**FINNISH TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE MINING (TSM) STANDARD**

**ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL**

**A Tool for Assessing Biodiversity Conservation Management Performance**

**Introduction**

This document provides a tool for assisting companies in the facility-level assessment of their current standard of biodiversity conservation management. Biodiversity conservation management performance is monitored using three performance indicators in accordance with this assessment tool. It enables key performance indicators to be segregated, and performance improvements for each indicator to be tracked from year to year. The use of this protocol also enhances the consistency of assessments conducted across companies. In addition, the tool has been designed to enable the external verification of company performance.

For the purposes of this document, biodiversity conservation management is also considered to include the conservation of Sámi traditional knowledge and practices.

**Assessing Biodiversity Conservation Management Implementation**

The purpose of the assessment protocol is to provide guidance to the companies in their planning and implementation of biodiversity conservation management using performance indicators.

The assessment should:

* assist companies in developing their capacity to monitor and improve their performance
* provide a basis for the related auditing.

Professional judgement is required when assessing the management system. The application of the assessment protocol of the Finnish TSM standard requires that the assessor have sufficient expertise in the practice of biodiversity conservation management and management systems assessment. When carrying out an assessment, account must be taken of cooperation between the employer and employees. The assessment protocol of the Finnish TSM standard is not, in itself, a guarantee of the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation activities, but it can be used to measure performance levels. A self-assessment checklist is attached to the document (Appendix 2).

**Performance Indicators**

Three performance indicators have been established for biodiversity conservation management:

* 1. Corporate commitment, accountability and communications
	2. Planning and implementation
	3. Reporting

Five levels of performance are identified for each indicator. Assessment criteria are used to further define performance at each level. The assessor must assess whether the company or the performance of the site/facility meets the assessment criteria for the performance indicators, by answering the questions presented in the self-assessment checklist. A base assumption is made that all companies are in compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

Specific criteria for each performance indicator are provided in subsequent tables to enable the assessor to determine an appropriate level of performance (Levels C-AAA). When conducting the assessment, assessors should note that the three indicators complement one another. The performance level is determined by the fulfilment of the requirements of the criteria.

Wherever a performance element or performance indicator is irrelevant, the assessment given should be N/A. For each indicator, only one level can be reached, which is determined by the lowest level that meets the requirements. All criteria at that level and below must be met. The overall level of the Biodiversity Conservation Management is determined by the lowest level achieved.

**The goal of each company is to achieve an “A” ranking at a minimum and to work towards continuous improvement.**

**Facility-level Assessments**

Companies are expected to complete an assessment and report on the performance indicators for biodiversity conservation management for each distinct site or facility. When planning the assessment, account must be taken of the organisational structure of mining operators, as companies may categorise their facilities and define their sites in various ways. This assessment protocol focuses on companies operating in Finland and their facilities and sites, in particular.

Facility-level reporting has been found to be the most reliable, informative and useful approach to performance evaluation.

**Assessment Process**

It is recommended that the assessment include interviews, discussions and document reviews. The assessment must include management as well as production and specialist personnel representing the site or facility. A level of expertise in auditing and management systems assessment and some knowledge of and experience in the practice of biodiversity conservation management is required. For each performance indicator, only one level can be reached if all criteria for that level and all preceding levels have been met. No partial levels of performance (e.g. B+) can be reported.

Where an operation is shared between two parties, e.g. a joint venture, the two parties are encouraged to discuss who should complete the assessment, and whether it should be undertaken jointly or divided up so that the results reflect the appropriate activities of each company.

The effects of climate change on biodiversity should be examined regularly, for example every five years.

**Structure of the Assessment Protocol**

For each performance indicator, the protocol provides:

* a statement of purpose that expresses the spirit and intent of the indicator
* assessment criteria for each level of performance (C-AAA)
* supporting guidelines to help the assessor understand the general scope of each indicator and to act as a framework for reviewing documentation and conducting interviews necessary for the assessment of the company’s or facility’s performance.
* Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that provide further information, such as definitions of key terms and answers to more commonly asked questions.

The following levels are applied to No Net Loss and Net Positive Impact systems:

C. The level required by Finnish legislation

B. The company has made a biodiversity commitment according to which negative biodiversity impacts are partly compensated for through measures which are reported separately.

A. The company is committed to complying with a No Net Loss system.

AA. The company is committed to complying with a No Net Loss system and is preparing to implement a Net Positive Impact system.

AAA. The company is committed to complying with a Net Positive Impact system.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1**

**CORPORATE COMMITMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**Purpose:**

To confirm that corporate biodiversity conservation commitment and accountabilities are in place and communicated to the relevant employees, contractors and communities of interest.

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|  **Performance Indicator 1****Corporate Commitment, Accountability and Communications****ASSESSMENT CRITERIA** |
| **Level** | **Criteria** |
| **C** | Activities meet the requirements set in Finnish legislation, but the company has made no public commitment to biodiversity conservation.  |
| **B** | The company has made a biodiversity conservation commitment and complies with it in its operations, but the commitment may not be consistent with the intent of the guiding principles of the Finnish towards sustainable mining standard. Plans are in place to address the gaps.  |
| **A** | The company has made a biodiversity conservation commitment that has been endorsed by the senior management and that is consistent with the intent of the guiding principles of the Finnish towards sustainable mining standard. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for the implementation of the commitment at the facility are clear. Commitment, responsibilities and accountabilities have been communicated to employees, contractors and communities of interest. Resources have been assigned to support implementation of the commitment. Communications are open, and reporting is public. |
| **AA** | The biodiversity conservation commitment and its implementation at the facility are subject to independent audit (internal or external). |
| **AAA** | The biodiversity conservation commitment includes a commitment to actively partner with other organisations for the purposes of biodiversity conservation and enhancement. Roles, responsibilities and resources have been assigned to support this commitment. |

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| **Corporate Biodiversity Conservation Commitment, Accountability and Communications** **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** |
| **No. in APPX. 1.** | **FAQ** | **PAGE** |
| 1 | [What are good sources of guidance on biodiversity conservation?](#_bookmark0) | [See page 11](#_bookmark0) |
| [2](#_bookmark1) | [Does a biodiversity conservation commitment have to be a stand-alone document?](#_bookmark1) | [See page 11](#_bookmark1) |
| [3](#_bookmark2) | [How do you integrate biodiversity conservation into corporate and facility business](#_bookmark2) [planning?](#_bookmark2) | [See page 11](#_bookmark2) |
| [10](#_bookmark8) | [Can corporate documentation be used to demonstrate facility-level commitment?](#_bookmark8) | [See page 13](#_bookmark8) |
| [12](#_bookmark9) | [What is the definition of “conservation”?](#_bookmark9) | [See page 13](#_bookmark9) |
| [13](#_bookmark10) | [What is a community of interest (COI)?](#_bookmark10) | [See page 14](#_bookmark10) |
| 14 | [What is a “system”?](#_bookmark12) | [See page 14](#_bookmark12) |
| 15 | What do “accountability” and “responsibility” mean? | See page 15 |

**Corporate Commitment, Accountability and Communications**

**SUPPORTING GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSOR**

Through interviews and the review of documentation, clarify the following issues:

* There is a facility-specific, clearly communicated biodiversity conservation commitment that has been endorsed by senior management.
* Managers and employees appear to be familiar with the commitment and understand its basic intent.
* Management and employee awareness of the commitment is maintained over time. Also determine the specific means employed.
* Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities related to implementing the commitment have been clearly defined and are consistently understood.
* Resources have been assigned to support implementation of the commitment.
* Audit processes are in place to ensure that the commitment is implemented.
* An internal or external audit of the commitment has been carried out within the last three years.
* There is a commitment to actively partner with other organisations for biodiversity conservation, and adequate resources, roles and responsibilities have been assigned to support this partnership activity.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2**

**PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Purpose:**

To confirm that effective plans and management systems are implemented at the facility in order to manage significant biodiversity aspects within the area affected by the mine.

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|  **Performance Indicator 2****Planning and Implementation** **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA** |
| **Level** | **Criteria** |
| **C** | Activities meet the requirements set in Finnish legislation, but the company has no facility-level action plan or management system in place to manage significant biodiversity aspects.  |
| **B** | The company has a facility-level biodiversity conservation action plan or management system that includes, at a minimum, the following elements:* Assessment of facility-level baseline data on biodiversity conservation
* Significant biodiversity conservation aspects with respect to operations have been identified
* Key communities of interest with respect to biodiversity conservation have been identified
* A plan has been developed for biodiversity monitoring

The biodiversity conservation action plan has been approved by facility-level senior management and is under implementation.  |
|  | The company implements a facility-level action plan or management system to manage significant biodiversity aspects that includes, at a minimum, the following elements:* Potential impacts on/risks to biodiversity have been assessed
* Specific targets for significant biodiversity aspects have been identified
* Action plans are developed and implemented to specifically address biodiversity targets
* Facility-level employees have been assigned responsibility for biodiversity conservation management
* Biodiversity conservation awareness is included in facility training programmes for key personnel
* The facility has consulted key communities of interest (e.g. authorities, the Sámi Parliament, the village meeting of the Skolt Sámi, reindeer herding co-operatives, other local communities and nature conservation organisations) regarding biodiversity conservation
* Implementation of the facility-level biodiversity conservation action plan and progress towards biodiversity targets are regularly tracked and reported to facility-level senior management

The company is committed to balancing the negative biodiversity impacts of its operations with biodiversity offsetting (No Net Loss, NNL). Such biodiversity enhancement measures are verified by an external, independent body.[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| **AA** | Biodiversity conservation management is integrated into core business planning processes and tools at the facility, including:* Annual business planning process
* Annual budget process

An independent (internal or external) audit of the implementation of the biodiversity conservation management system has been conducted at the facility. The facility participates with communities of interest or other (local, regional or national) organisations to support biodiversity conservation. |
| **AAA** | The facility participates with communities of interest or other (local, regional or national) organisations to support biodiversity enhancement. The company is committed to ensuring that the net impact of its operations on biodiversity is positive (Net Positive Impact, NPI).Biodiversity conservation management is integrated into the company’s business strategy that includes at least two of the following:* Investments in research and development that enhance the industry’s understanding of and contribution to biodiversity conservation, science and traditional knowledge
* Contributing to a greater scientific understanding of the protection of biodiversity
* Contributing to industry- or region-specific guidance documents which foster biodiversity conservation
* Enhancing biodiversity significantly in areas outside the company’s facilities
* Achieving national or regional recognition in biodiversity conservation
* Conducting ecosystem service valuation within the area affected and supporting the conservation of ecosystem services
* Encouraging employee volunteerism in community based biodiversity initiatives
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| **Biodiversity Conservation Planning and Implementation** **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** |
| **No. in APPX. 1.** | **FAQ** |  **PAGE** |
| [1](#_bookmark0) | [What are good sources of guidance on biodiversity conservation?](#_bookmark0) | [See page 11](#_bookmark0) |
| [3](#_bookmark2) | [How do you integrate biodiversity conservation into corporate and facility business](#_bookmark2) [planning?](#_bookmark2) | [See page 11](#_bookmark2) |
| [4](#_bookmark3) | [What are “significant biodiversity aspects”?](#_bookmark3) | [See page 11](#_bookmark3) |
| [5](#_bookmark4) | [What is a biodiversity conservation action plan?](#_bookmark4) | [See page 1](#_bookmark4)2 |
| [6](#_bookmark5) | [What types of biodiversity conservation targets might a facility establish?](#_bookmark5) | [See page 12](#_bookmark5) |
| [7](#_bookmark6) | [What is baseline data?](#_bookmark6) | [See page 12](#_bookmark6) |
| [10](#_bookmark8) | [Can corporate documentation be used to demonstrate facility-level commitment?](#_bookmark8) | [See page 1](#_bookmark8)3 |
| [12](#_bookmark9) | [What is the definition of “conservation”?](#_bookmark9) | [See page 13](#_bookmark9) |
| [13](#_bookmark10) | [What is a community of interest (COI)?](#_bookmark10) | [See page 14](#_bookmark10) |
| [14](#_bookmark12) | [What is a “system”?](#_bookmark12) | [See page 1](#_bookmark12)4 |
| 16 | What do the “No Net Loss” and “Net Positive Impact” principles mean? | [See page 1](#_bookmark14)5 |
| 17 | What does “biodiversity offsetting” mean? | [See page 15](#_bookmark14) |

**Biodiversity Conservation Planning and Implementation**

**SUPPORTING GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSOR**

Through interviews and the review of documentation, clarify the following issues:

* The facility has assessed local biodiversity and established a baseline.
* The facility can provide a list of identified significant biodiversity aspects and can explain how these were determined.
* There are established processes for monitoring biodiversity.
* There is a facility-level biodiversity conservation action plan or management system that has been approved by facility-level senior management.
* The level of accountability of biodiversity conservation management, and defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for biodiversity conservation management at this facility.
* Specific targets have been established for biodiversity, supported by action plans
* Processes are in place to consult or engage key communities of interest regarding biodiversity conservation management, including authorities, indigenous communities and nature conservation organisations.
* The level of training provided to employees whose activities may have an impact on biodiversity.
* The level of integration of biodiversity conservation management with the business planning of the facility/company.
* Internal/external audit of the biodiversity conservation management system is conducted and the results are reported to senior management.
* The results of audit are acted upon through formal action plans containing, as a minimum, actions, assigned responsibilities and timelines for completion.
* The extent to which the company and/or facility is a leader in biodiversity conservation management.
* How the application of the No Net Loss or Net Positive Impact principles and biodiversity offsetting are reflected in the operations of the company/facility.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 3**

**REPORTING**

**Purpose:**

To confirm that biodiversity conservation monitoring and reporting systems are in place as input for decision-making concerning the facility and to communicate the performance of the facility publicly.

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|  **Performance Indicator 3** **Reporting**  **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA** |
| **Level** | **Criteria** |
| **C** | The mining activities comply with the requirements set by Finnish legislation regarding monitoring and reporting, but no reporting on biodiversity conservation occurs other than that possibly required by the environmental permit.  |
| **B** | The facility carries out monitoring relating to biodiversity conservation, but reporting is irregular and not based on an approved reporting system. |
| **A** | The company has a monitoring and reporting system approved by senior management that is used for regular biodiversity conservation monitoring and reporting. Reporting includes the following elements: * Internal reporting on biodiversity conservation which supports the management of decision-making processes at the facility, and
* Regular public reporting on biodiversity conservation performance.
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| **AA** | Public reporting on biodiversity conservation is independently audited (internally or externally). |
| **AAA** | Feedback on biodiversity conservation and the related reporting are actively sought from communities of interest. Such information is used in the development of activities and reported publicly. |

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| **Biodiversity Conservation Reporting** **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** |
| **No. in APPX. 1.** | **FAQ** | **PAGE** |
| [1](#_bookmark0) | [What are good sources of guidance on biodiversity conservation?](#_bookmark0) | [See page 11](#_bookmark0) |
| [8](#_bookmark7) | [How is biodiversity conservation reporting externally audited (Indicator 3)?](#_bookmark7) | [See page 12](#_bookmark7) |
| [10](#_bookmark8) | [Can corporate documentation be used to demonstrate facility-level commitment?](#_bookmark8) | [See page 1](#_bookmark8)3 |
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| [14](#_bookmark12) | [What is a “system”?](#_bookmark12) | [See page 1](#_bookmark12)4 |

**Biodiversity Conservation Reporting**

**SUPPORTING GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSOR**

Through interviews and the review of documentation, clarify the following issues:

* The facility has processes in place for tracking and reporting on biodiversity conservation efforts.
* Consistent approaches to monitoring and reporting are used over time.
* Who is responsible for biodiversity conservation monitoring, reporting and the approval of reports, etc.
* Biodiversity conservation performance is reported regularly. Also assess how the data and information are used (internal or external reporting, performance assessments, etc.).
* Systems are in place for internal or external audit of public reporting on biodiversity conservation.

**APPENDIX 1:**

**Assessing Biodiversity Conservation Management Performance**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| [1](#_bookmark0) | [What are good sources of guidance on biodiversity conservation?](#_bookmark0) | [See page 11](#_bookmark0) |
| 2 | Does a biodiversity conservation commitment have to be stand-alone document? | See page 11 |
| [3](#_bookmark2) | [How do you integrate biodiversity conservation into corporate and facility business](#_bookmark2) [planning?](#_bookmark2) | [See page 11](#_bookmark2) |
| [4](#_bookmark3) | [What are “significant biodiversity aspects”?](#_bookmark3) | [See page 11](#_bookmark3) |
| [5](#_bookmark4) | [What is a biodiversity conservation action plan?](#_bookmark4) | [See page 1](#_bookmark4)2 |
| [6](#_bookmark5) | [What types of biodiversity conservation targets might a facility establish?](#_bookmark5) | [See page 12](#_bookmark5) |
| [7](#_bookmark6) | [What is baseline data?](#_bookmark6) | [See page 12](#_bookmark6) |
| 8 | How is biodiversity conservation reporting externally audited (indicator 3)? | See page 12 |
| 9 | What does internal and external audits mean and how long audits are valid? | See page 13 |
| [10](#_bookmark8) | [Can corporate documentation be used to demonstrate facility-level commitment?](#_bookmark8) | [See page 1](#_bookmark8)3 |
| 11 | How should regional biodiversity conservation approaches be reflected within the assessment? | See page 13 |
| [12](#_bookmark9) | [What is the definition of “conservation”?](#_bookmark9) | [See page 13](#_bookmark9) |
| [13](#_bookmark10) | [What is a community of interest (COI)?](#_bookmark10) | [See page 14](#_bookmark10) |
| [14](#_bookmark12) | [What is a “system”?](#_bookmark12) | [See page 1](#_bookmark12)4 |
| 15 | What do “accountability” and “responsibility” mean? | See page 15 |
| 16 | What do the “No Net Loss” and “Net Positive Impact” principles mean? | [See page 1](#_bookmark14)5 |
| 17 | What does “biodiversity offsetting” mean? | [See page 15](#_bookmark14) |

1. **What are good sources of guidance on biodiversity conservation?**

The International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) has produced a Good Practice Guidance Document for Mining and Biodiversity [(http://www.icmm.com/page/1182/good-practice-guidance-for-mining-and-biodiversity)](http://www.icmm.com/page/1182/good-practice-guidance-for-mining-and-biodiversity%29).

The Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme (BBOP) has prepared guidance (BBOP 2009a and b, BBOP 2012) that helps those establishing offset sites to design and implement such sites in accordance with best practice. The indicators have been developed by a wide range of international organisations, governments and companies.

In Finland, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy published the following guides in Finnish in 2014: “*Malminetsintä suojelualueilla sekä saamelaisten kotiseutualueella ja poronhoitoalueella*” (Ore prospecting in nature conservation areas, the Sámi Homeland and the Finnish reindeer herding area) (http://www.tem.fi/files/39765/TEM\_Opas\_MEKO\_02052014.pdf)

and “*Ympäristövaikutusten arviointimenettely kaivoshankkeissa*” (Environmental impact assessment in mining projects) (http://www.tem.fi/files/42427/TEM\_opas\_3\_2015\_Ymparistovaikutusten\_arviointimenettely\_kaivoshankkeissa\_12032015.pdf)

Further information on publications and other sources of information on biodiversity and indigenous populations can be found in Appendix 3 to this document.

1. **Does a biodiversity conservation commitment have to be a stand-alone document?**

No. It may be part of an overall environmental policy, for example, so long as biodiversity conservation is explicitly addressed.

##### How do you integrate biodiversity conservation into corporate and facility business planning?

The facility must be able to demonstrate that significant biodiversity conservation management considerations are integrated within its key business management processes and practices. Key business planning processes (such as the annual business plan, annual budget, and project scoping and charter documents) should demonstrate that significant biodiversity aspects are identified and considered during the planning process and that adequate budgetary provisions are made.

##### What are “significant biodiversity aspects”?

Significant biodiversity aspects are values related to the natural environment that have been identified by the company at the site as requiring for specific management in order to avoid or mitigate potential negative impacts on biodiversity, meet regulatory requirements, and/or promote dialogue with communities of interest. Examples include nature conservation areas and other valuable sites, important ecosystem services (e.g. the provision of clean water) and elements of the natural environment that are important to Sámi ways of using nature.

##### What is a biodiversity conservation action plan?

A biodiversity conservation action plan is a mechanism by which the objectives and targets of biodiversity conservation can be achieved. They can be either stand-alone plans or be incorporated in a management system. Numerous elements may be covered in the action plan, dependent on the risks that have been identified. They can include control of access to significant biodiversity areas or written procedures to be followed for clearing land (possible removal and salvage of soils, permitted methods of weed control) or for safeguarding the habitats of wildlife in the area.

A biodiversity conservation action plan is a plan that accomplishes the following:

* Establishes baseline data including the identification of [significant biodiversity aspects (FAQ 4)](#_bookmark3) within the mine site, claim area and adjacent areas potentially affected by the mine.
* Contains a risk assessment procedure in order to determine what the possible impacts of mining activities are on the significant biodiversity aspects and establishes a risk profile.
* Creates a plan based on the risk profile on how to conserve, and where possible enhance, the significant biodiversity aspects characterised in the baseline inventory.

##### What types of biodiversity conservation targets might a facility establish?

Biodiversity conservation targets tend to be site specific by nature. Targets should be established with respect to significant biodiversity aspects, and may be related to maintaining specific conditions or populations during operations, enhancing conditions or specific habitats, and/or the type(s) of ecosystem to which the site will be returned post-mining.

##### What is baseline data?

Baseline data is the data collected prior to the mine development for the purpose of assessing local biodiversity. In general, baseline data includes information on the flora and fauna in the probable area affected by the mine, threatened and other notable species, Natura areas, nature conservation areas and other valuable sites. In Sámi areas, information is also gathered on conventional Sámi ways of using nature, cultural heritage and the significance of the area to the Sámi culture. For older, established mines, alternative approaches may be used. For example, a facility may choose to examine trends over time, or collect data from a neighbouring location, where appropriate.

##### How is biodiversity conservation reporting externally audited (Indicator 3)?

The focus of the audit will be on the accuracy and replicability of the key biodiversity performance indicators publicly reported. The audit considers not only how the indicators are determined, but also the management and reporting systems used to ensure that indicators are consistently determined and reported over time. An external audit is conducted by a third party.

##### What does internal and external audits mean and how long audits are valid?

An audit is a systematic and documented independent assessment to determine whether the requirements of audited entity are met. The audit findings and conclusions are based only on the evidence. Audits are voluntary but are required to reach level AA.

Internal audits can be conducted by employees of the company with appropriate knowledge and competencies who are independent, impartial and objective with respect to the matter being evaluated. External audits are conducted by an independent and objective person or group, such an independent consultant. The audits are valid for three (3) years.

This should not be confused with the verification system, which is – largely a desk-top exercise in which the TSM rating self-assigned by a facility or company against a given indicator is verified. The TSM verification is not equivalent to an audit, as outlined in the preceding paragraph, which is more detailed than verification.

##### Can corporate documentation be used to demonstrate facility-level commitment?

A written senior management commitment at corporate level can only be accepted as evidence during a facility-level self-assessment or verification of the Finnish TSM standard, if it is accompanied by evidence that the corporate commitment is being applied and adhered to at facility level. There must be evidence of a link between corporate documentation and facility-level practices. If such a linkage is established, corporate documentation can be accepted as evidence of facility-level commitment.

###### How should regional biodiversity conservation approaches be reflected within the assessment?

Where multiple facilities are operating within a single ecosystem, the company may choose to adopt a regional approach to biodiversity conservation. This could also include collaboration between different companies. In such cases, the division of roles and responsibilities between facility-level employees and regional employees should be clearly understood and documented, and supporting systems should be developed and implemented at the appropriate level. The assessment should consider both facility-level and regional systems.

1. **What is the definition of “conservation”?**

Conservation is “The maintenance of environmental quality and resources or a particular balance among the species present in a given area. In modern scientific usage conservation implies sound biosphere management within given social and economic constraints, producing goods and services for humans without depleting natural ecosystem diversity, and acknowledging the naturally dynamic character of biological systems.” (*Source: Michael Allaby, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Ecology [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994], 92.*)

##### What is a community of interest (COI)?

Communities of interest include all individuals and groups who have an interest in, or believe they may be affected by, decisions relating to the management of operations. They include, but are not restricted to:

* employees
* neighbours
* landowners
* recreational users of the area affected
* the Sámi (the village meeting of the Skolt Sámi in the Skolt Sámi area)
* reindeer herding co-operatives and reindeer herders
* mining community members
* suppliers
* representatives of other livelihoods
* customers
* contractors
* environmental organisations and other non-governmental organisations
* governments, authorities
* the financial community, and
* shareholders.

##### What is a “system”?

A “system”, or “management system” represents processes that collectively provide a systematic framework for ensuring that tasks are performed correctly, consistently and effectively to achieve specified objectives and to drive continual improvement in performance. A systems approach requires an assessment of what needs to be done, planning in order to achieve the set objectives, implementation of the plan and review of performance in meeting the objectives. A management system also considers necessary personnel and resource requirements and how the documentation required for the implementation of the system will be carried out. The documentation covers all types of documentation (paper documents, intranet documents, electronic documents, etc.) Not all practices need to be documented. Within any system, processes and activities are usually given a certain status through clear and precise requirements that are documented as a written procedure, for example. This means that the company can clearly and easily demonstrate that the process or system in question is in place. It would also typically require documented processes or an “audit trail”.

Other definitions associated with systems are:

* Commitment: The formal expression of the management’s commitment to a particular issue area that presents the stance of the company with respect to interested external parties. A commitment can be expressed in the operational principles or policy of a company.
* Practice: Informal, undocumented approaches to carrying out a task.
* Procedure: A formalised, documented description of how a task is to be carried out.

##### What do “accountability” and “responsibility” mean?

Accountability: The biodiversity conservation management system must identify the party that is ultimately answerable for biodiversity conservation management and for the development and implementation of the biodiversity conservation management system at the facility.

Responsibility: Within the biodiversity conservation management system, specific biodiversity conservation management related requirements and tasks are also identified and assigned to specific positions within the facility.

These responsibilities and accountabilities cannot be delegated. Resources are available to the accountable party to ensure that the proper systems (training, equipment, communications, etc.) are in place to effectively meet their biodiversity conservation management goals. It is important that responsibilities are clearly communicated so that the person in each position understands what is expected of him or her.

1. **What do “No Net Loss” and “Net Positive Impact” principles mean?**

Negative impacts on biodiversity are prevented by avoiding the creation of adverse impacts, by minimising adverse impacts and by compensating for any residual adverse impacts in order to achieve No Net Loss or a net gain of biodiversity (Net Positive Impact or net benefit). At present, Finnish legislation requires that any harmful impact on the environment be avoided and minimised. The requirement to compensate for the deterioration of ecological values concerns Natura 2000 areas if the Government has decided that a permit can be granted despite adverse impacts on ecological values.[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. **What does “biodiversity offsetting” mean?**

There are three mechanisms for compensating for or offsetting adverse impacts on biodiversity: 1) The intervening party is obliged to compensate for the damage by establishing or restoring a new site that is important in terms of biodiversity, 2) the intervening party is obliged to pay compensation to a third party that will establish the required offset site or 3) the intervening party purchases the required amount of credits from a habitat or conservation bank that is an existing offset site. No habitat or conservation banking system is yet in place in Finland.

# APPENDIX 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

**Biodiversity Conservation Management**

|  |  |  |  |
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| **Facility/****Site:** |  | **Company:** |  |
| **Assessed by:** |  | **Date submitted:** |  |

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| **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION/EVIDENCE:** |
| **NAME OF DOCUMENT** | **LOCATION** |
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| **Interviewees:** |
| **NAME** | **POSITION** | **NAME** | **POSITION** |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Question** | **Y** | **N** | **NA** | **Description & Evidence** |
| **INDICATOR 1: COMMITMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNICATIONS** |
| **Indicator 1****Level B** | Is there a demonstrated senior management biodiversity commitment in place? |  |  |  |  |
| If the commitment is not consistent with the intent of the guiding principles of the Finnish towards sustainable mining standard, are there plans in place to address the gaps? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level B questions, continue to the Level A questions.**If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level B questions, the facility is a Level C facility.* |
| **Indicator 1 Level A** | Is there a demonstrated commitment from senior management, which is consistent with the intent of the Finnish towards sustainable mining standard? |  |  |  |  |
| Has the commitment to biodiversity conservation been communicated to the relevant employees, contractors and facility-level COI? |  |  |  |  |
| Are the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities involved in the implementation of the commitment clear? |  |  |  |  |
| Have resources been assigned to support the implementation of the commitment? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level A questions, continue to the Level AA questions. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level A questions, the facility is a Level B facility.* |
| **Indicator 1 Level AA** | Have the biodiversity conservation commitment and its implementation been subject to independent audit (internal or external)? |  |  |  |  |
| Was the audit conducted within the last three (3) years? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level AA questions, continue to the Level AAA questions. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level AA questions, the facility is a Level A facility.* |
| **Indicator 1 Level AAA** | Does the biodiversity conservation commitment include a commitment to actively partner with other organisations in biodiversity conservation? |  |  |  |  |
| * If yes, have roles and responsibilities been assigned to support this commitment?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Have resources been assigned to support this commitment?
 |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level AAA questions, the facility is a Level AAA facility. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level AAA questions, the facility is a Level AA facility.* |
|  | **ASSESSED LEVEL OF THE COMPANY’S PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 1** | **Level:**   |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Question** | **Y** | **N** | **NA** | **Description & Evidence** |
| **INDICATOR 2: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION** |
| **Indicator 2****Level B** | Has a facility-level biodiversity conservation plan OR management system been developed that includes:* Assessment of facility-level baseline data?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Facility-level monitoring of biodiversity?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Identification of significant biodiversity aspects?[[3]](#footnote-3)
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Identification of key communities of interest?
 |  |  |  |  |
| Has the plan been approved by facility-level senior management? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the plan under implementation? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level B questions, continue to the Level A questions. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level B questions, the facility is a Level C facility.* |
| **Indicator 2****Level A** | Does the facility-level plan OR management system include, at a minimum, the following elements: |  |  |  |  |
| * An assessment of potential impacts on/risks to biodiversity?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Specific targets for significant biodiversity aspects?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Action plans for specifically addressing biodiversity targets? If yes, are these action plans being implemented?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Responsibility assigned to facility-level staff for biodiversity conservation management?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Biodiversity conservation awareness included in facility training programmes for key personnel?
 |  |  |  |  |
| Has the facility consulted and/or engaged key communities of interest (e.g. authorities, Sámi communities and conservation organisations) regarding biodiversity conservation management? |  |  |  |  |
| Are implementation of the facility-level biodiversity conservation plan and progress towards biodiversity targets regularly tracked and reported to facility-level senior management? |  |  |  |  |
| Are the application of the No Net Loss principle and biodiversity offsetting reflected in the operations of the company/facility? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level A questions, continue to the Level AA questions. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level A questions, the facility is a Level B facility.* |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Question** | **Y** | **N** | **NA** | **Description & Evidence** |
| **Indicator 2****Level AA** | Can the facility demonstrate that biodiversity conservation management is integrated into business planning processes and tools? |  |  |  |  |
| Do these processes and tools include integration within the annual business planning and budget process? |  |  |  |  |
| Has an independent audit been conducted of the implementation of the biodiversity conservation management system (either internal or external)? |  |  |  |  |
| Was the audit conducted within the last three (3) years? |  |  |  |  |
| Does the facility participate with COI or other biodiversity conservation organisations (local, regional or national) in order to support biodiversity conservation? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level AA questions, continue to the Level AAA questions. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level AA questions, the facility is a Level A facility.* |
| **Indicator 2****Level AAA** | Is the application of the Net Positive Impact principle reflected in the operations of the company/facility? |  |  |  |  |
| Has biodiversity conservation management been integrated into the facility’s broader business strategy that includes at least two of the following: |  |  |  |  |
| * Investments in research and development that enhance the industry’s understanding of and contribution to biodiversity conservation, science and traditional knowledge?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Contributing to a greater scientific understanding of the protection of biodiversity?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Contributing to industry- or region-specific guidance documents which foster biodiversity conservation?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Enhancing biodiversity in areas outside the company’s facilities?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Achieving national or regional recognition in biodiversity conservation?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Conducting an ecosystem service valuation within the area affected and supporting the conservation of ecosystem services?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Encouraging employee volunteerism in community based biodiversity initiatives?
 |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to two or more of the Level AAA questions, the facility is a Level AAA facility. If you have not answered “Yes” to at least two of the Level AAA questions, the facility is a Level AA facility.* |
|  | **ASSESSED LEVEL OF THE COMPANY’S PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 2** | **Level:**   |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |
|  | **Question** | **Y** | **N** | **NA** | **Description & Evidence** |
| **INDICATOR 3: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION REPORTING** |
| **Indicator 3****Level B** | Does the facility report on biodiversity conservation? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level B questions, continue to the Level A questions. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level B questions, the facility is a Level C facility.* |
| **Indicator 3****Level A** | Has a reporting system on biodiversity conservation been established?If yes, does the report system include: |  |  |  |  |
| * Internal reporting on biodiversity conservation which supports decision-making processes at the facility?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Regular public reporting on biodiversity conservation performance?
 |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level A questions, continue to the Level AA questions. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level A questions, the facility is a Level B facility.* |
| **Indicator 3****Level AA** | Has the facility’s public reporting on biodiversity conservation been independently audited (either internally or externally)? |  |  |  |  |
| Was the audit conducted within the last three (3) years? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level AA questions, continue to the Level AAA questions. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level AA questions, the facility is a Level A facility.* |
| **Indicator 3 Level AAA** | Has COI feedback on biodiversity conservation and the related reporting been actively sought? |  |  |  |  |
| If yes, has COI feedback been used in the development of activities and has it been reported publicly? |  |  |  |  |
| *If you have answered “Yes” to all of the Level AAA questions, the facility is a Level AAA facility. If you have not answered “Yes” to all of the Level AAA questions, the facility is a Level AA facility.* |
|  | **ASSESSED LEVEL OF THE COMPANY’S PERFORMANCE FOR INDICATOR 3** | **Level:**   |

# APPENDIX 3: USEFUL REFERENCES

**Biodiversity Conservation Management**

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1. The audit includes interviews, discussions, reviews of documents and maps as well as on-site visits on the terrain. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. These instructions are compatible with the Guidance document produced by the European Commission (Non-energy mineral extraction industries and Natura 2000. Publications Office of the European Union, 2011. ISBN 978-92-79-18646-2).

The guidelines show how the needs of extractive industry can be met while avoiding adverse effects on wildlife and nature. They examine how the potential impacts of extraction activities on nature and biodiversity can be minimised or avoided altogether. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on how best to ensure that Non-energy extractive industry developments are compatible with the provisions of the EU Natura2000 legislation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In the Sámi Homeland, these also include the traditional knowledge of the Sámi and their ways of using nature. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)