowledges the keeping of the standards by the producer with the annual certification letter. In the case of violations of valid standards by the producer, sanctions according to the sanction catalogue of the producer contract can be imposed.

## **7. Labelling and Marketing**

The producer is allowed to label the products with a Naturland reference only in accordance with the license agreement that has to be concluded concerning this topic. In addition, the following deadlines and conversion periods must be respected.

Recognition of wood as from certified organic forest use, and labelled with the Naturland label, is only possible after 12 months have elapsed since unpermitted fertilizers and herbicides were last used on the area concerned.

## **II Organic Forest Use**

**For organic forest use, the following principles and conditions shall be binding:**

### **1. Stocking up with indigenous trees**

One objective in organic forest use is a continuous approach of the forest to a potential natural symbiosis. The natural regeneration and/or use of seeds or wilding plants of existent indigenous trees accord the natural forest community the best potential for regeneration suited to the site, and should be striven for. Planting and seed is, therefore, the exception and only the use of indigenous sorts of trees and origins are permitted.

### **2. First afforestations**

Afforestations have to be agreed with Naturland.

### **3. Treatment of forest floor**

The primary aim of organic forest use is the undisturbed development of forest floors. For this reason, and because of the damage likely to be caused to floor and roots, treatment of and exhaustive driving on the forest floor, including drainage measures, are not allowed in the forest. The upper soil may therefore only be loosened in exceptional cases and on parts of its surface, and this may only be done after discussion and agreement with Naturland.

### **11. Forest use and forest protection**

The use of trees to be harvested is done as single tree, stand or group cutting. Clear cutting and full tree use is, therefore, forbidden.

When using tree groups, the area cut must have a diameter not greater than the height of the neighbouring trees. The objective is to largely preserve the climate inside the stand. As a rule, the method, frequency and intensity of interventions for use will be agreed with Naturland on the basis of the planning data (e.g. forest management plan, expert's opinion on the production unit, etc.).

If there are no forest-protection reasons to the contrary, logging debris should remain at the site of their coming into being to protect the forest floor.

The overall natural diversity of species should be preserved and/or fostered.

### **12. Hunting**

The basic factor concerning plans for shoots is the state of vegetation in the forest. Basically, all sorts of trees in the natural regional forest community should be able to regenerate and develop without special measures for their protection. There are exceptions where the transformation or increase of non-indigenous stands is concerned, where measures to protect the mix of tree species against damages caused by game, become necessary. Exotic species of hoofed game, such as mouflon, Sika and fallow deer must not be re-introduced or encouraged.

## 6. Opening up forests, harvesting, storage of timber

The development of our forests for vehicles has in the main already been concluded. Plans for a network of routes are, therefore, to be agreed with Naturland.

A forest-protecting way of harvesting and hauling wood, requires installing a permanently fixed system of back lanes. Lane clearance has to be oriented at long-term forest treatment and - taking into account site conditions - be chosen in such a way that no more than 10% of the forest floor (lane clearance of 40 meters) will be used for driving on. In justified cases, Naturland may grant a limited exemption from the rule upon request.

Hauling must be carried out along the back lanes and/or forest lanes and be realized in appropriate weather (dry weather, ground frost). Moving it with horses is to be striven for. Tractors with wide tyres and cable winches should be used with preference.

In inaccessible areas, skyline cranes allow careful harvesting of the wood.

The use of plant-based, biologically degradable chainsaw oil is obligatory.

In the interest of greater durability of the timber and a reduction of energy-consuming artificial drying, logs should be cut only, as far as possible, during the time in winter when the sap is at rest.

Firewood must be dried naturally, without the use of fossil sources of energy, while being stored for adequately long periods of time.

## 7. Use of fertilizer and synthetically produced chemical preparations

Introduction of substances which are foreign to the forest ecosystem is, in principle, forbidden.

Exceptions to this rule are the use of suppressants and agents against browsing, rubbing and bark peeling, provided they do not contain synthetically produced chemical additives.

An exceptional authorization for compensatory liming on partial areas may be applied for at Naturland.

## 15. Natural dynamics

In all areas, but especially in stocks still low in species and not yet appropriate for the forest site, natural dynamics must be permitted.

The following is to be observed:

- Preservation of rare forest trees.
- Preservation of special biotopes, even beyond the extent to which they are legally protected (e.g. dry areas, forest swamps, moors, well areas, woods around boulders and in ravines).
- Single trees or old forest groups (preferably tree diameters of 30 cm and more), especially woodpecker holes or other cavities, will be marked and excluded from use and left to their natural aging process and natural decay. This leads to an increase in the proportion of dying trees, dead trees and trees in decay - in the following summed up under biotopic wood.
- The long term objective is to reach an overall proportion of standing and fallen biotopic wood of 10% of the wood stock. Registration will be carried out within the regular inventories.
- Preservation of tree monuments, extraordinarily clear-cut individual trees and cultural historical places in the forest.

## 16. Reference areas

Reference areas representative of the types of stands throughout the whole forest area should be designated for the purpose of recurrently making comparisons between not-managed and well-managed areas. The objective is to gain local and site information on the natural forest development and with that also information to be pallied in organic forest use. To reduce border effects to a minimum, reference areas should be as large as possible (at least 20 hectares).

Forests being predominantly state and/or local authority forests shall designate at least ten per cent of their forest areas as reference areas within three years.

Exemptions are possible upon request (e.g. strongly splitted-up forests and forests strongly frequented by recreation traffic).

Privately owned forests are not obliged to designate own reference areas. They shall, however, as well orient their forest use at comparable reference areas.