

UTZ GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

NATURE PROTECTION (Version 1.0 | August 2016)

Guidance on nature protection, as required in the UTZ Core Code of Conduct for group and multi-group certification (versions 1.1 and 1.0)

This guidance document is part of a set of documents designed to assist with implementation of specific topics within the UTZ Core Code of Conduct.

This document is intended for use by farmer groups and the technical assistants supporting them in the certification process.

NO DEFORESTATION



Safeguarding protected areas
and endangered species.



Promoting
ecological
diversity.

Applies to the
whole farm,
not only the
certified crop.





Box 1: What does the Code of Conduct say

G.D.109 (111)*:

No deforestation or degradation of primary forest occurs or has occurred since 2008.

G.D.110 (112)

No deforestation or degradation of secondary forest occurs, unless:

- a legal land title and/or landowner permission and/or customary land rights are available, and
- government permits are available (if required)

G.D.111 (113):

No production or processing occurs in or within 2 km of a protected area unless it is allowed under a management plan of the area.

G.D.112 (114):

Threatened and endangered species in the production area are identified, communicated to group members, and protected.

G.D.113 (115):

The group promotes ecological diversity by protecting and enhancing habitats and ecosystems.

Producer training must include protection of water, flora and fauna (G.A.19 (21)).

** The number in brackets refers to version 1.0 of the Core Code of Conduct for group and multi-group certification.*

UTZ & NATURE PROTECTION

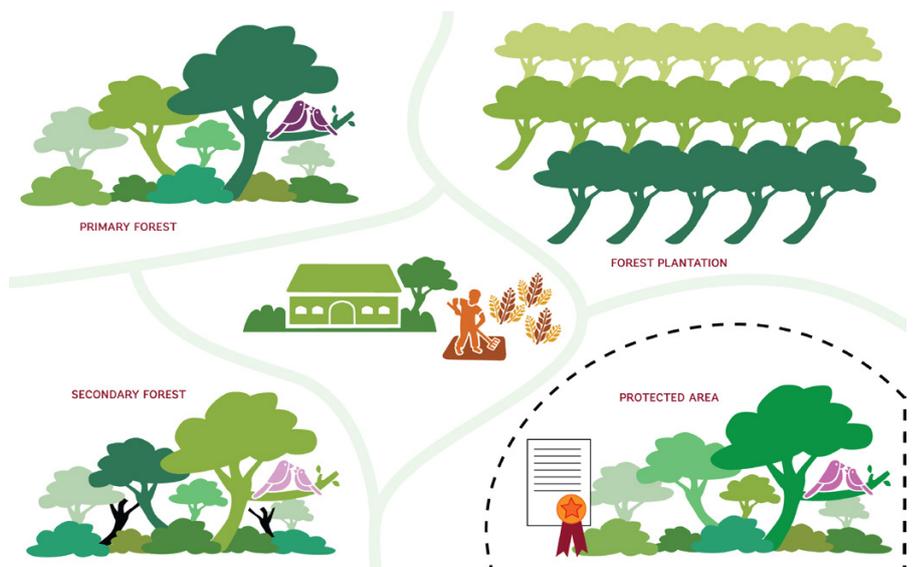
We all depend on nature and natural resources. We need healthy ecosystems that can provide the food, materials, clean air and water we need to live.

That's why protection of nature is integrated into the UTZ Code of Conduct through sustainable farming practices as well as specific requirements such as prevention of deforestation and avoiding farming in areas of high ecological value. Sustainable farming practices help protect biodiversity and preserve the earth's natural resources, while a well-managed, healthy environment supports productive farming.

The UTZ Code of Conduct for Groups (2014 - Block D)ⁱ prohibits deforestation, requires safeguarding of protected areas and endangered species and encourages actions to promote ecological diversity.

The **aim of this document** is to:

- explain the UTZ approach to protecting nature
- help groups to identify forests, protected areas and species
- provide guidance on planning, implementing and documenting actions for protecting nature



ⁱ This guidance document refers to version 1.1 of the UTZ Core Code of Conduct for group and multi-group certification. Where relevant the requirements of version 1.0 are also referred to. Version 1.1 is an improved version of version 1.0. As of the 1st of July 2015, groups can be audited against the Core Code of Conduct version 1.0 or 1.1. As of the 1st of January 2016, groups can only be audited against the Core Code of Conduct version 1.1.

WHAT TO HAVE IN PLACE: ESTABLISH A SYSTEM FOR NATURE PROTECTION

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
<p>IMS Environment Officer Appoint a person or committee in the IMS with responsibility for environmental management including protection of nature (Responsible person/IMS Environment Officer, G.A.7)</p>			
<p>He/she is responsible for implementing block D (environment) and the requirements relating to protection of nature. The IMS Environment Officer has to be qualified for the role (this can include official qualifications, attendance at training courses and/or practical experience) and accessible to group members and group staff.</p>			
<p>Map any protected areas (G.A.1). Your group should create a map of its production areas indicating any protected areas, bodies of water and human settlements.</p>			
<p>Demonstrate that no deforestation of primary forest has taken place since 2008 and that no deforestation of secondary forest takes place (G.D.109 (111), 110(112)) unless a legal land title and/or landowner permission and/or customary land rights and government permits have been obtained for deforestation of secondary forest.</p>			
<p>The number in brackets refers to version 1.0 of the Core Code of Conduct for group and multi-group certification.</p>			
<p>Create and implement a management plan for any group member who farms within 2km of a protected area.</p>			
<p>A sample plan is included in Annex 1. Management plans must be approved by a relevant national or regional authority (for example, the Ministry of the Environment and its agencies) and should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the current boundaries of production and processing areas and communicate these to group members Prohibit expansion of production and processing areas and any new land clearing outside of these areas Prohibit expansion of production and processing areas and any new land clearing outside of these areas Identify planned actions for mitigating or compensating environmental impacts. These could include reforestation, adoption of agroforestry* practices and establishing biological corridors** Set time frames and establish clearly defined roles for supervising and implementing the plan. <p>* Agroforestry combines forestry with agriculture, for example by growing trees among crops. ** Biological corridors connect different habitats or ecosystems that would otherwise be separated by human activity, i.e. roads, logging, settlements etc. They aim to enable movement of wildlife and ensure the viability of wildlife populations in the connected habitats.</p>			
<p>A management plan under G.D.111 (113) means a policy plan that is developed with relevant regional organizations (see annex 1 for an example). Note that this is a different document to the one referred to in G.A.17 which includes all actions following from the risk assessment.</p>			

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
	<p>Conduct a risk assessment This should include the risk of non-compliance with the UTZ Code of Conduct nature protection requirements.</p>		
	<p>Identify any threatened or endangered animal or plant species within the group's production areas. These should be communicated to all group members and measures put in place to protect them.</p>		

BOX 2: WHY ARE FORESTS AND PROTECTED AREAS SO IMPORTANT?

Forests and protected areas support a wide variety of plants and animals. For many of us, protecting nature is an important goal in its own right. However, nature plays an important role in successful farming, so protecting nature has a number of direct benefits including:

- rich soils and organic matter comprising organisms beneficial to the soil at the farm
- water filtration and regulation of local temperatures and rainfall patterns
- natural species for food, medicines and other uses
- protection against natural disasters. For example, coasts with mangrove forests are much better protected against tsunamis and wetlands provide protection against flood damage.
- climate change mitigation. Forests capture carbon and play an important role in the prevention of climate change.

IN PRACTICE: STEPS FOR SAFEGUARDING FORESTS, PROTECTED AREAS AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

ADDRESSING RISKS

In some cases there may be a conflict between agricultural activity and protection of nature and therefore a high risk of not reaching the UTZ goal of 'better environment'. This could be, for example, because a farm borders a forest or protected area and is likely to expand, or because a producer generates income from trafficking endangered species. Such conflicts should be identified in the risk assessment process (G.A.16 (18) & G.A. 17 (19)) and addressed. It is important to identify where agricultural land borders a forest or protected area, or where hunting or trading of endangered species is a profitable activity. Protected and forest areas should be included in the map of production areas (G.A.1).

The risk assessment and map should distinguish between primary and secondary forests and any forest plantations, see box 4 for definitions. To identify protected areas, endangered species and different types of forest, you can contact:

- National, regional or local government agencies such as the Ministry responsible for the Environment and/or Forests
- Local conservation organizations
- International organizations such as Global Forest Watch, which provides a world map for protected and forested areas. See <http://www.globalforestwatch.org/map>.
- A good source for information on endangered species is the red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN): <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

If a conflict exists between agricultural activity and protection of nature, it is important that producers have access to an alternative solution, where possible. For example, profitability can usually be improved by intensifying production through professionalization of farm management rather than by extending farm borders.

The risk assessment should be reviewed each year. This is a good opportunity to assess any changes in relation to forests, protected areas and endangered species and the impact of any measures taken to reduce the risks of non-compliance with the UTZ Code. See Guidance on Risk Assessment for more information on this process.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Information and guidance on protecting nature should be included in the training program for group staff and group members. An important first step is to raise awareness among members and, if possible, the wider community on the importance of nature protection for people, farmers and the environment. This should make sure that members understand why nature protection is important to them, their agricultural production and the environment.

Environmental protection can seem less relevant than other topics, particularly in poor communities or when farmers are struggling to make a profit. The key message to communicate is that successful farming depends on a healthy environment.



REMEMBER THAT

Sustainable farming helps protect biodiversity. Protecting nature isn't just about implementing conservation measures. Day-to-day agricultural practices can have a significant impact on the health of the environment on and around farmland. For example:

- Sustainable farming practices improve soil so it has a greater number of microorganisms and is more fertile.
- Pesticides don't just kill pests, but can be harmful to beneficial insects and soil microorganisms and can pollute water resources. Integrated pest management (IPM) helps protect beneficial insects and soil microorganisms.
- Good water management practices minimize the extraction and the pollution of natural water sources.



GOOD TO KNOW

WHAT IS A PRIMARY FOREST?

A primary forest is one that has never been logged and has developed through natural processes. A primary forest has not been subject to human disturbance. There has been no intentional clearing of the forest by any means (including fire) to manage or alter it for human use. This does not include minor disturbances by indigenous and local communities that live traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

WHAT IS A SECONDARY FOREST?

A secondary forest may have been cleared by humans at some point, including by logging or man-made fire, but has since developed naturally. It includes species that are native to the region, and has not been primarily established by planting and/or seeding. Version 1.0 of the Code of Conduct uses the term natural forest to refer to this type of forest.

WHAT IS A FOREST PLANTATION?

Forest plantations are intensively managed woodlands established through planting. It is usually easy to identify a forest plantation as they are characterized by having relatively few species which may not be native to the area, with trees of similar ages growing in straight, regularly-spaced lines. You can obtain information on native tree species for your area from local authorities and your Local UTZ Implementation Guide.

WHY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY FORESTS?

In line with international agreements, UTZ distinguishes between different types of forest based on their ecological value and the time and effort needed to re-establish them. Protection of untouched primary forests has the highest priority because these forests typically have the highest diversity of animal and plant species and take a long time to develop. We use 2008 as the reference year for producers to prove that they haven't cleared primary forest.

WHAT IS A PROTECTED AREA?

A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. Examples include national parks, wilderness areas, community conserved areas, and nature reserves

Once members are aware of the importance of protecting flora and fauna, more specific information should be provided to them during training. Following training, participants should be familiar with regional plant and animal species and understand what a primary forest in the area looks like. As this is very specific to the local context, local organizations and authorities should be consulted for information and material, such as the local offices of the International Union on Conservation of Nature (IUCN, http://www.iucn.org/contact/iucn_offices/) or the national Ministry responsible for Environment and/or Forests .

ACTIONS FOR SAFEGUARDING PROTECTED AREAS

Agricultural activities affect areas beyond the actual production plot through, for example, run-off of agrochemicals from fertilizers or because human activity disturbs wildlife. To limit the impact on protected areas, UTZ requires a 2km buffer zone between protected areas and production areas.

ACTIONS FOR SAFEGUARDING ENDANGERED SPECIES

There must be no hunting or trafficking of endangered species. Actions to protect endangered species can include protecting their habitat - the plants which provide them with food and shelter. For example, this can be done by putting up signs to mark protected areas used by endangered species and raising awareness through information material and maps in locations used by the local community.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR PROMOTING ECOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Practices to promote ecological diversity within the agricultural area can include planting bee-friendly flowers around farm plots and establishing agroforestry demonstration plots. Information should be included in farmer training. For example, farmers should be advised when applying pesticides to avoid times of day when bees may be collecting nectar.

It is the group's responsibility to lead on promotion of ecological diversity because many smallholders lack capacity to include this in their daily farming practices.

Proving there has been no deforestation

In order to demonstrate that no deforestation of primary or secondary forest has occurred (G.D.109 (111),G.D.110 (112)), farms that border forested areas should provide records that show how long they have been operating on the land and confirm that the border with primary forest has not changed since 2008.

If no producer records are available, we recommend checking external sources such as old satellite images (Global Forest Watch is a source for these - <http://www.globalforestwatch.org/>). In difficult cases, other community members can be consulted. For secondary forest, deforestation is allowed if the member has a legal land title and/or landowner permission and/or customary land rights, as well as government permits for the deforestation activity (if required). This should be documented.

ANNEX 1:

EXAMPLE OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PROTECTED AREAS

	2015		2016 etc.	
Objectives	Short-term objectives	Long-term objectives		
	For example: Agricultural activities within 2km protected areas only take place with relevant permits. This goal is reached once all member farms within 2km have a relevant permit. It has to be monitored continuously to ensure no producers expand into this buffer zone.	For example: Agroforestry practices adopted. This goal is reached once x producers have planted new trees of x different species on their farms.		
Actions to be taken by the group (IMS Environment Officer)	For example: Ensure all producers commit to no deforestation and no expansion into protected areas. This is done by checking all potential conflicts as identified from the maps of all production and protected areas.	For example: Establish demonstration plots for agroforestry practices. This is done by assessing options to acquire all necessary material such as seeds, seedlings and fertilizers; contacting producers who may potentially offer their farms as demonstration plots; organizing the planting and maintenance of the plants.		
Actions to be taken by members	For example: Check maps of their agricultural plots and the location of forests and protected areas. Commit to stop deforestation and no expansion into protected areas. Assess options for optimizing yield so that expansion is not necessary.	For example: Adopt agroforestry practices in land adjacent to protected areas and forests. Research options for obtaining resources for planting more shade trees; organize planting them.		
Resources/material needed	Up-to-date maps. Training for members on Nature Protection	Planting material; advice from agroforestry experts.		

ANNEX 2:

RECORD KEEPING - WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED FOR NATURE PROTECTION?

You should keep the following records on nature protection:

- The name of the responsible person for Block D (Environment) (G.A.7(6)) and proof of his/her competence for the role. This could be an official qualification, attendance certificates for relevant training courses, and/or details of his/her relevant experience.
- Details of any nature protection risks identified and planned activities to address these should be documented in your management plan (G.A.16, G.A.1819).
- Evidence that group staff and members have been trained on environmental topics including nature protection (G.A.18 (20), G.A.19 (21)). This should be recorded in your main training records.
- A map of production areas with any protected areas identified (G.A.1).
- If secondary forest has been cut down: proof of legal landowner rights or permission from the legal landowner as well as government permits for deforestation, if required by local law. (G.D.11 (12)0).
- If farming occurs within 2km of a protected area: a management plan for protected areas (G.D. 111(113)).
- Proof that the actions in the management plan for protected areas have been implemented (G.A.111 (113)).