

Forest Management Certification Assessment of Ekoteknika EOOD forest management in Kubrat, Dulovo, Bulgaria [04.11.2016]

Introduction - NEPCon is conducting forest management and chain of custody certification assessments of Ekoteknika EOOD forest management located in Kubrat, Dulovo, Bulgaria. The assessment will be implemented on 19 December 2016.

Scope of the Certification Assessment – The forest management certification assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forests managed by Ekoteknika EOOD, using the *NEPCon Interim Standard Bulgaria 19Dec14; NEPCon CoC Standard for FME 19Dec14*. To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about these standards, please contact NEPCon by telephone, 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™(FSC™) and this assessment process must follow procedures which have been approved by the FSC.

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 lead by Teodor Todorov (Bulgaria). The team members will be: Pencho Dermendzhiev and Neli Nikolova (auditor in training).

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

- ◆ Assessment organization – NEPCon team will assemble in sites managed by Ekoteknika EOOD.
- ◆ Field assessments – The team will visit sites managed by Ekoteknika EOOD on 19 December 2016.
- ◆ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding Ekoteknika EOOD forest management in villages surrounding the forest area. This will include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
- ◆ Public stakeholder meetings – A public stakeholder meeting will be held in Ekoteknika EOOD a centrally located public meeting place for Ekoteknika EOOD. Date, time, and location will be announced soon.
- ◆ Final assessment briefing – Prior to departure the team will meet with Ekoteknika EOOD 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 Ekoteknika EOOD and a minimum of 2 independent peer reviewers.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from Ekoteknika EOOD forest managers and independent peer reviewers, and other general stakeholder comments, NEPCon will reach a certification decision.

Your Input Sought – As a part of the forest certification assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on Ekoteknika EOOD 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 19 November so that we can take them into

consideration in reaching a certification decision. 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 Teodor Todorov, NEPCon staff person responsible for coordinating this certification assessment from Regional office Bulgaria. If Teodor Todorov is not in the office, please give your comments to either present staff.
3. Submit written comments by mail or email to Teodor Todorov. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing Ekoteknika EOOD forest management.

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 www.nepcon.org.

Contacting NEPCon

- ◆ Email: tt@nepcon.org for Teodor Todorov and nn@nepcon.org for Neli Nikolova;
- ◆ Worldwide Website – www.nepcon.org;
- ◆ Telephone – +359 894465910 for Teodor Todorov and +359 894465910 for Neli Nikolova;
- ◆ Mail address – NEPCon Bulgaria EOOD, 131 Tsarigradsko shose Blvd, ATM Building, Office 415, p.o.b. 1.