

# **Principles, Criteria and Indicators for Responsibly Produced Peat**

*Version 2.0, February 2018, available for Certification*

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## 1. Preamble

This document contains the principles and criteria for a responsible peat supply chain, which is the basis for certifying growing media that contain peat and for certifying peat extraction sites that deliver peat to the growing media industry. In 2010 the growing media industry organised a multi-stakeholder initiative to work on criteria and transparency in peat extraction. In close co-operation, representatives from peat production, manufacturing of growing media, users of growing media, retail and non-governmental organisations have drawn up criteria for the responsible production of peat products.

The goal of the Certification Scheme for Responsibly Produced Peat is to ensure that peat used as a constituent for growing media in both professional horticulture and the hobby gardening market can be guaranteed from responsible sources and that sources that do not fulfil the criteria are effectively excluded. The normative umbrella of these principles and criteria is the *IPS Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management (SRPM)*<sup>1</sup>. The Principles and Criteria as defined in this document make sure that the certified companies and extraction sites take into account the SRPM strategic objectives for biodiversity, hydrology and climate change during the entire business cycle from developing and operating extraction sites until and during after-use. This process will ensure that peatlands will be used, managed and restored in a responsible way, generating optimal social, cultural, economic and ecological benefits.

These Principles and Criteria are also built upon the earlier work by the European Peat and Growing Media Association (EPAGMA). *EPAGMA's Code of Practice*<sup>2</sup> contains seven core principles for which practices have been described. This document uses similar principles. Many elements of the practices as defined by EPAGMA were the starting point for defining the criteria in this document.

The Principles and Criteria contain obligations to be fulfilled by single companies that certify their peat production according to the RPP scheme. The RPP scheme is the contribution of the peat-based supply chain for growing media to responsible peat extraction. This contribution is an important part of a combined effort of governments on different levels, the private sector and civil society to stimulate responsible peat production. The RPP scheme, however, cannot prescribe the behaviour of others than individual companies such as the industry as a whole or government. Many issues, such as the restoration or re-development of peat extraction sites for which no clear private sector responsibilities exist, cannot be dealt with in this scheme, but require public sector action.

The certification system aims at minimising the negative effects of peat extraction whilst maximising its positive effects. Negative: peat production can have negative impacts on environmental values; Positive: wetland restoration after peat extraction from highly degraded

<sup>1</sup> IPS, *Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management*, International Peat Society, October 2010

<sup>2</sup> EPAGMA, *Code of Practice for Responsible Peat Management*, October 2009)

peatland is prioritized. The certification system forbids peat extraction from high conservation value areas whereas stimulating peat extraction from highly degraded areas followed up by appropriate after-use measures.

The geographical scope of these Principles and Criteria is peat used in the European<sup>3</sup> industry for growing media, extracted in Europe and possibly some areas in neighbouring countries. Therefore, issues typical for tropical peatlands and the countries where they are situated (as explicitly mentioned in the IPS strategy) have not been incorporated here. However, if issues not dealt with in the present version of the Principles and Criteria, become relevant, they will be included in future versions.

The principles and criteria contain requirements for responsible extraction of peat, including the selection of sites and after-use. Many of these requirements are already covered by European, national and regional legislation and regulations. The certification scheme requires that peat extraction companies fulfil the requirements independently of the degree to which national legislation has implemented European legislation and independently of the quality of national, regional or local enforcement. For sites in neighbouring countries, the same standards apply as for sites in the EU.

The principles and criteria for RPP equally apply in all production countries. No country-specific criteria have been developed or will be developed. However, the certification system takes differences between countries into account, especially with respect to the application of site selection criteria. Peatlands that were close to a natural state prior to extraction (so-called class 2 areas) are generally not eligible for RPP certification. However, the certification scheme makes exceptions for countries with ample availability of natural and semi-natural peatlands.

To this version of the Principles and Criteria, requirements for the supply chain from extraction site to end product and consumer have been added (Chapter 6). The RPP Chain of Custody is a system for guaranteeing that peat in RPP certified growing media, comes from RPP certified sites. Version 2.0 includes rules for RPP labelling of end products.

This version (2.0) is the basis for decision-making to RPP certification starting from 1-3-2018 till 1-3-2020. During that time, new experiences may lead to adjustments in the next version.

It is recognised that, in the context of the 'wise use policy' for peat extraction, there are strong arguments to use peat preferably for high value-added applications, such as growing media for horticulture. The principles and criteria in this document will be used for certifying the source of peat used for professional horticulture and hobby markets only. Certification of peat for other uses is not the purpose of the certification scheme that will be developed on the basis of the Principles and Criteria.

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<sup>3</sup> European Economic Area + Switzerland

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 The overall goal

The overall goal of this document is:

To provide a set of principles, criteria and indicators that can be effectively used to certify growing media for professional horticulture and the hobby gardening market so that the market can be certain that peat used in these products is from responsibly selected and responsibly managed sites only:

- responsibly selected sites: not from sites in high conservation value peatlands;
- responsibly managed sites: well-managed during all classes of development and extraction, including after-use.

### 2.2 Chapters, principles, criteria, indicators

The Principles & Criteria document is structured on the basis of the following chapters:

1. Legality
2. Good governance
3. Site Selection
4. Site Preparation and Peat Extraction
5. After-Use and Rehabilitation
6. Chain of Custody and RPP-labelling of growing media

Apart from general principles of legality and good governance (principles 1,2), the principles follow the business cycle from site selection to after-use and the supply chain from production to end markets. Central issues such as biodiversity and climate change are not covered by separate principles but are part of the criteria for legality (1), site selection (3), peat extraction (4), after-use (5) and supply chain/labelling (6).

The principles and criteria relate to the obligations on different players in the supply chain, notably the peat extracting companies, the manufacturers of peat-based growing media and companies that market and sell these products to both professional and hobby market.

The following hierarchy is used throughout the document.

- Chapters state the core principles.
- Principles define the general objectives to be realised by responsible management throughout the peat supply chain;
- Criteria link the principles to concrete activities or decisions.
- Indicators define how compliance to the criteria should be measured by the players themselves and by the external auditors and certification bodies.

- Annexes to chapters contain instructions for processing the criteria in a way that the minimum required information is provided and criteria are applied correctly.
- Tools are service instruments that can be used in the development of (management) plans and for gaining insights. New tools will become available in time and can be found on [www.responsiblyproducedpeat.org](http://www.responsiblyproducedpeat.org).

## 2.3 Certifying production sites, products and companies

The principles, criteria and indicators are intended to certify the product: either the peat containing end product or the peat produced. Many of the criteria refer to the extraction site. Other criteria, however, refer to the company.

- RPP-certified sites: all criteria with respect to site selection, site preparation, production and after-use planning are being met.
- RPP-certified peat shall contain 100% peat from RPP-certified sites.
- RPP-registered companies: general requirements on legality, governance etc. are being met. For abandoned production sites, criteria on after-use, for which the company bears responsibility, are being met.  
Registered companies can be peat-producing companies and/or companies trading RPP-certified peat and/or companies producing RPP-labelled growing media.
- RPP-certified growing media: the peat fraction of growing media shall contain 100% RPP-certified peat in option one, and at least 50% RPP-certified peat in option two of the chain of custody.

Companies are allowed to have both certified sites and non-certified extraction sites, but under the following conditions only:

- The registered peat production company acts with respect to legality, governance, after-use obligations and abandoned extraction sites. Note that peat production companies must not have any abandoned site without a proper after-use plan. An exception is made for sites that were abandoned already before the cut-off date (see below).
- For sites operated by joint ventures, all the participating companies shall be RPP-registered or sign a due diligence declaration.
  - Certified peat exclusively comes from certified sites
  - Companies keep non-certified and certified peat as raw material administratively separated.

- The company's non-certified sites are not allowed to show any of the following problems:
  - production without a legally valid licence;
  - production from legally protected nature protection areas, unless these areas have an official, legally valid production licence;
  - major conflicts with population or government agencies regarding the particular site.
- A company is allowed to buy peat from other companies and sell mixtures of own production and externally sourced peat. The following rules apply:
  - The company has the obligation to check the legality of all externally sourced peat;
  - A company that buys peat from companies that produce illegally will not be allowed to certify any of its production sites;
  - Peat from the company's own certified sites may be mixed with externally sourced certified peat and sold as certified peat as long as the company can trace all peat back to its certified sources and show the certificates of all extraction sites involved.



## 2.4 Cut-off date: New and old sites – after-use obligations

Criteria related to the selection of new sites (Chapter 3) can only relate to sites developed after a cut-off date. The cut-off date will be set to the publication date of Version 1 of these Principles and Criteria. Version 1 is the first version approved by the board of the Foundation for Responsibly Produced Peat, defined date 01-01-2014.

Sites developed after the cut-off date, which do not comply with the criteria for site selection (Chapter 3), can never be certified in the future.

For sites, developed before the cut-off date, all criteria for production (production-related criteria in Chapter 4) and after-use (Chapter 5) shall be met. Criteria for site selection (Chapter 3) and site preparation (site preparation criteria in Chapter 4) do not apply, however:

1. Before taking undeveloped fields, within sites that were licensed before the cut-off date, in production,
  - a quick scan needs to demonstrate the presence or absence of HCVs;
  - some criteria for site selection (Chapter 3, Principle 3.3) apply for these fields in case HCVs are present.
2. For after-use and after-use planning (chapter 5), the following should be clarified:
  - If the company had agreed on an after-use plan for a producing site (developed before the cut-off date) before the cut-off date, thereby fulfilling all legal requirements at the time, this particular site is exempted from implementing the criteria in Chapter 5.
  - If there is no such after-use plan available for this producing site (developed before the cut-off date), there is an obligation to develop such an after-use plan in full compliance with Chapter 5 within 2 years from certification.
  - The same applies to sites that were abandoned after the cut-off date: If the after-use plans had been agreed before the cut-off date, there is no obligation to comply with Chapter 5. If there are no such after-use plans, new after-use plans shall be made for all closed sites where this applies, in full compliance with Chapter 5 within four years from certifying the company's first site.

The certification scheme does not contain obligations for sites abandoned before the cut-off date.

<b>After-Use Obligations Peat Company</b>		<b>site developed</b>	
		<b>before cut-off date</b>	<b>after cut-off date</b>
<b>site abandoned</b>	<b>before cut-off date**)</b>	<b>Only legal obligations</b>	<b>Not possible</b>
	<b>after cut-off date**)</b>	<b>Implementation of legally valid after- use plan agreed with authorities*)</b>	<b>Implementation of after-use plan in compliance with P&amp;C chapter 5</b>
	<b>producing</b>	<b>Legally valid after- use plan agreed with authorities*)</b>	<b>After-use plan in compliance with P&amp;C chapter 5</b>

\*) if not present: after-use plan in compliance with P&C Chapter 5.

\*\*) abandonment date = day following the day of last production.

Development and abandonment dates are defined as follows:

- Development date:  
The development date will be set to the date of the full official licence application.
- Abandonment date:  
the day after last production has taken place. This date can be the first date of the year or to be defined by the company. Production is assumed to have stopped if one of the following conditions apply:
  - all production facilities, machinery has been removed. Production is not practically possible anymore;
  - no production is taking place for at least three years, even if technical facilities could make production possible. In case of longer term, dispensation has to be granted by the Board.
  - If a part of a site is still operational and there is no legal obligation for after-use on the non-production area, the whole site is assumed to be not-abandoned.

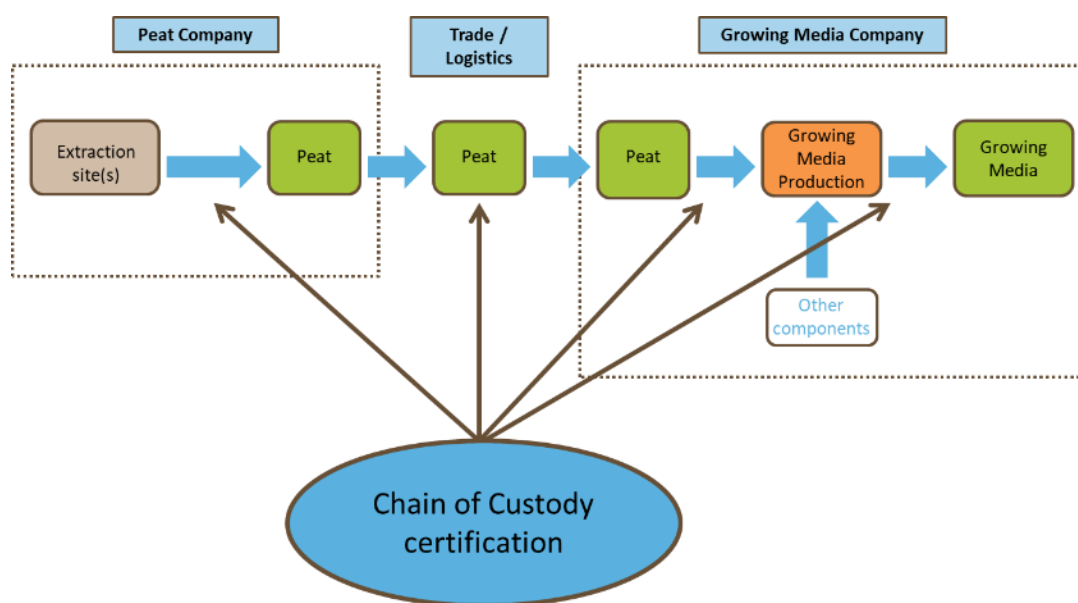
## 2.5 Chain of Custody (CoC)

Chapter 6 contains the requirements to be met for growing media certified according to RPP. If a quantity of peat-based growing media (a bag sold to the consumer, a truck load to a horticulture company, etc.) is RPP certified it tells a simple story: “A guaranteed percentage of the peat contained in this growing medium comes from RPP certified extraction sites.”

To be able to tell that story, the RPP label must assure that:

1. Peat from RPP certified sites conforms to RPP’s criteria for responsibly produced peat;
2. (A minimum percentage of the) peat in the growing media is coming from RPP certified sites only.

The first requirement is being met by RPP’s site certification system as described in Chapters 1-5. The second requirement will be met by applying RPP’s Chain of Custody certification system as defined in chapter 6: the system that assures the link between RPP-certified peat extraction sites and RPP certified growing media.



### Mass Balance

RPP’s ultimate goal is to sell growing media in which the peat fraction is 100% RPP certified: no mixing of peat from certified sites and non-certified sites at the peat company. For the time being, this is not a practical option. Mixing with non-certified peat will be required for some time to come. Because the production chain is clearly organised and controllable, it is

decided that the RPP CoC-system is based on Mass Balance. Within the Mass Balance system, RPP certified and non-certified peat can be mixed. This makes it far more feasible for companies to source RPP certified peat, process it and bring RPP certified growing media on the market. Mass balance encourages companies to make the transition towards sourcing RPP certified peat, which in turn means more recognition and acknowledgement for RPP.

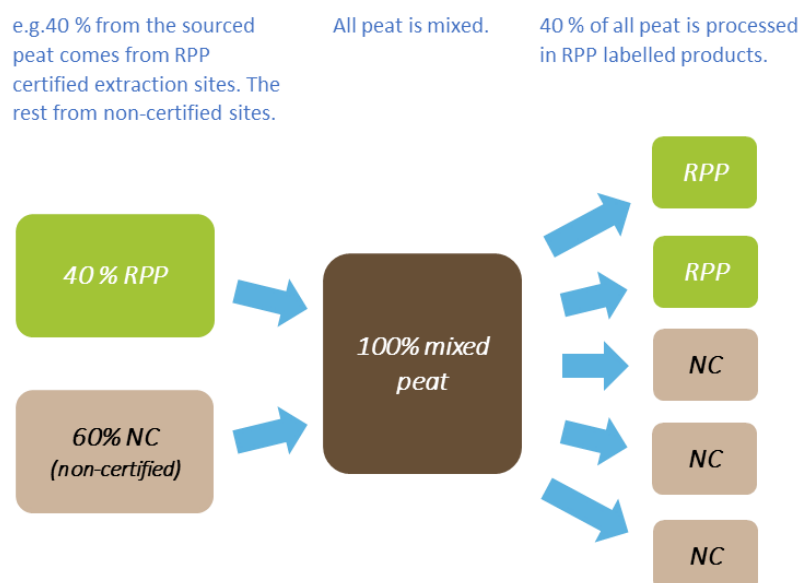
### Chain of Custody methodology

RPP recognises two different options within the 'mass balance' system for the Chain of Custody:

- Option 1** A company commits itself to the principles of RPP and supplies a part of their growing media with the RPP label, which corresponds to the volume of sourced RPP certified peat;
- Option 2** A company commits itself to the principles of RPP and supplies all their growing media with the RPP label, in combination with a time-bound plan and an agreed increase in the application of RPP-certified peat.

N.B. companies that only produce or trade peat as raw material apply option 1

#### Option 1:



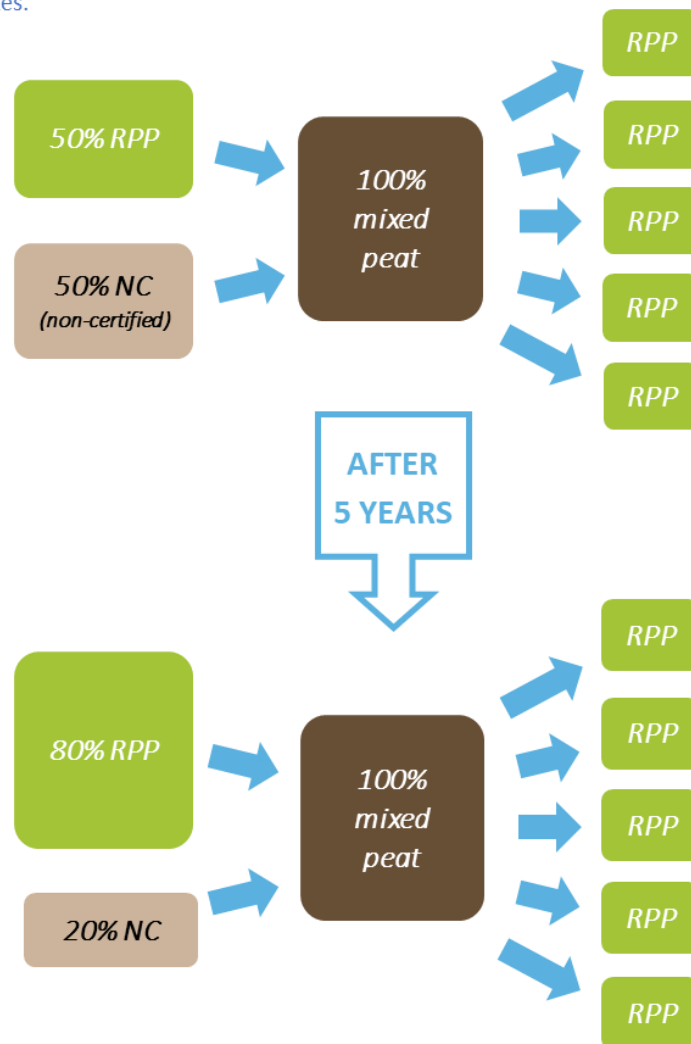
The peat in a certain growing medium does not necessarily come from RPP certified extraction sites. The system assures however, that the company has sourced RPP-certified peat, for at least the volume of peat applied in their certified growing media.

## Option 2:

Min. 50% from the sourced peat comes from RPP certified extraction sites.  
Max. 50 % from non-certified sites.

All peat is mixed.

All products have the RPP label.



The company can market all their peat containing growing media under the RPP-label. The company commits itself to sourcing a gradually higher percentage of RPP certified peat (from the total amount of peat sourced) and enters into an agreement with Foundation Responsibly Produced Peat. The agreement shall show;

- a demonstrable plan,
- be time-bounded (increase to min. 80% in max. 5 year) and
- at the starting point the company sources already a minimum of 50% of RPP certified peat.

When it appears that the company cannot comply to the agreement, the company can only apply option 1 (and enter into a new agreement with RPP in a later stage).

### General requirements and traceability for both options:

- The growing media producer sources peat from RPP registered peat companies to exclude the risk of 'illegally' extracted peat entering the supply chain through non-certified sources. For companies supplying the part of non-certified peat, RPP registration is preferred. Alternatively, an RPP due diligence declaration can be signed.
  - The manufacturer may label this growing medium as RPP certified.
  - Volumes of peat and growing media are defined in accordance with EN12580. Reliable Volume Control and Material Balance are critical to the CoC system. An inspector shall be able to check all necessary facts and figures at the company.
  - Accounting records need to be maintained and up to date figures are to be shown - at location- during an announced inspection.
- The inspector shall be informed in an accessible and transparent manner about input and output of volumes of peat and growing media, certified and non-certified.

### The peat supply chain for growing media

The peat supply chain consists of the following activities, players and responsibilities:

Activity	Player	Responsibility
Peat extraction	peat extraction company with RPP registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• document production from certified sites</li> <li>• document sales of RPP certified peat</li> <li>• apply labelling according to rules</li> </ul>
Trade in peat (as raw material)	trader with RPP registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• document sourcing and sales</li> <li>• apply labelling according to rules</li> </ul>
Growing media production	growing media company with RPP registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• document sourcing of RPP certified and non-certified peat</li> <li>• document production and sales</li> <li>• apply labelling according to rules</li> </ul>
Retail / trade to end user both hobby and professional market	retailer, trader (of packed growing media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply labelling according to rules</li> </ul>



## 2.6 Labelling and RPP-logo

### The RPP-label

Logo on the packed peat and growing media.



- Ownership of the label:  
The label is owned by Foundation RPP. The right to use the label on the packaged peat and growing media is given by RPP to a registered company on the basis of compliance with RPP Chain of Custody (chapter 6) and checking the evidence given by the company. In case of non-compliance the right to use the label will be withdrawn by RPP.
- Claims:  
For growing media, the label claims a minimum of RPP certified peat as a percentage of total peat content and the exclusion of illegal peat in the non-RPP certified peat fraction. For peat as raw material, the label claims 100% of the product comes from RPP certified sites.
- Products eligible for labelling:  
End products containing peat, with a minimum percentage of RPP certified peat as set by the actual RPP certification scheme and/or peat from RPP certified sites
- Other inputs:  
Labelling does not refer to other inputs into the end product. No guarantees are given for the acceptability/responsibility of these inputs. Manufacturer/trader may apply for other labels referring to other inputs.
- The use of the RPP on-product label:  
Conditions for the use of the RPP on-product label are defined in Annex D.

### The RPP-logo

The RPP-logo, owned by RPP, is the logo that RPP uses for communication with all stakeholders.

Only RPP registered companies and organisations can use the RPP logo as defined in Annex D.



Note: A company can use RPP certified products in their sustainability policy but the RPP logo by itself does not indicate sustainability. RPP checks on responsible peatland management as defined in the RPP-certification scheme. RPP however does not assess a company's policy on sustainability in general.

### Supporter of Responsibly Produced Peat

Organisations, including NGO's and consultants, that feel connected to RPP, are welcome to register. The "*Registration agreement RPP*" is available on the website under 'get involved'.

## 2.7 Certification procedure for SITES

The “*Application form RPP certification*” is available on the website under [“Get involved”](#).

The certification process for obtaining the Responsibly Produced Peat Certificate for a particular production site and for the peat produced from that site consists of the following chronological steps:

1. Application for Certification:  
The company that wants to obtain the Responsibly Produced Peat Certificate applies for certification of
  - a. the legality of its activities and the good governance of its organisation (as required in Chapter 1 and 2 of the Principles and Criteria);
  - b. compliance to all criteria that the Certification Scheme has defined for producing sites, for the site(s) the company wants to have certified;
  - c. compliance to the criteria on after-use planning and execution of abandoned sites as set out in the Principles and Criteria
2. Inspection is performed on site (i.e. at both the company office(s) and the relevant production sites) on the basis of a check-list provided by the Foundation. The completed check-list is sent to the Foundation’s Committee of Experts (CoE). The inspection can only be performed by an inspector approved by the CoE of the Foundation.
3. The application form and inspection report are reviewed by the CoE. On the basis of the information received from the inspector, the CoE decides whether the company will receive the certificate for the site(s) under consideration. On the basis of the rules set by the Principles and Criteria, certain issues of non-conformity may be temporarily accepted by the CoE who, in that case, will set a date before which full compliance shall be realised.
4. The CoE will publish its intended decision on the website (click for link: [“Companies in process of RPP-certification”](#)) for an objection period of 6 weeks where after the Committee will issue a binding advice to the Board, on granting the certificate. The RPP secretariat actively informs interested parties in country or region (list of interested parties is developed continuously and relevant interest groups are welcomed to provide their contacts).

In case of objections, the CoE will judge the objections and respond to the complainant. If the complainant is not in agreement with the response of the CoE, the complainant can bring the issue to the attention of the Board of the Foundation. The Board presents the issue to the Complaints Panel. See procedure below.



5. The certificate is issued for an indefinite period. The certificate exists of a digital document, the relevant data regarding the certificate are published on the RPP-website. After initial certification, the following procedures will be followed:
  - a. A yearly up-date by means of a self-declaration of the company regarding legality and governance;
  - b. A 5-yearly inspection of certified production sites and other obligations; Unless otherwise agreed, e.g. due to agreements with CoE regarding the after-use plan or other measurements to be taken before full compliance is achieved.
  - c. At the end of the production- and start of after-use phase, the company will supply periodical information to the Foundation on results of implementing the after-use. The progress in the fulfilment of the after-use plan will be published on the website of Responsibly Produced Peat (public accountability).
  
6. Above data and information are documented as follows:
 

<u>Public:</u> (to be found on RPP website)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Company information (click for link <a href="#">"Companies producing certified peat"</a>)</li> <li>– Certified sites (click for link <a href="#">"Issued RPP certificates"</a>)</li> <li>– Communication execution of after-use (will be announced on <a href="#">news page</a> of the website)</li> <li>– Complaints and decisions (will be announced on <a href="#">news page</a> of the website)</li> </ul>
<u>Non-public:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Other (non-certified) sites</li> <li>– Inspection reports</li> <li>– Complaint reports</li> </ul>

Non-public data will be exclusively available for the company in concern and for evaluation and improvement of the certification scheme. Aggregated data are at the disposal of the Foundation. Access and maintenance of the database are granted by the board to the secretariat of the Foundation.
  
7. Fees for Certification are published on the website ["Certification fees Responsibly Produced Peat"](#))

## 2.8 Registration procedure for the CHAIN OF CUSTODY

The “*Registration agreement RPP*” is available on the website under ‘[Get involved](#)’.

The Chain of Custody registration process has two different aspects:

- A. checking the accounting systems needed for conforming to the RPP requirements on the Chain of Custody and mass balance system.
- B. checking whether these systems are properly being implemented in practice.

re A.: Chain of Custody registration: Approving the company’s procedures

1. Company registers for RPP, if not already registered, which means the company endorses the basic principles of Responsibly Produced Peat.
2. Company signs an agreement, based on a time-bound plan for increased sourcing of RPP certified peat, when choosing option 2 of the mass balance system
3. Company sends information on administrative procedures to assure mass balance in conformity with the RPP requirements.
4. Inspector verifies information given by company.
5. RPP provides company with the RPP-label.
6. Fees for certification and the use of the label Responsibly Produced Peat will be published on the website. Key aspects are that all registered companies pay a yearly contribution and this amount will be offset against other costs for RPP (e.g. for companies with certified sites)

re B.: Auditing procedure of individual companies:

1. RPP makes an appointment for a visit to the RPP registered company;
2. The company makes all data, needed for checking conformity to RPP rules on mass balance available to the inspector;
3. The inspector discusses his/her findings with the company;
4. The inspector sends an audit report to RPP.
5. If there are no serious issues, the process stops here.
6. If there are issues, RPP looks for solutions in cooperation with the company audited.

For the period of 2018 to 2020, inspection will be executed by the secretariat to stay closely involved in the development, functionality and reliability of the Chain of Custody. Production figures and data will be processed confidentially.

## 2.9 Compliance, non-compliance, time for correction

For RPP certification all criteria of the RPP certification scheme must be met. During the process of certification, it may occur that some criteria are not met sufficiently. Some criteria will need immediate compliance and others can be given more time. In the communication during the certification process the following terms are used:

- Major non-compliance:** A criterion needs immediate compliance otherwise a certificate cannot be granted.
- Minor non-compliance:** A criterion can be met within a determined period of time, without having a significant impact on responsible peat production during that time. A certificate can still be issued under the condition that the criterion will be met within the timeframe set by the RPP-Board.
- Remark:** A remark shows a specific area that may need attention of the company in order to stay in line with the RPP mind set. This has no further consequences and a certificate can still be issued. However, in the future additional criteria could be developed in this area.

## 2.10 Relationship between RPP certification and (national) law

The RPP certification system requires that peat producing companies respect all applicable local, national and international law and regulations. The relationship between the certification requirements and national law is as follows:

- in cases where the law is more demanding than RPP, the law shall be followed;
- in cases where RPP requirements are more demanding than the law, RPP shall be followed;
- in cases where RPP requirements are against the law, the law shall be followed and not RPP;
- RPP requires that the law is obeyed, also in cases where state authorities do not check compliance;
- a company or location can be withdrawn from RPP certification in case any of the licenses given to a company is withdrawn by government or court.

## 2.11 RPP-organisation and process

### Organisation scheme

The Foundation Responsibly Produced Peat (RPP) is the owner of the certification system. The Foundation's objective is to develop and administer a certification scheme for the re-

sponsible and transparent production of peat resources, and, based on that scheme, to stimulate and facilitate certification of companies, and to do everything that is related therewith or that may be conducive thereto.

The Foundation endeavours to realise its objective by:

- actively involving anyone who has an interest in the development and the application of the certification scheme, including the development and application of a label for products based on peat certified by the scheme;
- continuously developing and improving the certification scheme;
- actively promoting the certification scheme and the label Responsibly Produced Peat among the target-groups.

The foundation organises its activities as follows:

Organisational Body	Members	Tasks
Board of the Foundation	6 members 2 x growing media sector 2 x peat companies 2 x environmental NGO/ science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- appoints board her members</li> <li>- appoints the Committee of Experts</li> <li>- appoints the Complaints Panel</li> <li>- decides on Principles, Criteria and Indicators for certification</li> </ul>
Committee of Experts	5 members with expertise on peat-production, growing media, legislation, certification, environmental aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- issues check-list (for inspection)</li> <li>- issues a binding advice on certification to the board</li> </ul>
Inspection <i>Outsourced to an independent certification body</i>	Independent experts to check information independently, objectively and with required knowledge of the working field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- performs inspections for certification</li> <li>- reports to the Committee of Experts</li> </ul>
Complaints Panel	3 independent experts nominated by the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gives binding advice to the Board in case of complaints about certification issues that cannot be solved through direct communication with the Committee of Experts</li> </ul>
Secretariat	Executive officer(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- responsible for maintaining all documentation</li> </ul>

## 2.12 Sanction policy

### Introduction

#### *RPP objective and registration*

Companies with RPP-certified locations and/or companies that are part of the RPP Chain of Custody must comply with the requirements of the current version of the Scheme 'Responsibly Produced Peat'. Joining Foundation RPP is done by means of the RPP registration form. Companies and individuals who actively support the objective of RPP are also invited to register. By signing the registration form, the signatory declares to endorse the objectives of RPP and comply with requirements regarding certification and the use of the RPP-logo and -label. The company complies strictly with financial obligations that are associated with RPP certification and registration.

#### *Active communication about RPP*

The Board of RPP encourages registered companies and individuals to actively communicate about RPP. Important tools are the RPP website and the logo.

#### *It is essential to keep RPP credible and reliable*

If a company cannot (or no longer) meet the requirements of certification of one (or more) location(s), the right to use the RPP logo, in relation to the location(s) concerned, will lapse. In the event that a company with certified locations and/or certified products acts contrary to the standards of RPP, the Board may take measures that are in accordance with the severity of the offence and the company's history. It can be decided to give a formal warning, to place the company under strict supervision, to suspend or withdraw the use of the RPP logo and/or label.

- Foundation RPP informs the company in writing about its decision on the measure taken.
- The costs of (re-)inspections imposed by Foundation RPP or the stricter supervision measures imposed by the board, are charged to the company. If the measure involves additional research, the associated costs will be charged to the company.
- Upon withdrawal or suspension of certification or a registration-agreement, the company must return the certificate or registration agreement to Foundation RPP without delay. The company removes the RPP publication and statements related to the certificate.

#### Measures in case of non-conformities and violations

##### Article 1      **Suspension of certification and/or the registration agreement**

##### 1. Certification can be suspended by Foundation RPP in the following cases:

- serious shortcomings identified during the inspections;

- failure to take corrective measures within three months after written notification on identified shortcomings which were not in themselves a reason for suspension;
  - changes made by the company, which require further investigation by Foundation RPP.
2. During a period of suspension of the certification, the agreement between Foundation RPP and the company remains in force.
  3. During a period of suspension of the certification, the company may not use the certificate. Nor may the company give the impression that she still has the right to use the certificate.
  4. A certification will be suspended for a maximum period of 12 months. In case of suspension, the company itself must inform Foundation RPP timely that it has corrected the deviation. Foundation RPP will then carry out a re-inspection -on location- for verification. If the deviation is not lifted within the 12-month period, the relevant certification will be withdrawn.

## Article 2      **Withdrawal of the certification and/or the registration agreement**

1. A certification can be withdrawn by Foundation RPP with immediate effect in the following cases:
  - Very serious shortcomings, established during an inspection or investigation;
  - failure to take corrective measures during a period of suspension;
  - the company has acted in serious contradiction with one or more of its obligations, including financial obligations;
  - the company has seriously damaged the interests of Foundation RPP.
2. In other cases than those mentioned above, the certification can be terminated with due observance of a term of at least three full calendar months. Termination must be communicated by registered letter to the other party, stating the date of termination. In the event of termination by Foundation RPP, the reason for cancellation will be indicated.
3. As from the date of termination of the certification, the company may not use the certificate and the RPP-Logo and/or label that results from this. Nor may the company give the impression that it she would still have the right to use the certificate and the certification mark.
4. Termination of the certification is without prejudice to the financial obligations of the company towards Foundation RPP.

5. Upon termination of the certification, the registration agreement concluded with the company will expire and the company will be deregistered.
6. Up to and including nine months after termination of the certification agreement, the company is obliged to provide all information to Foundation RPP that is necessary for the settlement of its (contractual) obligations.

## Complaints and objection

### Article 3 **Complaints from third parties**

1. Foundation RPP applies a complaints procedure after a received complaint by a third party.
2. If a complaint proves to be justified, this may be a reason for Foundation RPP to consult with the company about measures for improvement or to take a measure.

### Article 4 **Complaints about Foundation RPP**

1. When Foundation RPP receives a complaint about its own performance, it is handled by an authorized RPP representative who was not involved in the performance that gave rise to the complaint.
2. The complaint must be dealt with within a period of six weeks after registration of receipt of the complaint.

### Article 5 **Objection against a decision**

1. Objections may be submitted to Foundation RPP, against a decision of Foundation RPP, by interested parties within a period of six weeks after the date of publication. The board of Foundation RPP will deal with this objection.
2. Making an objection shall not affect the decision or the measure of Foundation RPP, unless otherwise provided by or pursuant to a legal requirement, until a decision has been made in this regard.

### Article 6 **Liability**

1. Foundation RPP is liable towards the company for shortcomings in the performance of its work, insofar these are the result of the non-observance by Foundation RPP of the care, expertise and workmanship on which the work may be expected. The liability for the damage caused by the shortcomings is limited to the amount of three times the total of the contributions owed by the company in the year in which the claim to the damage is submitted to Foundation RPP.

2. Any claims by the company must be submitted within three months of the occurrence of the damage, failing which the company has lost its rights.
3. Changes to these regulations take effect after approval by the board of Foundation RPP.
4. In all cases not covered by these regulations, the board of Foundation RPP decides.

#### Article 7 **Transitional and final provisions**

1. These regulations can be cited under the name Foundation RPP - Sanction Policy.
2. Amendments to these regulations will only come into effect after approval by the board of Foundation RPP.
3. The board of Foundation RPP is authorized to withdraw these regulations at any time.
4. In all cases in which these Regulations do not provide or are unclear, the Board of Foundation RPP decides.

### 2.13 Complaints procedure

The RPP certification system makes it possible to file a complaint about decisions on certification. Complainants will be informed by the secretariat within 6 weeks.

Foundation Responsibly Produced Peat distinguishes two situations where different procedures are being applied, one during the certification procedure and one after the final Board decision on certification.

#### 1. Complaints about intended advice for certification

- a. During 6 weeks the intended decision for certification by the committee of experts to the Board is available for information and comment by relevant stakeholders. Comments will be sent to the secretariat.
- b. The comments will be communicated to the committee of experts, the company and other parties involved.
- c. The committee of experts sets a timeframe for communication.
- d. All communication is co-ordinated by the secretariat.
- e. Solutions will be sent and evaluated by the committee of experts and a new advice to the Board will be prepared. In some cases, additional inspection can be part of the procedure.
- f. When the situation cannot be solved, the complaint will be presented to the Board for decision. Appointment of a complaint panel can be part of the procedure (see below).



## 2. Complaints about decisions on certification.

The complaints may concern positive decisions (the complainant questions the certificate that, in his/her opinion has been granted on the basis of wrong data or wrong decisions) or negative decisions on certification (the complainant does not agree that the certificate was refused).

- a. For dealing with such complaints, the RPP board appoints a complaints panel of at least three persons.
- b. The complaint panel decides whether the complaint is supported by sufficient evidence to be handled by the panel.
- c. If the panel judges that the complaint should be investigated, it collects all necessary information and hears the complainant and other relevant parties. It may ask for more information from the complainant or others.
- d. The panel's advice to the RPP board is binding.

Complainants may be parties directly involved in peat production and trade (including the RPP certificate holders) or external stakeholders that represent relevant interests, including interests of the affected population, interests related to nature protection/biodiversity/climate.

### 3. Principles and Criteria

#### Chapter 1: Legality

Compliance with Law and Regulations		
The criteria apply to the company, not to single sites only.		
Principle 1.1: RPP registered companies shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations of the country in which the operations occur and with relevant international laws and agreements.		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
1.1.1 Peat producing companies shall be able to prove that they have all the applicable licenses, permits and conform to all other legal requirements for producing peat at all their production sites, including non-certified sites, and including abandoned sites for which they bear legal responsibility.	Companies present a full list of planned production sites, production sites and abandoned sites for which they bear responsibility.  Companies present licences to the certifying body.	European regulation always applies, irrespective of its implementation in national law.
1.1.2 Peat producing companies shall have access to all technical and legal knowledge necessary to guarantee awareness of their legal obligations.	Companies show how responsibilities for legal issues are effectively implemented in their structure or effectively outsourced to external organisations.	
<i>Specific details on legal compliance are in the chapters 3, 4, and 5</i>		

Securing the Certification System's Reputation		
Principle 1.2: Companies that damage the reputation of the certification system by unlawful behaviour are excluded from certification and will lose all RPP certificates obtained.		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
1.2.1 Companies must not produce from any site without legal permits.	Companies shall produce evidence that legal permits are available for all sites, including their non-certified sites.	
1.2.2 Companies must not source from any other company that is producing illegally	Companies shall produce evidence that the companies they source from are producing legally.	
1.2.3 Companies must not create joint ventures with companies that behave illegally or that source from companies that produce illegally.	Companies shall produce evidence that the companies in their joint ventures do not produce illegally or source from illegal production.	
1.2.4 Companies must not be involved in any corruption case or any case of human rights violation.	Companies shall produce evidence that they and their business partners (joint ventures, peat suppliers) are not involved in such cases.	

## Chapter 2: Good governance

The principles and criteria apply to the company, not to single sites only.

This chapter will eventually be merged into the chapter on Principle 1. To avoid confusion about chapter numbering, this change has not been made yet.

Transparency about Peat Operations		
Principle 2.1: Peat extracting companies shall be transparent about their operations		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
<i>The principle has been implemented by criteria in the specific chapters on site selection and after-use</i>	none	
Stakeholder Dialogue		
Principle 2.2: Peat producing companies shall organise stakeholder dialogue and stakeholder participation properly		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
<i>The principle has been implemented by criteria in the specific chapters on site selection and after-use</i>	none	

## Chapter 3: Site selection

Site selection criteria apply to sites, or extensions of sites, selected after the cut-off date.

Principle 3.3 also applies for sites licenced before the cut-off date with undeveloped areas, intended for extraction.

<b>Compliance with Legislation and Regulation</b> applies to sites (or extensions) selected after the cut-off date		
Principle 3.1: Site selection shall be in full compliance with government legislation and regulations on all levels		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
3.1.1 Selection of sites shall be in full compliance with all relevant <u>EU directives</u> including EIA Directive, Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, IPPC Directive and Water Framework Directive.	<p>For each development of a new site or an extension of an existing site, the company shall perform an EIA pre-assessment (German: 'Vorprüfung')</p> <p>The company shall perform a full EIA in two cases only:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if there is a legal obligation to do so;</li> <li>2. if the pre-assessment leads to this obligation, on the basis of the classification tool (Annex A).</li> </ol>	<p>N.B. The RPP-obligation regarding a pre-assessment is valid for all sites, not depending on size or national laws.</p> <p>The EIA obligation is not based on the size of the site or site extension, only on the results of the pre-assessment.</p>

<p>3.1.2 Selection of sites shall be in full compliance with all local, <u>national regional and ratified international laws and regulations</u>.</p>	<p>The company presents its licence and related documentation to the certifier.</p> <p>There are two options for compliance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Either: the company makes plausible that all relevant legislation and regulation is effectively covered by the licence obtained, and effectively enforced by the authorities;</li> <li>2. Or: the company gives clear evidence that it effectively takes into account also those elements that are not well included in the licence and/or not properly enforced by the authorities.</li> </ol> <p>An English summary shall be part of the documentation provided.</p>	
<p>3.1.3 <u>Sites outside the EU</u> shall be proven to comply with EU directives or equivalent national and regional legislation, including obligations on Impact Assessment.</p>	<p>For sites that require an impact assessment on the basis of Annex A, companies shall provide an impact assessment with the same information for sites outside the EU. Where national or regional legislation is weaker than EU law, conformity to EU law shall be proven.</p>	

<b>Stakeholder Consultation</b> only applies to sites (or extensions) selected after the cut-off date		
Principle 3.2: Sites may only be selected after Consultation with Local and Regional Stakeholders		
3.2.1 <u>Full Prior Informed Consultation</u> with relevant local / regional stakeholders shall take place before developing any extraction site.	<p>Before obtaining the extraction licence, the company shall provide full information (a) on the local and regional stakeholders potentially affected by the peat extraction planned on the site, (b) on the consultation processes followed before developing the site. The peat extraction company shall document (i) how the consultation process was or was not linked with the licensing process, (ii) that the plan for peat extraction was publicly and timely announced to the relevant stakeholder groups, (iii) the consultation process, including meetings held, (iv) the way the company dealt with the inputs from the consultation process.</p> <p>This obligation is limited to new sites and larger extensions (larger than 10 ha).</p>	

### Minimising Negative Effects on Biodiversity and Other Values

applies to sites (or extensions) selected after the cut-off date and for sites licenced before the cut-off date with undeveloped areas, intended for extraction

Principle 3.3: Areas where peat extraction will affect peatland with high conservation value shall not be selected.

RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
3.3.1 Peatland of high conservation value shall not be selected for peat extraction.	<p>Using the methodology outlined in Annex A, the company demonstrates that one of the following conditions apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the peatland is classified as “class 4”;</li> <li>2. the peatland is classified as “class 3” and none of the specific situations as formulated in box 3.3 of Annex A apply;</li> <li>3. the peatland is classified as “class 2” and special exceptions, as formulated in box 3.2 of Annex A, apply that make extraction from this class 2 peatland eligible for certification.</li> </ol>	N.B. Peatlands that conform these indicators are eligible for certification. However, if other criteria mentioned elsewhere in this document have not been met, certification will not be possible.



<p>3.3.2 Sites on which peat extraction will affect the hydrology and/or biodiversity of adjacent sites with high conservation value sites shall not be selected.</p>	<p>The company provides objective evidence demonstrating that the envisaged peat extraction operations will not seriously harm high conservation values of global, regional or local importance in adjacent areas.</p> <p>If an EIA is required (see Annex A), this evidence will be part of it.</p>	<p>Serious harm: the committee who performs the EIA or pre-assessment also defines the level of harm. Procedures for objection may apply to the defined level of harm.</p>
<p><b>Preference for Degraded Areas</b> applies to sites selected after the cut-off date only</p>		
<p>Principle 3.4: Drained and degraded peatlands shall be prioritised for peat extraction.</p>		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
<p>3.4.1 Peat producing companies shall select sites for which eco system services after peat extraction show an improvement or remain at least equal in comparison to the situation before extraction.</p>	<p>If there are suitable extraction sites available, classified as “class 4” (see Annex A), these will be prioritised above “class 3” and “class 2” sites.</p>	<p>Reference to Annex B. Further guidance will be developed.</p>

## Chapter 4: Site preparation and peat extraction

<b>Impact Assessment and Planning</b> this applies to all sites before and after cut-off-date (site preparation requirements also apply to sites from before the cut-off-date where parts of the site still need to be prepared)		
Principle 4.1: Site preparation, Extraction / Production shall follow a detailed planning based on a systematic impact assessment.		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
<p>4.1.1 An assessment of all potential impacts on-site and off-site shall be prepared in accordance with Annex C.</p> <p>In case of sites licensed <b>before the cut-off-date</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of potential <u>off-site impacts</u> in area shall be prepared in accordance with Annex C.</li> <li>A quick scan shall be performed for undeveloped areas within licensed area to determine absence or presence of HCVs</li> <li>Criterion 3.3 of chapter 3 and Annex A shall be applied for licensed but undeveloped areas when HCVs are present.</li> </ul>	A document reporting the outcomes of the assessment shall be made available to the certifying body.	<p>A <u>guiding document</u> on contents and format is present (Annex C).</p> <p>The level of detail in requirements with regard to sites from before or after cut-off-date is defined in Annex C.</p> <p>The fact that an area is already licensed, does not change the obligation of the company to assess its impact on-site and off-site to ensure that these impacts are mitigated properly.</p>

4.1.2 In relation to the impact assessment mitigation plan and monitoring plan is to be developed	Availability of - mitigation plan - monitoring plan	<p><u>Guiding instructions</u> on contents and format are present in Annex C</p> <p>The mitigation plan shall comply with the mitigation hierarchy defined in Annex C.</p> <p>A toolbox of mitigation measures will be available at the RPP-website</p>
<b>Site Management</b> applies to all sites		
Principle 4.2: Site management (including site preparation, extraction and production) shall minimise negative effects on biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions and hydrology on-site and off-site.		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
4.2.1 Site preparation, peat extraction and production shall be based on a detailed management plan, including the mitigation and monitoring plan, and taking into account the requirements for after-use and after-use preparation.	Management plan including reporting of monitoring	After-use: See the chapter on after-use

<b>Impacts of Operations</b> (applies to all sites, old and new)		
Principle 4.3: Negative environmental impacts of operations (peat extraction and production) shall be minimised.		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
4.3 Negative environmental impacts of operations shall be monitored and minimised	<p>The company shall implement a monitoring plan and present the result to the certification body, including following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective handling and storage procedures to prevent spillage of fuel, oil or other soil contaminants shall be in place.</li> <li>• Effective procedures for controlling and reducing waste generation and waste disposal shall be in place.</li> <li>• Effective measures for preventing negative off-site impacts (including air pollution, impacts on water quality by run-off, flooding) shall be in place.</li> <li>• Effective precautionary measures according to site-specific circumstances shall be in place when operations are close to high conservation value peatlands.</li> </ul>	<p>Specific remark: self-heating and burning peat will cause unwanted emissions.</p> <p>In general: the aspects mentioned in the indicators all have their individual impact on environment and therefore should be managed. This is likely already part of the licence or permit.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncontrolled emissions shall be prevented by applying storage methods that minimise self-heating of peat in stockpiles.</li> <li>• Measures shall be taken to minimise negative effects on cultural values.</li> </ul>	
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## Chapter 5: After-use and rehabilitation

See the remarks in the introduction.

To sites developed after the cut-off date, all criteria on after-use apply. For sites developed before the cut-off date, a legally valid after-use plan agreed with the authorities may replace the requirements of this chapter. For sites abandoned before the cut-off date, there are no obligations in this certification scheme.

After-Use Plans		
Principle 5.1: After-use plans shall be present during all stages of site selection, licensing, site preparation and extraction.		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
5.1.1 There shall be clear operational plans for after-use	<p>The company shall present detailed after-use plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete list of extraction sites, maps of sites + after-use plans</li> <li>- Clear operational plans for after-use, including;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identified requirements for after use</li> <li>○ Identified responsibilities for after-use execution</li> <li>○ Identified responsibilities for after-use monitoring.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>This applies to all its extraction sites (certified and non-certified), including sites under the company's responsibility that are no longer producing.</p>	One of the core principles of RPP is that there will always be an (intended) after-use (plan). If there are reasons for a change in plans, the company should follow the procedure for defining an after-use plan, including stakeholder consultation.

<p>5.1.2 Effective execution of the after-use plan shall be secured during all stages of site selection and peat extraction</p>	<p>The peat company shall present information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expected future ownership</li> <li>- Planned budget</li> <li>- Financing plan describing arrangements for securing finance for after-use development, implementation and monitoring</li> <li>- After-use development plan, including roles of the extraction company and expected role of future owner in after-use development, management and monitoring</li> </ul>	<p>The certified company remains responsible for the after-use obligations, whether it concerns the original plan or an adjusted plan.</p> <p>Consider the following aspects for the after-use development plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After-use design</li> <li>○ Review of possible implications of planned after-use for (adjusted) implementation of the peat extraction</li> <li>○ Relation to surrounding areas, e.g. HCV areas, drainage patterns, land-use outside of the control of the operator</li> <li>○ After-use management &amp; monitoring plan.</li> </ul>
<p>5.1.3 The company shall effectively manage the execution of after-use plans.</p>	<p>The peat company shall make sure that the execution of after-use plans is carefully monitored and that the results are made available to the certifying body.</p>	<p>.</p>

Proper Consultation about After-Use		
Principle 5.2: After-use plans shall be made in consultation with relevant government agencies, regional and local stakeholders.		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
5.2.1 After-use plans shall be prepared in close cooperation and agreement with all <i>relevant</i> public authorities, including local and regional governments and government agencies.	The company shall present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of relevant authorities</li> <li>- Meeting reports with these authorities</li> <li>- Endorsement letters or agreements from relevant government agencies for planned after-use.</li> </ul>	The company may define relevant stakeholders by performing a stakeholder-analysis.
5.2.2 After-use plans shall be prepared in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including communities near the extraction site and NGOs	The company shall present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comprehensive list of all relevant stakeholders</li> <li>- Proof that all relevant stakeholders have been timely invited for consultations</li> <li>- Minutes of consultation meetings</li> <li>- Final advise from key stakeholder groups for after use plan.</li> </ul> The company shall show that relevant information was communicated in an understandable format and in the language(s) understood by relevant stakeholders.	



Choosing the appropriate after-use destination		
Principle 5.3: After-use plans shall aim at returning the abandoned extraction site as close as possible and practically feasible to its original natural conditions		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
5.3.1 Cutover peatlands shall be rewetted with the objective target of future mire development, if this is possible and practically feasible, unless this is not desirable for reasons of biodiversity and hydrology.	<p>For each extraction site to be certified, the company shall provide an after-use plan in which the after-use destination presents a higher value than the situation before extraction according to the methodology given in Annex B, unless this is not feasible for one of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no technical options available</li> <li>• prohibitive costs</li> <li>• against legal requirements, including contractual obligations</li> </ul>	<p>Annex B is a mandatory tool to determine the after-use.</p> <p>The after-use planning needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>involve consideration with the wider landscape;</li> <li>taking account the socio-economic, biodiversity and hydrological aspects.</li> </ul> <p>It needs to consider stakeholder views regarding the optimal after-use; evaluating pros and cons of different after-use options</p>

## Chapter 6: Chain of Custody and RPP-labelling of growing media

Trade in RPP Certified Peat		
Principle 6.1: RPP-certified peat shall originate from RPP-certified extraction sites.		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
6.1.1 Peat sold as RPP-certified shall come from RPP certified sites only.		
6.1.2 Mixing of RPP-certified peat from different sources is allowed. Mixing of RPP-certified peat with non-certified peat is allowed, this however has no influence on the original volume of certified peat. The non-certified peat shall come from site(s) of peat producing companies that are RPP registered or companies that sign a Due Diligence declaration for the RPP Chain of Custody.		volume EN12580

6.1.3 Trading in RPP-certified peat may only be performed by a registered company		
6.1.4 The peat producing and/or trading company shall collect and store all information needed to track production, blending, trade and transport of RPP certified peat.		
6.1.5 The company shall assign responsibilities in its organisation to make sure that tasks described in 6.1.1-6.1.4 can be performed effectively.		
<b>Production of RPP-certified Growing Media</b>		
Principle 6.2: Peat used for production of RPP-certified Growing Media must be RPP-certified		
<b>RP Criterion</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
6.2.1 The growing media company shall be a RPP-registered company		
6.2.2 The growing media company shall source all peat used in the production of RPP-certified growing media (including non-certified peat if needed) from RPP- registered companies or companies that apply a Due Diligence System for the RPP Chain of Custody		

<p>6.2.3 The Chain of Custody methodology is based on a system of Mass Balance. Within the Mass Balance system, RPP certified and non-certified peat don't have to be kept separate. The administrative system of the company shall ensure that volumes of certified peat can be proven at all times.</p>		
<p>6.2.3.1 Mass Balance Option 1: The growing media company supplies a part of their Growing Media with RPP-certification this part corresponds with the volume of sourced RPP-certified peat.</p>		
<p>6.2.3.2 Mass Balance option 2: The growing media company supplies all their Growing Media with RPP-certification, in combination with a time-bound plan.</p>	<p>This plan shall contain the following starting-points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the peat-content in the company's volume of growing media exist for at least 50% of RPP-certified peat and gradually increases to at least 80% in max. five years;</li> <li>- the plan is basis for an agreement with the RPP-Board;</li> <li>- the agreement includes annual reporting of progress.</li> </ul>	

Use of the on-product RPP-Label for Peat and Growing Media		
Principle 6.3: the use of the RPP-label for Peat and Growing Media shall meet the requirements of the RPP Registration Agreement		
RP Criterion	Indicators	Remarks
6.3.1 In order to use the RPP trademarks (logo and/or on-product RPP-label), the company shall have signed the RPP Registration Agreement.		
6.3.2 A RPP-registered company can apply the RPP-label on packed peat and growing media, under application of the specified labelling requirements	A company shall use the RPP-label with the company-specific registration number	The requirements for RPP-labelling are stated in Annex D

## ANNEX A: Classification tool for site selection (Annex to chapter 3)

### Site selection

When selecting a new site for peat production, the company has to classify the site on the basis of this simple classification tool. Depending on the outcomes, the site will be eligible for certification or not. Class 1 sites can never be certified and class 4 sites will always be open to RPP certification. Generally, class 3 sites may be certified and class 2 sites may not, but there are exceptions. Open to certification does not mean 'certified'. More criteria have to be fulfilled than only the criteria shown below.

This classification tool can be used for both smaller and larger sites. Larger sites may contain different elements that correspond to different classes. However, only the site as a whole will be classified, depending on percentages of the area that correspond to different classes.

		yes	no	indicators
<b>Class 1</b> <b>RPP</b> <b>not available</b>	natural situation	X		Bog ecosystem functions intact
		X		Acrotelm intact
		X		Hydrology intact (no artificial drainage)
		X		Vegetation intact
		-		Regeneration possible
		X		Important for special species
<b>Class 2</b> Generally, not open to RPP cert. <b>see Box 3.2</b>	limited degradation	mostly		Bog ecosystem functions intact
		mostly		Acrotelm intact
		mostly		Hydrology intact (no artificial drainage)
		mostly		Vegetation intact
		X		Regeneration possible
		X	(X)	Important for special species (s. box 3.2)
<b>Class 3</b> <b>RPP optional</b> <b>see Box 3.3</b>	strong degraded, partially under agricultural/forestry use		some	Bog ecosystem functions intact
			some	Acrotelm intact
			some	Hydrology intact (no artificial drainage)
			some	Vegetation intact
			X *	Regeneration possible
		(X)	X	Important for special species (s. box 3.3)
<b>Class 4</b> <b>RPP recommended</b>	fully under agricultural/forestry use or very strong degraded		hardly	Bog ecosystem functions intact
			hardly	Acrotelm intact
			X	Hydrology intact (no artificial drainage)
			X	Vegetation intact
			X	Regeneration possible
			X	Important for special species

## Clarifications:

### *Class 1:*

Peatlands under class 1 are of high value for ecosystem services such as biodiversity, carbon sink, water retention and supply, amenity functions etc. These areas therefore cannot be certified under the RPP scheme.

The typical situation for a site of class 1 is a completely conserved bog with a naturally functioning hydrological system. There are no human activities or impacts to the entire site apart from usual diffuse emissions of nutrients or the general influence of climate change.

### *Class 2: not eligible for RPP certification, unless...*

A peatland area in this class still has significant conservation values. Parts of the area have already been affected either by on-site activities such as linear drainage impacts, neighbouring excavation activities or by impacts from intensive land-use in adjacent areas.

Options for hydrological restoration and rewetting of the peatland that lead to restoration of full bog eco-hydrological processes are generally possible if drainage infrastructure can be stopped and reversed (on site) or isolated (off-site). In general, these areas will not be eligible for certification under the RPP scheme, and priority should be given to restoration.

However, under certain conditions and provided that national inventories or plans allow excavation in a class 2 area, there may be an exception to the general rule, based on a single case decision on the basis of the decision tree in box 3.2. Please note, that a positive decision to make a class 2 area eligible for certification does not automatically grant the certificate. There may be other requirements in the certification system that are still not being met.

### Box 3.2: Decision tree for areas in class 2

- 1 Is the area a part of a peat bog in which peat extraction already takes place or which is otherwise being affected by other relevant impacts

**\*Yes:** continue to 2

**\*\*No:** extraction cannot be certified

*\*These are moderately degenerated part areas for which re-wetting and peatland regeneration will eventually not be successful because of the negative influence from adjacent areas (large scale peat extraction, lowering of water levels, etc.)*

*\*\*These are closed peatland complexes, which have been only moderately affected and which can be re-wetted and regenerated by relatively simple measures.*

- 2 Are there other areas with an equal or better ecological quality available in the particular peat bog or in the peat region (within the context of the bio-geographical region)?

**Yes:** continue to 3

**No:** certification not possible

- 3 Does the area function as a habitat for strongly protected species?

**Yes:** not possible without an EIA necessary

**No:** continue to 4

- 4 Which significance does the area have for the area-specific fauna and flora? Does the area represent irreplaceable donor potentials for regeneration in the larger peatland area?

**Yes:** continue to 5

**No:** certified extraction possible

- 5 Is it feasible to transfer the acrotelm containing donor vegetation and seeds to the appropriate re-wetting areas to develop habitat functions for protected species of vegetation and / or fauna?

**Yes:** certified extraction possible

**No:** no certified extraction possible.

*In case of a positive decision in favour of certified extraction, special requirements for extraction methods and after-use should be formulated.*

### Socio-economic aspects

The Board of RPP concluded during its meeting of 14 December 2017, that there is more time and information needed to implement socio-economic aspects in the decision tree in box 3.2. The Board acknowledges however, that certain socio-economic situations may lead to an exception to the general rule. Until criteria are developed, the applying company has to provide a coherent plan and proposal with valid arguments, substantiated with evidence, why excavation in the class 2 area concerned should be approved. The board assesses the specific application and decides on certification. Practical experience with concrete situations may contribute to the development of objective criteria for socio-economic aspects and Responsibly Produced Peat.



### *Class 3: eligible for RPP certification, unless ...*

Peatlands under this class have less significant conservation values since such areas already have been substantially affected by drainage, which has started the degradation the vegetation degradation and has stopped processes in the acrotelm.

There may be spots in the area that have not been affected at all or to a minimal extent only. However, eventually degradation of these spots will be hard to avoid as a result of the overall development in the area.

The general rule is to make class 3 areas eligible for RPP certification. However, a class 3 area may be excluded from RPP certification if it contains certain values of high importance. For that reason, it is required to carry out a preliminary test to define whether there is a need for carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA Pre-assessment or Quick scan).

If, for instance, this test shows

- the area is of high importance to special species<sup>4</sup>,
- the area contains a restricted range species endemic to this site,
- or a threatened (strongly protected) species that depends on this habitat and the area, despite its disturbance, represents one of the best or only example(s) of this habitat,
- or if the area provides an ecosystem services to another (off-site) area on which the species depends,

then such a full EIA based on thorough investigation is required to define whether the area is eligible for RPP certification. If it can be shown that such an impact assessment is not needed (the area has no special or has only limited biodiversity values, which can also be commonly found and conserved elsewhere), then the area is eligible for RPP certification.

Box 3.3: Decision tree for areas in class 3	
1. Are there special protected species in the site? *)	
Yes: EIA required, continue to 4	No: continue to 2
2. Does the site have a function of a corridor for special protected species?	
Yes: EIA required, continue to 4	No: continue to 3
3. Does peat extraction in this site result in impacts (hydrological or others) on protected areas?	
Yes: EIA required, continue to 4	No: area is eligible to certification
4. Does the EIA conclude that peat cannot be extracted without unacceptable impacts?	
Yes: area is not eligible to RPP certification	No: eligible for RPP certification, on the condition that EIA requirements are followed up.
*) EU-bird directive 79/409/EWG _ FFH- directive	

<sup>4</sup> "Importance for a species" is related to the species being dependent for at least part of its lifecycle on the area or the ecosystem services rendered by the area (e.g. water supply to downstream areas on which the species depends).

#### ***Class 4:***

The ecological character of peatlands in Class 4 has been changed completely as a result of drainage, ploughing, fertilisation and crop management.

This class includes typically sites under agriculture use or very strong impacted areas as abandoned excavation sites. They do no longer have any special values for bog related biodiversity conservation or for other natural ecosystem services. Biodiversity values alien to the original bog ecosystem many have developed in areas converted to farmland. The RPP scheme does not require protection of such values, unless this is required by public authorities on the basis of legislation and regulation.

For class 4 areas, peat extraction, if followed by appropriate after-use measures, can contribute to improving conditions for rehabilitation of natural values: wetland rehabilitation and, in certain cases, restoration of bog formation processes. Peat extraction can in this case constitute a win-win option for both economy and biodiversity. Therefore, all class 4 areas, without exception, are eligible for RPP certification, unless the relevant authorities decide against giving a legally valid permit, in which case Chapter 1 does not allow for RPP certification.

#### **The Relationship between RPP, national classification systems and national inventories**

Different European countries have made peatland inventories and classified the peatlands into various categories. RPP highly values these initiatives, and the available information may be a basis for benchmarking all relevant inventories with the RPP classification system. Persons and organisation are welcome to initiate benchmarking. Results of a benchmark will be communicated at [www.responsiblyproducedpeat.org](http://www.responsiblyproducedpeat.org).

## ANNEX B: Method for defining after-use destinations (Annex to chapter 5)

After-use plans for sites to be certified shall contain a thorough analysis of the values present at production start and the values that can be expected to develop in the after-use situation. The general rule is that values should, if feasible, increase. There are two options available:

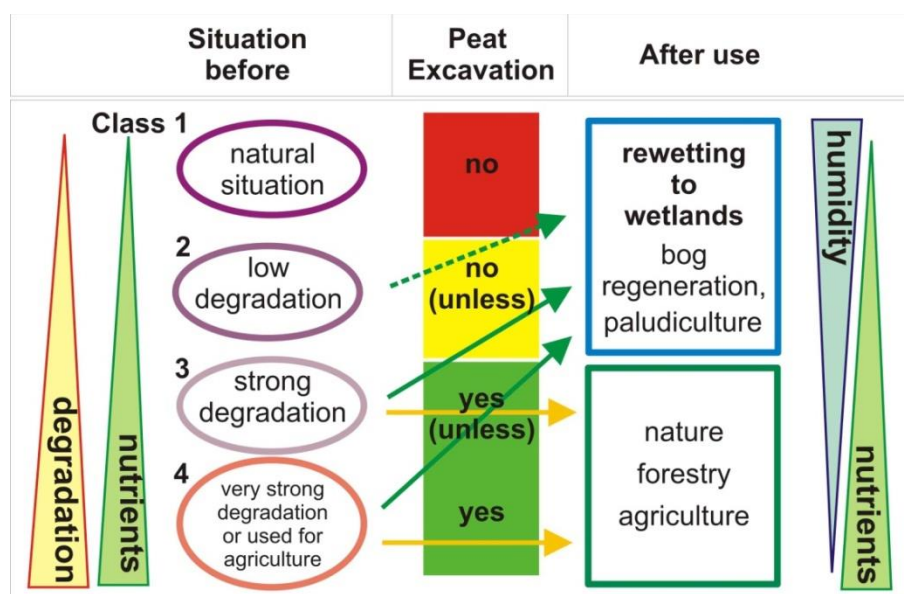
Option 1: the after-use plan shows that the after-use situation is close to the natural situation in terms of humidity (high) and nutrients (low). Generally, this will be a development towards re-wetting.

Option 2: if such a development towards a more natural state is not feasible or desirable, the after-use plan shall make clear that the after-use situation creates other major values in terms of regional development, income generation, etc.

Option 2 may only be chosen after carefully considering option 1. The feasibility and desirability of an option 2 solution may be dependent on:

- the availability of high quality peatlands and wetlands in the area. It may not make sense to invest in creating a landscape type which is already abundant in the area;
- public policies in the region, which may promote agriculture or forestry rather than promoting the creation of new wet areas.

### Option 1: Creating an after-use outcome closer to the natural situation



The above diagram contains the paths that may be followed.

- If peat is produced from a strongly degraded peatland (class 4), e.g. farmland, the preferred destination will be rewetting or succession. It may however be kept on an equal level (forestry, agriculture), if this is not feasible or desirable for reasons to be specified.
- Class 3 sites shall preferably be rewetted. If bog development is not feasible, there are various paludiculture options available.

- Class 2 sites (which will be eligible for certification under certain conditions only, see Annex A) shall be rewetted to create suitable conditions for natural bog regeneration.

There are still many options in the box “rewetting to wetlands”. What option is feasible and what option creates best value for the site under consideration strongly depends on local circumstances. Cumbersome bog restoration in a region with abundant peatlands may create less value than creating a lake in the same area, for example. Companies may produce region-specific arguments for the value the proposed after-use destination will create.

#### Option 2: Creating important socio-economic values

If option 1 is not feasible or desirable, for reasons to be specified, the after-use plan shall make plausible that major socio-economic values will be created by implementing the after-use plan. These values may include:

1. Value creation by
  - a. agriculture
  - b. forestry
  - c. tourism
  - d. industry
  - e. and other activities
2. Its contribution to
  - a. regional development
  - b. employment
  - c. ...

## **ANNEX C: Requirements and guidelines for a management plan based on a systematic impact assessment (Annex to chapter 4)**

### **Introduction to P&C Chapter 4:**

RPP sets minimum requirements with regard to the assessment of impacts. Workflows and guidelines in the permission process do not necessarily result in fulfilment of the RPP-requirements. It is therefore necessary that the applicant objectively demonstrates, that in the certification process, the significant effects are checked out in a proper way and impacts are avoided, minimized or even well-managed by mitigation plans.

The assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner the direct and indirect significant effects of the extraction site on the following factors:

- population and human health;
- biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC, Directive 2009/147/EC
- land, soil, water, air and climate;
- material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape;
- the interaction between these factors

These items are assessed in order to identify potential impacts on high conservation values as defined by high conservation value resource network<sup>5</sup>

### **Content of the Requested Documents (Project Plan and EIA)**

Documents, in English language, report the outcomes of the assessment and shall address at least the items listed in the EIA-check.

The report needs to have a description of the method used and refer to the organisation that carried out the survey.

In addition, the following technical data are required:

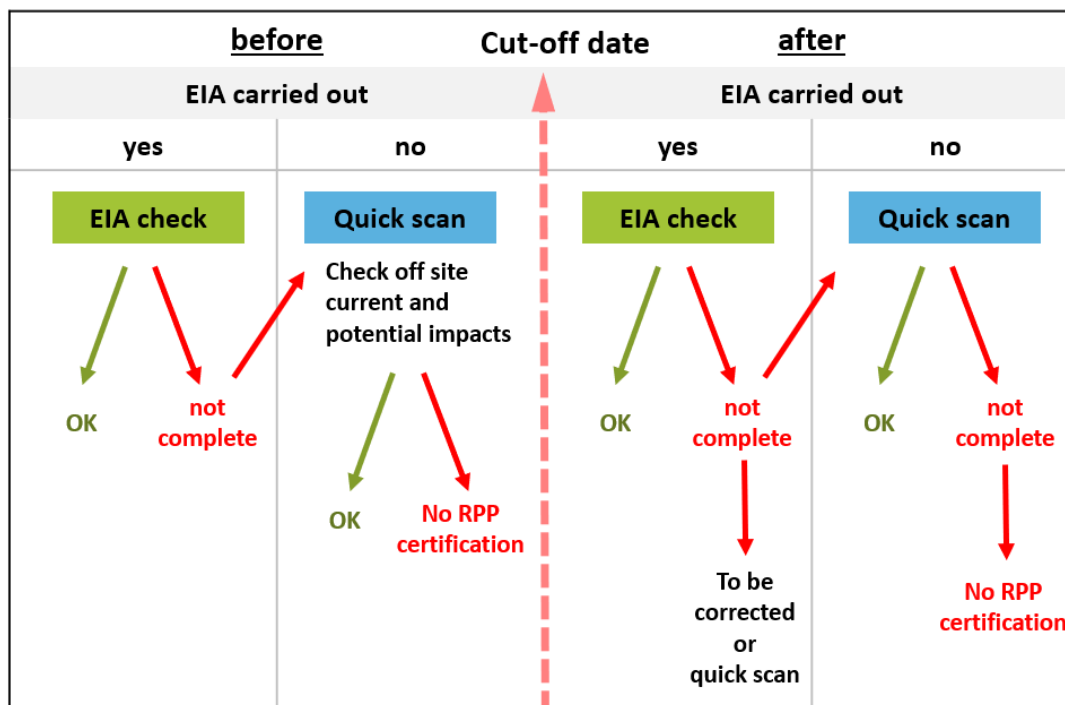
- description of the project (site, design, size and other relevant features)
- details to extraction and production plan (minimum required parts):
  - location of the site, cadastral land register data and outlined in a geo-referenced map
  - excavation method - timetable and technology
  - sections for excavation (for large sites)
  - dewatering system
  - infrastructure and transport
  - current height above sea level
  - extraction level above sea level
  - base of the peat body above sea level
- detailed after-use plan, as covered in P&C Chapter 5

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<sup>5</sup> link <https://www.hcvnetwork.org/about-hcvf/what-are-high-conservation-value-forests>

## Scheme to check impacts

The following scheme shows the workflow in the different cases:



## EIA check

Usually, the structure and contents of an EIA are defined in EU and national law, and factors are well-reviewed. However, for reasons of clarity and transparency, RPP defined minimum topics and indicators, to avoid serious harm on nature.

The topics are to be assessed in the planned extraction area and its potential impact-zone. The level of detail in performing the investigations, depends on the level of off-site values which can be impacted by the planned activities. An EIA is to be performed by independent, qualified expert(s).

### Minimum Topics and Indicators of the EIA

#### – geo-hydrological topics

*assess the potential impact of bog exploitation on the hydrology in the adjacent area*

SOIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peat type (fen, bog)</li> <li>- Thickness of different peat-layers</li> <li>- Degree of decomposition (Von Post or %)</li> <li>- Mineral underground (defining type of underground)</li> <li>- Coefficient of permeability of the different peat layers</li> <li>- Exact location and height of drilling points (on-site minimum 200 x 200 meter grid and off-site transects in the potential impact area)</li> </ul>

## HYDROLOGY

- Differentiation in bog and ground water table; direction of waterflow
- Monitoring period from winter (highest water level) to summer (lowest water level)
- Surveying of location and height (elevation-model)
- Assessment of potential impacts of the effluent on surface- and groundwater off-site

### – ecological topics

## VEGETATION

- Mapping of biotope-types
- To register red-listed and/or protected species / biotope-types (when the adjacent area is protected under Natura 2000 or when the area fulfils criteria for FFH habitats, then the 'Natura2000 check'\* is to be performed
- Gathered data used for the EIA should not be older than 5 years at point of assessment. In case of older data, the validity needs to be re-assessed.

\* link [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/docs/standarddata-forms/notes\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/docs/standarddata-forms/notes_en.pdf)

## FAUNA

- Inventory of species in relation to biotope types, when the adjacent area is protected under Natura 2000 or when the area fulfils criteria for Flora, Fauna and Habitat directives, then the 'Natura2000 check' is to be performed
- Analyses of results in relation to red-listed species.
- Monitoring methods according to EU directives
- Gathered data used for the EIA should not be older than 5 years at point of assessment. In case of older data, the validity needs to be re-assessed.

### – general topics

## LOCAL PEOPLE

- Information about impacts on humans, such as noise, dust and impacts on adjacent residential areas and buildings.
- Assessment of potential impacts on economic values of the area's ecosystem services, such as hydrology, water-buffering

## CLIMATE

- Specific statement with regard to the expected greenhouse-gas emissions of the excavation activities (using general knowledge and national greenhouse gas inventory reports, following IPCC standards – RPP-tool)

## LANDSCAPE

- Effects on the landscape (e.g. on near-natural elements, uniqueness)

CUTURAL HERITAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment of impact on archaeological artefacts, impacts on cultural aspects of indigenous and local people.</li> </ul>



Review INTERACTION between TOPICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show that the interaction between topics is analysed</li> </ul>



## Quick scan

A Quick scan shall be performed by independent, qualified expert(s).

If no EIA has been carried out or EIA- data are incomplete according to RPP-standards, companies should present a Quick scan explaining:

- in case of sites **before cut-off-date**  
potential off-site impacts in area of at least 400 m around the site, unless there is evidence that the impact zone is smaller.
- in case of sites **after cut-off-date**  
potential on-site and off-site impacts in areas of at least 400 m around the site, unless there is evidence that the impact zone is smaller.

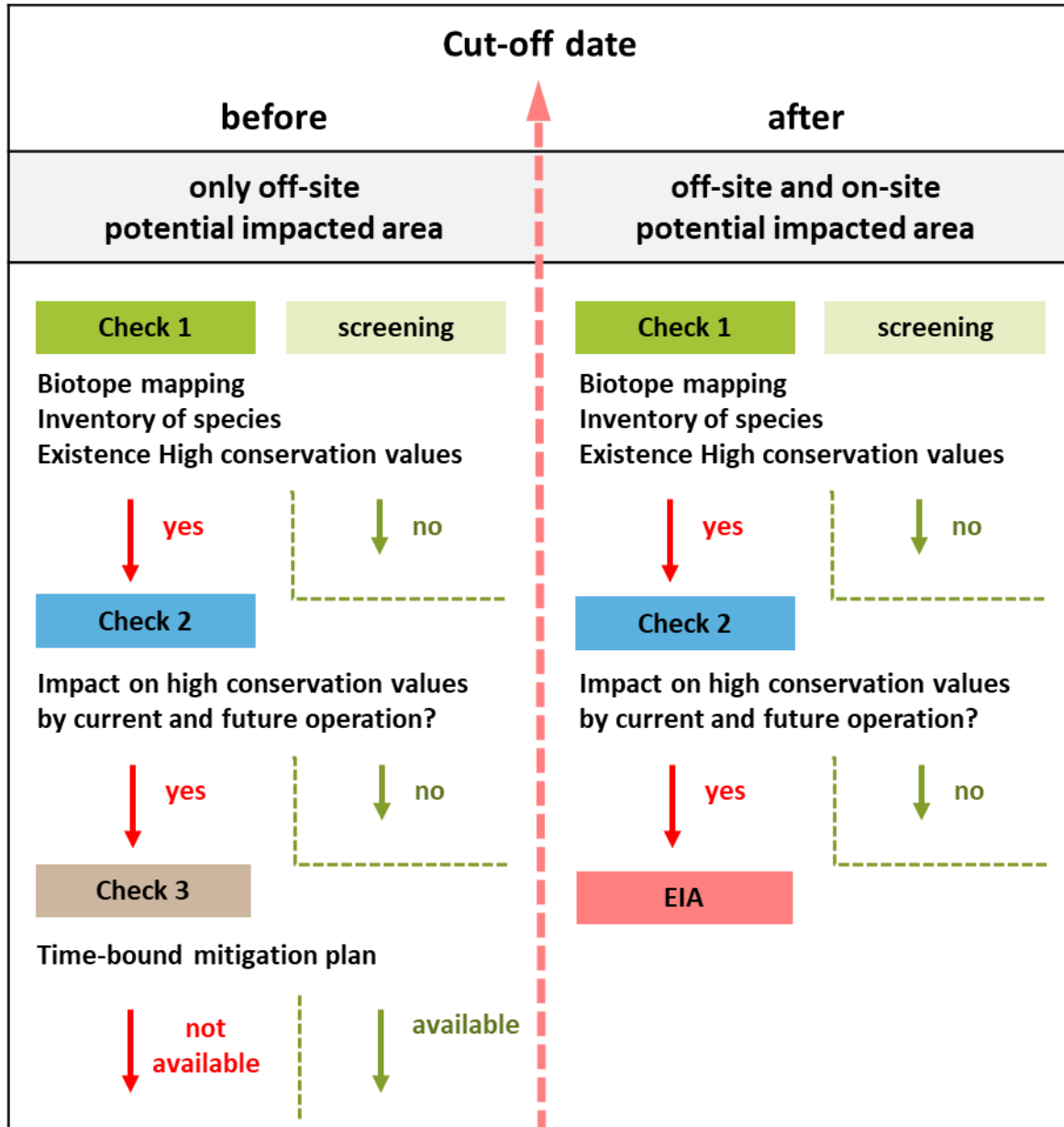
The requirements for the quick scan (**see workflow scheme next page**) refer to potential impacts on high conservation values.

If an impact could be expected then that specific aspect has to be examined in detail.

Experts/companies may use additional data if available by national/ regional authorities, universities, experts, local/regional NGO's.



*Requirements for the quick scan:*



## Mitigation Plan

A mitigation plan is needed as part for an EIA as well for a Quick scan.

The mitigation plan shall contain

- description of the features of the project and/or measures envisaged in order to avoid, minimize, rehabilitate or restore impacts and where this is not possible, consider off-sets<sup>6</sup>;
- description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer relevant to the project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons;
- alternatives for the project/planning (location, technique...). After explaining the main reasons, the chosen alternative has to be named. If there are no alternatives - just explain the reason.

## Mitigation Hierarchy

The mitigation hierarchy is defined as:

- **Avoidance:** measures taken to avoid creating impacts from the outset, such as careful spatial or temporal placement of elements of infrastructure, in order to completely avoid impacts on certain components of biodiversity.
- **Minimisation:** measures taken to reduce the duration, intensity and/ or extent of impacts (including direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, as appropriate) that cannot be completely avoided, as far as is practically feasible.
- **Rehabilitation/ restoration:** measures taken to rehabilitate degraded ecosystems or restore cleared ecosystems following exposure to impacts that cannot be completely avoided and/ or minimised.
- **Offset:** measures taken to compensate for any residual significant, adverse impacts that cannot be avoided, minimised and/ or rehabilitated or restored, in order to achieve no net loss or a net gain of biodiversity. Offsets can take the form of positive management interventions such as restoration of degraded habitat, arrested degradation or averted risk, protecting areas where there is imminent or projected loss of biodiversity. Offsets needs to stay as close as practically feasible and shall be at least 1:1.

The after-use is considered to be part of the mitigation plan and is referred to in P&C Chapter 5.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://bbop.forest-trends.org/pages/mitigation\\_hierarchy](http://bbop.forest-trends.org/pages/mitigation_hierarchy)

## Monitoring and communication

Changes and developments in the context of RPP-certification at a location, requires communication by the company (applicant or certified company) as stated below

- a. Non-compliances or Shortcomings: Inspection at location and assessment of information by the inspector, may result in shortcomings. These shortcomings are to be solved within the timeframe as defined by the inspector or RPP-Board. The company informs the inspector and secretariat.
- b. The effectiveness of mitigation measures is to be monitored. Plans are time-bounded and implemented as planned. When plans are not fulfilled within the planned timeframe, or in case of deviations or problems, the company shall communicate immediately with the secretariat.
- c. The company informs the secretariat - annually - of any changes in legality or governance with regard to a location (standard declaration).
- d. Prior to a re-inspection, normally every 5 years, the company informs the secretariat about the actual situation at the certified location. The information includes overview of the actual situation, possible deviations and the results of monitoring. The company shall also look forward to fulfilment of RPP requirements in subsequent years.
- e. At the end of the production-phase (=start of after-use phase), the company will inform the secretariat periodically on results of implementing the after-use. The progress in the fulfilment of the after-use plan will be published on the website of Responsibly Produced Peat (public accountability). The board is responsible for determining the situation in which the implementation of after use by the company can be considered completed.

## ANNEX D: Conditions to use the RPP-label and -logo (Annex to chapter 6).

### Use of the RPP on-product label

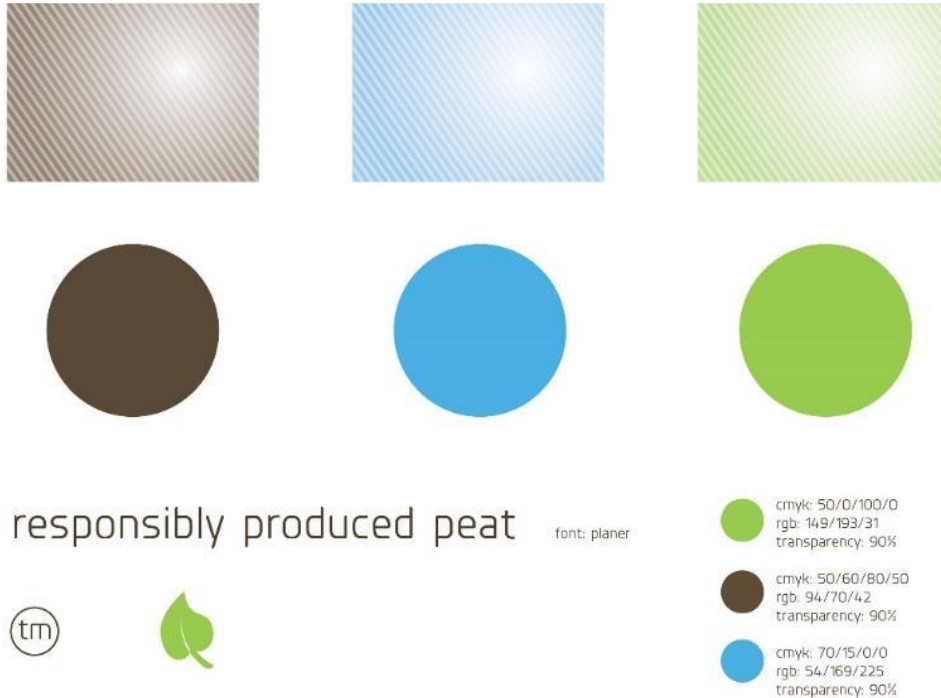
1. The RPP on-product label includes a registration number and can only be used by the RPP-registered company;
2. The company licenced to use the RPP on-product label shall pay a fee as decided by the RPP-board.
3. Only the RPP label artwork issued or approved by RPP shall be used (see below).
4. On the label, the RPP registration number of the company that receives the RPP labelling licence will be printed in the special field reserved for that purpose (see below).
5. The use of the RPP label shall strictly be limited to product communication. The company is not allowed to use the RPP label as a company logo, see also next section.
6. Communication of the label shall be based on the text for communication provided by RPP.
7. Companies that source RPP labelled growing media (retailers, traders) have the right to sell these growing media as RPP labelled on the condition that no physical changes to packaging and labelling will be made.
8. Companies that source RPP labelled growing media from others shall make sure that the original registration number on the label is being kept.

### Use of the RPP-logo

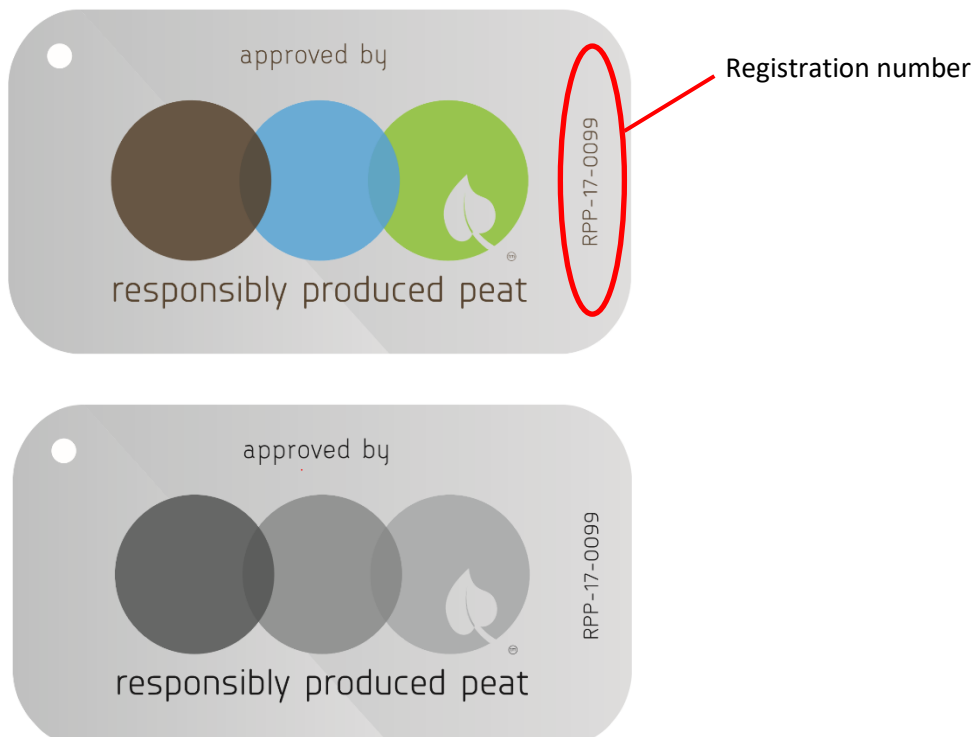
1. Only RPP registered companies may show the logo on their websites and other company publications. This implies that the company subscribes to the principles of RPP and this includes that the company actively contributes to the growth of RPP-certified products in the market. Website should clearly refer to RPP through a direct web-link. Other publications shall make a printed reference to RPP and its website.
2. Communication of the logo shall be based on the '*text for communication*' provided by RPP and available on [www.responsiblyproducedpeat.org](http://www.responsiblyproducedpeat.org)
3. The RPP logo must never be used as a replacement of, or an alternative to, the own company logo.

## Artwork for RPP-logo and -label

### RPP-logo



### RPP-label



## ANNEX E: Glossary

We refer to the Glossary included in the Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management, published by the International Peat Society: <http://www.peatociety.org/sites/default/files/files/srpmwebversion.pdf> (page 27).