

## Forest Management Certification Re-Assessment of The Programme for Belize in Río Bravo Conservation and Management Area (RBCMA), Orange Walk District, Belize July 18, 2019

**Introduction** - NEPCon is conducting forest management and chain of custody certification re-assessments of The Programme for Belize located in Río Bravo Conservation and Management Area (RBCMA), Orange Walk District, Belize. The assessment will be implemented from September 02-06, 2019.

**Scope of the Certification Assessment** – The forest management certification assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the Río Bravo Conservation and Management Area managed by The Programme for Belize, using the NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Belize, FM-32-BELIZE December 2014. To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about these standards, please contact NEPCon by telephone, FAX, email or website listed below. Please note that the standard may be modified to take account of stakeholder comments. NEPCon is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council™ and this assessment process must follow procedures which have been approved.

The forest under evaluation contains areas either identified as High Conservation Value Forests or where high conservation values, as defined by the FSC, are likely found. NEPCon evaluates the identification, management and protection of these High Conservation Values and solicits related comments from stakeholders.

**Assessment Team Composition** – The assessment team will be led by Adolfo Lemus, General Manager (Guatemala). The team members will be: Zenaïdo Garnica, Associate Manager (México).

**Assessment Steps and Schedule** – Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- ◆ Assessment organization – NEPCon team will assemble in Belize City on September 02<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.
- ◆ Field assessments – The team will visit sites managed by The Programme for Belize from September 04-05, 2019.
- ◆ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding The Programme of Belize forest management in villages surrounding the forest area. This will include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
- ◆ Final assessment briefing – Prior to departure the team will meet with The Programme for Belize managers and other parties to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- ◆ Draft report production – The assessment team will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to The Programme for Belize and a minimum of one independent peer reviewer. This should occur 60 days after completion of the assessment.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from The Programme for Belize forest managers and independent peer reviewers, and other general stakeholder comments, NEPCon will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by December 06<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

**Your Input Sought** – As a part of the forest certification assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on The Programme for Belize forest management in relation to conformance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above as well as comments on the FME's management and protection of High Conservation Values within the forest under evaluation. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the assessment process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the assessment, during the assessment, or prior to December 01<sup>st</sup>, 2019 so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision by December 06<sup>th</sup> 2019. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows.

1. Meet with a NEPCon assessment team member during or shortly after the fieldwork.
2. Call and give comments to Edgar Bámaca, NEPCon staff person responsible for coordinating this certification assessment from Guatemala Office. If Edgar Bámaca is not in the office, please give your comments to either Ailin Salguero (asalguero@nepcon.org).
3. Submit written comments by mail, FAX or email to Edgar Bámaca. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing the Programme for Belize.

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential available to only to FSC and NEPCon staff. Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access NEPCon's Dispute Resolution Policy at <https://www.nepcon.org/dispute-resolution-policy>

#### Contacting NEPCon

- ◆ Email: [ebamaca@nepcon.org](mailto:ebamaca@nepcon.org)
- ◆ Worldwide Website – [www.nepcon.org](http://www.nepcon.org).
- ◆ Telephone – (502) 2300-6811
- ◆ FAX – (502) 2300-6811
- ◆ Mail address – 8a. Avenida 15-62, Guatemala City, Guatemala.