# *EverCover Chain of Custody* standard.

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# Purpose and definitions

*Chain of Custody** (*CoC**) refers to the tracking of *EverCover**-certified timber from the forest through the various stages of processing, handling and trade to the end user. *Chain of Custody** management ensures that marketing *Claim***s made for wood products sold under the *EverCover* trademark** are accurate.

The *EverCover* CoC** Standard applies to organizations that procure, handle, process, sell, purchase or use *EverCover** wood or wood products and wish to make *EverCover Claim*s** concerning their products or activities.

Where an *EverCover Claim** is transferred from one organization to another within the supply chain, both the seller and the purchaser shall comply with the management system requirements of this standard and the requirements applicable to the relevant *Chain of Custody** method.

The *EverCover* CoC** system includes three methods for *Chain of Custody** management:

**1. *EverCover Direct****

**2. *EverCover Credit****

**3. *EverCover Matching****

The *CoC** requirements ensure that products, quantities and rights of use marketed under the *EverCover trademark** are based on a documented, controlled and verifiable system in accordance with this standard. The standard ensures that *EverCover Direct**, *Credit** and *Matching** *Claim*s** are based either on physically traceable *EverCover** wood or on a corresponding quantity recorded and managed in accordance with this standard.

## *EverCover Direct**

Under the *EverCover Direct** method, *EverCover**-certified material is kept physically separate from other certified and non-certified materials throughout the entire supply and production chain. This enables the *EverCover** origin of the final product to be traced directly and continuously throughout the production chain. The method ensures that a product sold with an *EverCover Direct Claim** has actually been manufactured from *EverCover**-certified material.

A production facility applying for Direct certification shall establish policies and procedures in accordance with the *EverCover** *CoC** Standard and the applicable *trademark** standard for the receipt, identification, segregation, handling, accounting, *Registry** recording and sale of material.

The Direct method requires *EverCover** material to remain segregated throughout the entire process and not to be mixed with other materials at any stage. Where a final product is produced through a chain involving several organizations, each organization in the chain shall be *EverCover Direct** certified and shall maintain the required segregation.

The Direct method enables the use of the strongest *EverCover Claim**. Through the Direct method, an organization can demonstrate that a product has been manufactured from wood material originating from an *EverCover**-certified forest, rather than being supported only by a quantitatively equivalent or credit-based system. An *EverCover Direct Claim** indicates that the product has actually been made from wood harvested in accordance with the *EverCover** Forest Management Standard.

For example, in a timber building manufactured under the Direct method, the entire chain shall be certified and *EverCover** wood shall remain segregated from the log stage through to the final product. This ensures that the wood used in the building is actually of *EverCover** origin and is traceable throughout the entire chain.

## *EverCover Credit**

Under the *EverCover Credit** method, the *Chain of Custody** of *EverCover** wood is certified and verified, but the material does not need to be physically segregated within the production facility.

Credit provides organizations with a more flexible and cost-efficient way of using the *EverCover* trademark** than the Direct method, as it does not require *EverCover** wood to be physically segregated from controlled material during production. At the same time, it maintains a controlled and certified *Chain of Custody**, enabling verification of where *EverCover** wood has been processed and how it has moved through the supply chain.

Production facilities using the *Credit** method shall be certified in accordance with the *EverCover* CoC** Standard. In production, *EverCover** wood may only be mixed with *controlled material**.

The organization shall ensure that the quantity of wood products sold under the *EverCover Credit* trademark** corresponds to the quantity of *EverCover** wood purchased. Quantitative equivalence shall be verified through *Conversion Factor**s defined in accordance with this standard, evaluation of the production process and monitoring of the Credit account. This is referred to as a controlled mass balance.

An *EverCover Credit* Claim** may be used for products where a corresponding quantity of *EverCover** wood has been procured, processed and recorded through the supply chain in the manner specified by this standard.

For example, in a timber building produced using the *EverCover Credit** method, *EverCover**-certified wood may move from the forest owner to a sawmill, then to a manufacturer of construction wood products and finally to the house manufacturer. Each organization in the chain is certified, but at production facilities the *EverCover** wood may be mixed with controlled material.

Organizations shall ensure that a quantity of wood equivalent to the wood used in a building sold under the *EverCover Credit* trademark** has been procured, processed and recorded in the system as required by this standard. *EverCover** adds value to the product by demonstrating that it is supported by a controlled and certified *Chain of Custody** and that a corresponding quantity of *EverCover** wood has passed through the wood-processing chain.

## *EverCover Matching**

*EverCover Matching** enables wood products to be sold with an *EverCover Matching* Claim** without certification of the supply chain.

The use of an *EverCover Matching* Claim** is based on a corresponding quantity of wood harvested from an *EverCover**-certified forest and recorded in the *EverCover* Registry** (uncontrolled mass balance). This standard defines how the *EverCover Matching Claim** may be used for products where the physical *Chain of Custody** of the wood raw material actually used in the product is not tracked.

Under the Matching method, only the organization that sells the *EverCover** product to the end user is certified. The organization shall establish policies and procedures in accordance with the *EverCover* CoC** Standard and the applicable *trademark** standard.

Under *EverCover Matching**, the certified organization acquires a sufficient quantity of *EverCover Matching** rights. These rights are defined in this standard (see Clause 8). The organization thereby obtains the right to use the *EverCover Matching* Claim** for the products it sells to the extent covered by the Matching rights it has acquired.

For example, an *EverCover**-certified furniture manufacturer may use conventional wood raw material procured from the market in its products and separately acquire *EverCover Matching** rights for sales within the relevant *Product group**. The right of use is based on a corresponding quantity of wood having been harvested from an *EverCover**-certified forest and placed on the market, and on that quantity not being sold again under an *EverCover* Claim**.

The certified furniture manufacturer may then use the *EverCover Matching* Claim** for the relevant *Product group** to the extent permitted by this standard. *EverCover** adds value to the product by demonstrating that a corresponding quantity of *EverCover**-certified harvesting has been verified and allocated to the products sold, even though the physical *Chain of Custody** of the wood used in the specific product is not known.

## 1. Legal Compliance

**1.1.** An *Organisation** shall be within the scope of *EverCover** *CoC** certification where it takes legal ownership of a product and:
a) sells the product with an *EverCover Claim**;
b) applies an *EverCover** product label to the product;
c) changes the composition or physical integrity of a product that is to be sold with an *EverCover Claim**; or
d) creates, transfers, reserves, or cancels *EverCover Credit** or *Matching** entitlements.

**1.2.** The *Organisation** shall be a legally registered company or other legal entity entitled to carry out the activities included within the scope of certification. The *Organisation** shall be able to demonstrate the legality of its operations and its legal right to control the activities, products, and supply chain included within the scope of certification. The *sites** and activities covered by the certification shall be clearly defined.

**1.3.** The *Organisation** shall ensure that *EverCover**-certified products and materials comply with all applicable legislation relating to timber, trade, customs, and origin.

**1.4.** The *Organisation** shall, at a minimum:
a) establish and maintain procedures to ensure compliance with applicable legal requirements relating to import, export, placing on the market, and traceability;
b) maintain information on timber species, country of origin and, where applicable, region of harvest, and make such information available upon request to customers, competent authorities, or other supply-chain actors where necessary to demonstrate compliance with applicable legal obligations; and
c) retain and, upon request, provide evidence demonstrating compliance with applicable timber, trade, and customs legislation.

**1.5.** Any conflict between applicable national legislation and the requirements of this certification standard shall be evaluated by the *Audit Unit** on a case-by-case basis.

**1.6.** The *Organisation** shall commit to anti-corruption practices and shall neither offer nor accept bribes or other improper advantages.

**1.7.** The *Organisation** shall have documented policies for the prevention of corruption, which shall be made publicly available upon request.

**1.8.** The *Organisation** shall have no outstanding taxes, statutory fees, or other legally required payments.

**1.9.** The *Organisation** shall make a written commitment to comply with the requirements of the certification standard and shall agree to independent audits.

**1.10.** The *Organisation** shall respect the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work and comply with applicable labour legislation. This shall include:
a) prohibition of forced labour;
b) prohibition of discrimination;
c) prohibition of child labour; and
d) freedom of association.

**1.11.** The *Organisation** shall comply with applicable national labour legislation and applicable collective agreements and wage agreements. Remuneration and terms and conditions of employment shall be appropriate and documented.

1.12. The *Organisation** shall promote equality and non-discrimination in the workplace.

## 2. General Requirements for Certification of the *Organisation**

**2.1.** The *Organisation** shall define the scope of certification and the applicable certification model. Certification may cover the *EverCover Direct**, Credit, or *Matching** methods and may apply to:
a) a *single site**;
b) *multiple site**s of the same *Organisation** covered by a single certificate; or
c) *group certification**, provided that the applicable eligibility requirements are met. These requirements are further specified in Part II of this standard.

**2.2.** The *Organisation** shall have a documented management system appropriate to the scale and nature of its operations to ensure conformity with the certification requirements. The *Organisation** shall be responsible for:
a) appointing one or more persons with overall responsibility for ensuring that the *Organisation** complies with all applicable certification requirements;
b) establishing and documenting procedures necessary to implement the certification requirements;
c) training personnel involved in the implementation of the certification system; and
d) retaining documentation demonstrating conformity with the certification requirements for a minimum of five (5) years.

**2.3.** The *Organisation** shall commit to the values, principles, and ethical practices of the certification system.

**2.4.** The *Organisation** shall maintain appropriate occupational health and safety practices and ensure that personnel receive adequate safety training relevant to their responsibilities.

**2.5.** The *Organisation** shall ensure that all use of certification-related *trademark*s**, logos, and *Claim*s** complies with the applicable *trademark** standard.

**2.6.** The *Organisation** shall have procedures for identifying, controlling, and preventing non-conforming products and processes. Where a non-conforming product has been delivered, or where there is a risk that it has been supplied further along the *Chain of Custody**, the *Organisation** shall notify *AEFC** and all affected direct customers without delay. The *Organisation** shall subsequently implement *Corrective action*s** to prevent recurrence of the *nonconformity**.

**2.7.** The *Organisation** shall commit to undergoing *AEFC** *CoC** audits in accordance with the applicable audit schedule.

**2.8.** The *Organisation** shall sign the *EverCover** certification licence agreement and commit to paying the applicable certification-related audit and *trademark** fees in accordance with the terms in force.

### Additional Requirements for *EverCover Direct**

**2.9.** The *Organisation** shall ensure that the *Chain of Custody** based on the *EverCover Direct** method is established, documented, and traceable back to the relevant *EverCover**-certified harvest.

**2.10.** The *Organisation** shall ensure that personnel involved in the receipt, storage, production, *Registry** entries, and sale of *Direct** material are familiar with the requirements relevant to their responsibilities.

### Additional Requirements for *EverCover Credit**

2.11. The *Organisation** shall ensure that the *Chain of Custody** based on the *EverCover Credit** method is established, documented, and traceable back to the relevant *EverCover**-certified harvest.

## 3. *Organisation*'s* *EverCover* Registry** Information

**3.1.** The *Organisation** shall provide *AEFC** with at least the following information for registration and certification purposes:

a) official name, including, where applicable, the local name or trade name;
b) registered address, postal address, and email address;
c) registration number, business identification number, or other applicable tax identification number;
d) the *Organisation*'s* contact person and their contact details;
e) type of certification model (individual certification or *group certification**);
f) information on the *Organisation*'s* current or previous applications or certifications relating to *EverCover** or other forest certification schemes;
g) the *Product group** or *Product group*s* included within the scope of certification in accordance with this standard;
h) the number of *site*s* included within the scope of certification and the necessary *site** information; and
i) the *EverCover* Chain of Custody** method or methods used by the *Organisation**: *Matching**, *Credit** and/or *Direct**.

The *Organisation** shall ensure the accuracy of the information provided to *AEFC** and shall notify *AEFC** of any changes to such information without undue delay.

**Note:** *AEFC** is responsible for recording and maintaining the information in the *EverCover* Registry** in accordance with the *AEFC General Requirements for AEFC and Audit Unit* standard.

3.2. The *Organisation** shall use the *EverCover* Registry** to record certification-related material and transaction information specified in this standard. Requirements concerning material records are specified in Section 4.

3.3. The *Organisation** shall treat the information contained in the *EverCover* Registry** confidentially and shall comply with the requirements governing the use of the *Registry** and with applicable data protection and information security legislation.

3.4. The *Organisation** shall provide the Audit Unit with access to the information in the *EverCover* Registry** to the extent necessary for the evaluation, in order to verify material quantities, traceability, *Chain of Custody** methods, and conformity with other certification requirements.

## 4. Material Records in the *EverCover* Registry**

**4.1.** The *Organisation** shall maintain up-to-date information in the *EverCover* Registry** on all parties and their products that supply products to the *Organisation**, and to whom the *Organisation** sells products, that are to be included within *EverCover** certification. The information shall include at least:

a) the supplier's name and certification code;
b) the *Product group*s** of the wood materials supplied;
c) the delivery and/or receipt date;
d) the quantity;
e) the wood species; and
f) documentation of the *EverCover** wood material batch used and its quantity in accordance with the applicable *Chain of Custody** method.

**Note 1:** The *Product group*s** shall correspond to the *Product group*s** specified in Annex 1 of the *EverCover* CoC** Standard.

4.2. The *Organisation** shall maintain records in the *EverCover* Registry** concerning materials and products included within the scope of certification in such a manner that conformity with the *Chain of Custody** method used, material quantities, and the use of *EverCover Claim*s** can be verified. The records shall cover, as applicable:

a) *EverCover** materials received;
b) products generated in production and transfers between *Product group*s**;
c) waste and other changes in material quantities; and
d) materials and products sold with an *EverCover Claim**.

4.3. Material information recorded in the *Registry** shall be linkable to the *Organisation*'s** purchasing, production, inventory, and sales records, as well as to other related documents and records.

4.4. Under the Direct method, material records shall be batch-specific and shall enable verification of at least the following:

a) *EverCover Direct** material batches received and their quantities;
b) Direct quantities used in production;
c) splitting, combining, and processing of Direct batches, as well as the products and material quantities resulting from them;
d) remaining quantities of Direct materials and products;
e) quantities of materials and products sold with a Direct *Claim**; and
f) the link between received Direct batches and the processed batches and final sales resulting from them.

4.5. Where a material batch is split, combined with other Direct batches, or transformed into a processed batch during production, the changes and the related material quantities shall be verifiable from the *EverCover* Registry** and the *Organisation's** own records.

Multiple received material batches may be treated as one production or consolidated batch only if the information concerning the original batches and their link to the resulting batch remain traceable.

4.6. Under the Credit method, material records shall enable verification of:

a) the acquisition of *EverCover Credit**;
b) the use of credit;
c) the remaining amount of available credit; and
d) sales made with a *Credit Claim**.

4.7. Under the *Matching** method, material records shall enable verification of:
   a) the quantities of materials sold with an *EverCover Matching Claim**;
   b) the corresponding *EverCover** harvesting equivalents acquired;
   c) the use of harvesting equivalents; and
   d) the amount of unused harvesting equivalents.

4.8. The *Organisation** shall ensure that all information recorded in the *EverCover** *Registry** is accurate, complete, and verifiable from the *Organisation*'s* records and other documents.

4.9. The *Organisation** shall make the required material entries in the *Registry** at least quarterly.

4.10. Corrections, amendments, and cancellations made in the *Registry** shall be documented in such a manner that the original information and the persons making the changes can be verified retrospectively.

## 5. Procedural Requirements

**5.1.** The *Organisation** shall have documented procedures for the procurement, receipt, recording, use, transfer, and monitoring of *EverCover** material to the extent required by the *EverCover** *Chain of Custody** method used by the *Organisation** and the applicable requirements of this standard.

**5.2.** The *Organisation** shall appoint responsible persons for the procurement, acceptance, record-keeping, and *Registry** monitoring of *EverCover** material. Responsibilities and approval authorities shall be documented.

**5.3.** The *Organisation** shall document a procedure for determining, by *Product group**, how much raw material or roundwood is required for the manufactured products and for the use of *EverCover** quantities.

**5.4.** *Organisations** manufacturing customised products are not required to determine *Conversion Factors** prior to production but shall maintain production records on the basis of which *Conversion Factors** can be calculated.

**5.5.** The *Organisation** shall ensure that the *EverCover** quantities acquired and used do not exceed the actual raw material, production, or sales quantities of the corresponding *Product groups** during the defined accounting period.

**5.6.** All *EverCover** quantities shall be linkable to purchase records, delivery documents, production records, inventory records, and *EverCover** *Registry** transactions.

**5.7.** The *Organisation** shall carry out regular reconciliations between *EverCover** quantities, production quantities, inventory records, and *Registry** information.
The *Organisation** shall conduct an annual control check to ensure that *EverCover** quantities are not:

a) used more than once;
b) recorded more than once;
c) allocated to incorrect *Product groups**;
d) used in excess of actual material quantities; or
e) transferred without the appropriate entitlement.

# 6. Material Handling

## 6.1. General Requirements

6.1.1. The *Organisation** shall identify the materials and products included within the scope of certification and control their receipt, storage, production, and internal transfers in accordance with the requirements of the *EverCover** *Chain of Custody** method used.

6.1.2. Upon receipt, the *Organisation** shall verify from the sales and delivery documents that the type, *Product group**, quantity, and, where applicable, certification *Claim** of the received material correspond to the material delivered.

6.1.3. The *Organisation** shall also verify the validity of the supplier's *EverCover** certification in the *EverCover** *Registry** and ensure that the supplied material is included within the scope of the supplier's certification.

6.1.4. Before material is introduced into production, the *Organisation** shall ensure that the material meets the acceptance requirements of the applicable *EverCover** *Chain of Custody** method and that the related origin, sales, and delivery information are consistent with each other.

6.1.5. The *Organisation** shall arrange the identification, storage, production, and internal transfer of materials so that the material handling requirements applicable to the Direct, *Credit**, and *Matching** methods are met and the material is not handled or sold with an *EverCover Claim** for which it is not eligible.

## 6.2. *EverCover Direct**

6.2.1. Under the *EverCover Direct** method, the *Organisation** shall prevent the material from being mixed with other material throughout receipt, storage, internal transfer, production, processing, packaging, and sale. Segregation may be achieved by:

a) physical separation;
b) temporal separation; or
c) unambiguous identification of the material that is maintained throughout the handling and production process,

provided that the method used reliably prevents *Direct** material from being mixed with other material.

6.2.2. Where *Direct** material is mixed, or there is a justified reason to suspect that it has been mixed, with material that is not eligible for *Direct**, the material shall not be handled or sold as *EverCover Direct** material unless its conformity can be reliably verified.

## 6.3. *EverCover Credit**

6.3.1. Under the *EverCover Credit** method, only *controlled material** may be used in production together with *Credit** material.

6.3.2. For *EverCover** certification, the following are accepted as *controlled material**:

a) FSC-certified raw material; or
b) raw material supplied with an FSC Controlled Wood *Claim**.

6.3.3. Before accepting *controlled material** for use under the Credit method, the *Organisation** shall, at a minimum:

a) verify the validity of the supplier's FSC certification in the FSC certificate database;
b) ensure that the received material is included within the scope of the supplier's FSC certification; and
c) verify from the sales and delivery documents the quantity, *Product group**, and applicable FSC *Claim** of the material.

6.3.4. During storage, internal transfers, and production, the *Organisation** shall identify material accepted for the *Credit** method and prevent material other than the *controlled material** defined in Clause 6.3.2 from entering the material flow under the *Credit** method.

6.3.5. Where material other than the controlled material defined in Clause 6.3.2 is mixed, or there is a justified reason to suspect that it has been mixed, into the material flow under the *Credit** method, the material shall not be handled or sold as eligible *EverCover Credit** material unless its conformity can be reliably verified.

### 6.4. *EverCover Matching**

6.4.1. *EverCover Matching** is an uncontrolled *Chain of Custody** method under which material covered by the *Matching** method is not required to be physically segregated from the *Organisation**'s other materials.

6.4.2. Under the *Matching** method, the origin or certification status of other material used in the *Organisation**'s production is not controlled under this standard, and such material is not required to meet the material origin or segregation requirements of the *Direct** or *Credit** methods.

6.4.3. The *Organisation** shall be able to determine and verify:
a) the *Product group**s covered by the *Matching** method;
b) the quantities of products or materials sold with an *EverCover Matching Claim**; and
c) other information required under this standard to demonstrate the quantitative equivalence of the *Matching** method.

6.4.4. Mixing material covered by the *Matching** method with the *Organisation**'s other materials does not in itself affect the material's eligibility for *Matching**.

6.4.5. In order to use a *Matching Claim**, the *Organisation** shall meet the requirements relating to quantitative equivalence under the *Matching** method, harvesting equivalents, the *EverCover* Registry**, and the use of *Claim**s.

### 6.5. Production Yield and *Conversion Factor**s

6.5.1. Where the quantity or *Product group** of *EverCover** material changes as a result of production or processing, the *Organisation** shall determine the *EverCover** quantity resulting from the production process using either:
a) documented *Conversion Factors**; and/or
b) monitoring based on actual production, under which the quantity of input material, the quantity of final product resulting from production, material losses, and side streams can be verified.

6.5.2. Where the *Organisation** uses a *Conversion Factor**, it shall be based on the actual material flows, production yields, and process data of the *Organisation** or production facility and shall be appropriate to the production process and *Product group** in which it is used.

6.5.3. The *Organisation** shall document at least the following information concerning each *Conversion Factor** used:
   a) the purpose and scope of application of the *Conversion Factor**;
   b) the quantitative relationship between the input material and final product and the basis of calculation;
   c) conversion from one *Product group** to another; and
   d) material losses, side streams, and production yields.

6.5.4. Where the *Organisation** uses monitoring based on actual production as referred to in Clause 6.5.1 b), it shall be able to verify at least:
   a) the quantity of input material used in production;
   b) the quantity of final product resulting from production;
   c) material losses and side streams; and
   d) the *Product groups** of the input material and the resulting products.

### 6.6. Transfer of *EverCover** Quantities and Common Account

6.6.1. Available *EverCover** quantities may be transferred between different *sites** of the same *Organisation** or between companies belonging to the same corporate group, provided that both the transferring and receiving *site** or company are covered by the applicable *EverCover** certification.

6.6.2. The transfer shall be documented and recorded in the *EverCover** *Registry** before the receiving *site** uses the transferred quantity as the basis for an *EverCover Claim** or *trademark** use, or transfers the quantity further.

6.6.3. At least the following information concerning the transfer shall be verifiable:
   a) the transferring and receiving *site** or company;
   b) the *EverCover** quantity transferred;
   c) the *Product group**;
   d) the *Chain of Custody** method;
   e) the date of transfer; and
   f) the origin of the transferred quantity and the related *Registry** transaction.

6.6.4. *Sites** covered by the same certificate and common management system may use a common *EverCover** account, provided that:
   a) product-group-specific monitoring is maintained;
   b) the material flows and formation of *EverCover** quantities at each *site** can be separately verified;
   c) all quantities added to the account, transfers between *sites**, and uses of quantities are recorded in the *EverCover** *Registry** in a manner that allows them to be allocated to the relevant *site**; and
   d) each *site** using the common account uses at least twenty per cent (20%) of its own *Matching**, *Credit**, or *Direct** balance generated at that *site**.

6.6.5. The quantities and accounts of each applicable *EverCover** *Chain of Custody** method (*Matching**, *Credit** and *Direct**) shall be kept separate from each other. Quantities may be transferred or combined only within the same *Chain of Custody** method in accordance with the requirements of this standard.

6.6.6. Transfer of an *EverCover** quantity to another *site** or to a common account does not change the original date on which the quantity was recorded in the *EverCover** *Registry** and does not extend the validity period specified for it in this standard.

## 7. **Registration of the *Chain of Custody** Method**

7.1. Where the *Organisation** uses more than one *Chain of Custody** method, it shall maintain a separate account in the *Registry** for each method (*Direct** / *Credit** / *Matching**) and comply with the requirements of this standard applicable to each method.

7.2. The balance of the *EverCover** account shall be based on verified quantities received, produced, transferred, used, and sold, by *Product group**.

7.3. *Registry** accounts may be applied centrally across multiple *site**s in accordance with Clause 6.6.

7.4. Upon termination or suspension of certification, or upon discontinuation of any of the Direct, Credit, or Matching methods, unused quantities shall not be used, transferred, or marketed with *EverCover Claims** without the approval of *AEFC**.

7.5. The *Organisation** shall maintain a separate account for each method and *Product group**. Approved additions, deductions, transfers, adjustments, and expirations shall be recorded in chronological order in the account.

7.6. The *EverCover** quantity available in the *Organisation's* EverCover** account shall not exceed the total amount of *EverCover** quantities acquired by the *Organisation** and recorded in the *EverCover* Registry** during the preceding twenty-four (24) months, less the *EverCover** quantities used during that period.

Any unused *EverCover** quantity shall expire twenty-four (24) months after the date on which the quantity was recorded in the *EverCover* Registry** and shall thereafter not be used as the basis for an *EverCover Claim**.

7.7. Expired *EverCover** quantities shall be removed from the accounts no later than during the month following the expiry of their validity period.

7.8. When products are sold under the *EverCover trademark**, the *Organisation** shall deduct the corresponding quantity of purchased material from the relevant *Chain of Custody** method account in the *EverCover* Registry**.

## 8. Harvesting Equivalents Required for the Use of the *EverCover Matching** Method

**8.1.** The *Organisation** shall acquire *EverCover Matching** harvesting equivalents in proportion to the *Product group** and product quantity that the *Organisation** purchases, receives, or takes into use for the manufacture or resale of products to be sold with an *EverCover Matching Claim**.

**8.2.** The amount of *EverCover Matching** harvesting equivalents to be acquired shall be calculated by multiplying the quantity of the purchased, received, or used *Product group** by the harvesting equivalent specified for that *Product group** in Annex 2.

**8.3.** The harvesting equivalents presented in Annex 2 represent a standardised and conservative quantity of *EverCover** harvesting corresponding to the procurement of one product unit in the relevant *Product group**.

**8.4.** The *Organisation** shall manage *EverCover Matching** products manufactured from or resold from purchased *Product group**s through documented material accounting. The *Organisation** shall determine and maintain its own *Conversion Factor**s, production yields, and other procedures so that the correspondence between purchased materials, production, and products sold with an *EverCover Matching** *Claim** can be verified. The applicable requirements are specified in Section 9 of this standard.

**8.5.** The quantity of products sold with an *EverCover Matching Claim** shall not exceed the quantity that can be demonstrated on the basis of purchased or received materials, applicable *Conversion Factors**, production yields, and the available *EverCover Matching** harvesting equivalent balance.

**8.6.** Where the *Organisation**'s sales under the *EverCover Matching** *trademark** exceed the entitlement permitted on the basis of the quantity of equivalents acquired, the *Organisation** shall acquire the corresponding additional quantity of *EverCover Matching** equivalents before using the *trademark** beyond the available entitlement.

**8.7.** Where the *Organisation** purchases a finished product for resale without substantial further processing, the harvesting equivalent factor shall normally be applied to the purchased finished *Product group**.

8.8. A Matching *Claim** based on equivalents shall not imply that an individual product within the relevant *Product group** has been physically manufactured from *EverCover** wood or that the exact roundwood equivalent of the product has been individually calculated, unless this can be separately demonstrated.

## 9. Sales

**9.1.** The *Organisation** may sell with an *EverCover Claim** only those *Product group**s and quantities for which it has a documented and valid *EverCover** entitlement.

**9.2.** Before making a sale with an *EverCover** *Claim**, the *Organisation** shall ensure that the requirements of this standard applicable to the relevant product and the *Chain of Custody** method used have been fulfilled.

**9.3.** Before making a sale with an *EverCover Claim**, the *Organisation** shall ensure that the quantity corresponding to the sale has been recorded and is available in the *EverCover** *Registry**.

**9.4.** The *Organisation** shall ensure that sales documents for products sold with an *EverCover** *Claim** or as being covered by *EverCover** certification contain at least the following information:

a) the name and contact details of the seller and buyer;
b) the date of issue of the document;
c) the name or description of the product;
d) the quantity delivered or sold;
e) the *Organisation's** *EverCover** certification code or other applicable *Registry** or licence identifier; and
f) the *EverCover Claim** associated with each product or *Product group**, in accordance with the *Trademark** Standard.

9.5. A record relating to the sale shall be entered in the *EverCover** *Registry** in connection with the corresponding original received or purchased material batch in such a manner that material traceability is maintained throughout the supply and production chain. The *Organisation** shall not create new batch records in connection with a sale without a link to the original material batch.

## 10. *Outsourcing**

**10.1.** The *Organisation** may outsource activities covered by *EverCover** certification to *Contractors**, provided that the *outsourcing** is carried out in accordance with this standard and does not compromise the control, traceability, or conformity of the *EverCover** *Chain of Custody**.

**10.2.** The *Organisation** shall remain responsible for all outsourced activities covered by the certificate and for ensuring that the *Contractor** complies with all applicable *EverCover** requirements.

**10.3.** The *Organisation** shall enter into a written *outsourcing** agreement directly with the *Contractor** for all outsourced activities related to certification.

**10.4.** The *Contractor** shall not further outsource any activity related to *EverCover** certification to a third party. Sub*contracting** chains for certification-related activities are prohibited.

**10.5.** The *outsourcing** agreement shall specify, at a minimum, that the *Contractor**:

a) complies with all requirements of the *EverCover** Standard, the *Trademark** Standard, and the *Organisation**'s procedures that are applicable to the outsourced activity;
b) does not use *EverCover** *trademarks**, *Claims**, or marks without the explicit authorization of the certified *Organisation**;
c) does not further outsource certification-related activities;
d) accepts that *AEFC**, the *Audit Unit**, or another evaluator authorized by *AEFC** may inspect the outsourced activity and related documentation; and
e) maintains the required records and provides the *Organisation** with the information necessary for auditing.

**10.6.** The certified *Organisation** shall provide the *Contractor** with written procedures defining the *EverCover** requirements applicable to the outsourced activity. The procedures shall cover, as applicable, at least:

a) identification and segregation of materials, or another control method appropriate to the applicable *Chain of Custody** method;
b) recording of quantities, *Product groups**, batches, and delivery documents;
c) management of *nonconformities**, risks of mixing, and incorrect handling; and
d) application of *EverCover** markings, where applicable, only to products covered by the *outsourcing** agreement.

**10.7.** The certified *Organisation** shall ensure that the *Contractor** is informed of all applicable *EverCover** requirements and of any changes made to them.

**10.8.** The certified *Organisation** shall ensure that personnel involved in the *Contractor's** outsourced activities receive sufficient information and the necessary instruction on the *EverCover** requirements relevant to their tasks.

**10.9.** The *Organisation** shall maintain and retain agreements, instructions, records, training information, and other documents relevant to the audit concerning outsourced activities in accordance with the documentation requirements of this standard.

**10.10.** The *Organisation's** legal ownership or other documented right of control shall cover the outsourced *EverCover** material throughout the *outsourcing** process.

**10.11.** The *Organisation** shall ensure that material sent for outsourced processing can be identified in the relevant delivery documents in accordance with the sales and delivery document requirements of this standard.

10.12. Where the *Contractor** applies *EverCover** markings, *Claims**, or product identifications on behalf of the certified *Organisation**, these may only be used on products covered by both the *outsourcing** agreement and the scope of certification.

# PART II: *Chain of Custody* Group certification**

## 11. Inclusion of *Multiple Sites** in a Group Certificate

**11.1.** *Multiple sites** may be included within a single *Chain of Custody** certificate if all *sites** covered by the same *Chain of Custody** certificate:

a) belong to the same ownership structure;
b) are under the direct control of the *Certificate holder**;
c) have an exclusive business relationship with each other in relation to outputs, materials, or products included within the scope of the certificate; and
d) are located in the same country.

In such a case, one of the *sites** covered by the *Chain of Custody** certificate shall:

a) act as the *Certificate holder**;
b) be responsible for invoicing external customers for certified and non-certified materials or products included within the group certificate; and
c) control the use of the *EverCover* trademark**.

## 12. Administrative Requirements for *Group certification**

**12.1.** A group consisting of independent small *Organisation**s may be included within the scope of a *Chain of Custody** group certificate. Each *Organisation** participating in the group shall meet the following definition of a small enterprise, having either:

a) no more than 15 full-time employees; or
b) no more than 25 full-time employees and an annual total turnover of no more than EUR 3,000,000.

**12.2.** A Managing *Organisation** shall be designated for a *Chain of Custody** *group certificate** to administer the certificate on behalf of the group.

**12.3.** The *Certificate holder** shall be responsible for ensuring that all *site**s included within the certificate comply with all requirements of this standard.

**12.4.** The *Certificate holder** shall demonstrate that it has an adequate management system and sufficient technical and personnel resources for the continuous and effective management of the *site**s included within the group certificate.

**12.5.** Where the participating *site**s do not belong to the same ownership structure, each *site** within the group shall sign a written commitment to *group certification**. The agreement shall specify, at a minimum:

a) the participating *site**'s acceptance of and commitment to the general obligations and responsibilities associated with *Chain of Custody** *group certification** in accordance with this standard, the certification agreement, and the documented procedures of the Managing *Organisation**;
b) commitment to comply with all requirements of the standard, contractual obligations, *Corrective actions**, and the procedures of the Managing *Organisation**;
c) authorisation for the Managing *Organisation** to apply for and administer *EverCover** *Chain of Custody** certification on behalf of the *site**; and
d) acceptance of shared responsibility for maintaining the certificate, whereby *nonconformities** identified at the level of the Managing *Organisation** or a participating *site** may result in *Corrective actions**, suspension of the certificate and/or withdrawal of the certificate.

**Note 1:** Where the *Audit Unit** issues five (5) or more major *Corrective action** requests to the Managing *Organisation**, the entire certificate shall be suspended.

**Note 2:** *Nonconformities** identified at *site** level may also result in a *nonconformity** being raised against the Managing *Organisation** where they are determined to result from the activities of the Managing *Organisation** or from a failure of monitoring for which it is responsible. This may be the case, for example, where similar *Corrective action** requests are issued to several participating *site**s as a result of inadequate training or insufficient support from the Managing *Organisation**.

12.6. All *sites** shall be included within the audit programme of the Managing *Organisation** unless the relevant *site** has been audited by the *Audit Unit** during the same year. This applies to certification evaluations, surveillance evaluations, and re-evaluations.

## 13. Requirements for the *Certificate holder**

### 13.1. Quality Management

13.1.1. **Responsibilities:** The Managing *Organisation** shall appoint one or more persons responsible for the certification of the *sites** included within the group. Such person(s) shall have sufficient legal or managerial authority and the necessary technical support to fulfil the responsibilities specified in this standard and to manage the participating *sites**.

13.1.2. **Documented procedures:** The Managing *Organisation** shall establish and maintain documented procedures to fulfil the requirements of this standard. The procedures shall also include practices for adding *site**s to and removing *sites** from the group.

13.1.3. **Training:** The Managing *Organisation** shall implement and maintain a training programme for the group *sites** that enables conformity with the applicable *EverCover** *Chain of Custody** certification requirements throughout the certification period.

13.1.4. **Documents and information:** The Managing *Organisation** shall maintain up-to-date information on all *sites** included within the *group certificate**. Documents and information shall be retained for at least five (5) years and shall be provided to *AEFC** upon request. The information shall include, at a minimum:

**a)** a list of all *sites** within the group, including:
   **a.** contact details, such as name, telephone number, email address, and physical address;
   **b.** the designated *Chain of Custody** contact person;
   **c.** the date of entry into the *Chain of Custody** *group certificate**;
   **d.** the date of withdrawal or removal from the certificate; and
   **e.** the role of the *site**, for example processor or trader;

**b)** the signed agreement of each *site** within the group;

**c)** information indicating the scope of *CoC** certification of each *site** within the group;

**d)** information on all audits conducted by the Managing *Organisation**, nonconformities identified during those audits, and *Corrective actions** implemented;

**e)** information on training organised by or on behalf of the Managing *Organisation** and participation in such training; and

**f)** a list of the Managing *Organisation's** *Auditors**s and their qualifications.

### 13.2. Competence of the *Certificate holder**

13.2.1. The *Certificate holder** shall appoint one or more persons responsible for the certificate who have sufficient professional experience, knowledge, and competence to administer the certificate and implement the *EverCover** standards.

13.2.2. The *Certificate holder** shall select the persons who act as internal *Auditors** of the *sites**/*members** included within the group certificate. When selecting *Auditors**, it shall ensure that:

a) the *Auditor** has sufficient professional experience and demonstrated ability to evaluate all applicable aspects of the *EverCover** *CoC** Standards in relation to the size and scope of activities of the *site** being evaluated; and

b) the *Auditor** acts objectively and impartially. The *Auditor** shall not audit activities in which they are involved or in relation to which they have another conflict of interest.

13.2.3. The *Certificate holder** shall ensure that its *Auditors** are trained to evaluate participating *sites** in accordance with the *EverCover** standards applicable to the scope of the certificate and the procedures of the Managing *Organisation**.

### 13.3. Audit Programme of the *Certificate holder**

13.3.1. The Managing *Organisation** shall audit each *site** before it is accepted into the *group certification**. The audit shall verify that the applicant meets all applicable requirements of the *CoC** Standard and the *Trademark** Standard. Thereafter, an audit shall be conducted at least once annually.

13.3.2. The *Certificate holder** may omit the annual audit of a *site** that:

a) has already been audited by the *Audit Unit** during the same calendar year; and/or
b) signs a declaration confirming that it has not carried out any activities related to the *EverCover** *Chain of Custody** certificate since the previous audit. At the next audit, the Managing *Organisation** shall review the records back to the previous audit to verify that no certification-related activities took place during that period.

13.3.3. The *Certificate holder** shall not omit the annual audit of the same *site** for more than two consecutive years.

13.3.4. The *Certificate holder** may conduct remote audits of *sites** that:

a) trade in finished and labelled products, such as retailers; and/or
b) trade in products without taking physical possession of them, such as brokers.

13.3.5. The *Certificate holder** shall document the audit of each group *site** in a report containing at least the following:

a) identification details of the *site**;
b) descriptions of findings, conformity, or nonconformities;
c) information on the status of *Corrective action** requests issued by the *Audit Unit** and/or the Managing *Organisation**; and
d) a summary of the audit conclusions, including a decision on whether the *site** may be included within or remain within the scope of the *group certificate**.

13.3.6. The *Certificate holder** shall evaluate its audit programme and procedures at least once annually. The evaluation shall take into account the results of all audits, as well as any necessary changes and identified needs for improvement.

### 13.4. Provision of Information and Documents to Group *Site**s

13.4.1. The *Certificate holder** shall provide each *site** within the group with documents specifying the essential conditions of participation and certification. The documents shall include, at a minimum:

a) copies of the applicable *Chain of Custody** standards;
b) copies of the *Certificate holder**'s documented procedures;
c) an explanation of the Audit Unit's right of access to the group *site** for external evaluation and monitoring;
d) an explanation of the Audit Unit's and *AEFC**'s requirements relating to the collection and publication of information; and
e) an explanation of the obligations associated with participation, including:
    a. the use of procedures for monitoring *EverCover**-certified materials and products;

b. the requirement to correct nonconformities issued by the *Audit Unit** or the *Certificate holder** within the specified timeframe;
c. requirements relating to the marketing and sale of products included within the certificate; and
d. the appropriate use of the *EverCover trademark** licence code assigned to the *site**.

### 13.5. Number of Group *Sites** and Expansion of the Certificate

13.5.1. A *Chain of Custody** group certificate may include a maximum of 100 *sites**.

13.5.2. The *Certificate holder** may add new *sites** to the *group certificate** at any time within the annual growth limit approved by the *Audit Unit**.

**Note 1:** During each evaluation, the *Audit Unit** shall evaluate the *Certificate holder's** ability to manage the number of group *sites** and may approve annual growth of up to 100 per cent of the number of group *sites** included within the certificate at the time of the evaluation. Where the *group certificate** includes 20 or fewer *sites** at the time of the main evaluation, the *Audit Unit** may approve growth exceeding 100 per cent where the Managing *Organisation** demonstrates its ability to manage the larger number of *sites**.

13.5.3. Where the number of group *sites** would exceed the approved growth limit, new *sites** may only be added to the group certificate after the *Audit Unit** has audited the Managing *Organisation** and a sample of the new *sites**.

13.5.4. New participating *site**s added within the approved growth limit shall be considered certified once *AEFC** has added them to the *EverCover* Registry** as registered *sites** under the *group certificate**. The Managing *Organisation** shall provide the audit report for each applicant *site** to the *Audit Unit** together with the request to add the new *site** to the *EverCover* Registry**.

13.5.5. Where a group *site** no longer meets the eligibility criteria for *group certification** due to an increase in the number of employees or turnover, its participation in the group shall enter a transitional status. The *site** shall reassess its eligibility for *group certification** twelve (12) months after the beginning of the transitional period. If the eligibility criteria are still not met, the *site** shall be removed from the group within three (3) months.

13.5.6. When a *site** leaves the group certificate, the *Certificate holder** shall notify the *Audit Unit** and *AEFC** in writing.

## 14. Requirements for Group *Sites**

**14.1.** Each *site** within the group shall be responsible for:

a) appointing a person to act as the *site's** contact person with the Managing *Organisation** and who has sufficient legal or managerial authority to be responsible for the implementation of and conformity with all applicable *EverCover** certification requirements and the procedures of the Managing *Organisation**, including any outsourced activities;
b) complying with all applicable *EverCover** *Chain of Custody** certification requirements;
c) complying with all requirements for participation in the group certificate established by the Managing *Organisation**;
d) responding appropriately and without undue delay to requests made by the Managing *Organisation** and/or the *Audit Unit**;
e) informing the Managing *Organisation** of any changes in ownership, personnel, procedures, or processes that may affect conformity with certification or participation requirements;
f) fully cooperating with audits conducted by the Managing *Organisation** or the *Audit Unit**; and
g) ensuring that all *Corrective actions** issued by the Managing *Organisation** or the *Audit Unit** are implemented within the specified timeframes.

## Annex 1. *EverCover* Product groups**

| Code | *Product group** |
|---|---|
| W1.1 | Sawlogs |
| W1.2 | Pulpwood |
| W1.3 | Energy wood |
| W2 | Charcoal |
| W3 | Wood industry by-products, such as wood chips, sawdust and shavings |
| W4 | Treated or preserved timber, such as poles and posts |
| W5 | Sawn timber, such as boards, planks, battens, beams and joists |
| W6 | Planed timber |
| W7 | Glulam, solid wood, structural wood products and CLT |
| W8 | Veneer and plywood |
| W9 | Particleboard and fibreboard, such as particleboard, OSB, MDF and HDF |
| W10 | Other wood compos*ite**s and wood-based panel products |
| W11 | Panels and cladding products, including interior and exterior cladding |
| W12 | Building components and timber elements |
| W13 | Indoor furniture |
| W14 | Outdoor furniture and garden structures |
| W15 | Wooden interior decoration products |
| W16 | Household products and small wooden items |
| W17 | Other wood products |
| P1 | Pulp |
| P2 | Printing and office papers |
| P3 | Packaging board and paper |
| P4 | Tissue paper and hygiene products |

Annex 2. *EverCover Matching** Harvesting Equivalents (HE)

| ***Product group**** | **Unit of Calculation** | **EC-HE** |
|---|---|---|
| W1.1 Sawlogs | 1 $m^3$ solid wood | 2.9 $m^3$ |
| W1.2 Pulpwood | 1 $m^3$ solid wood | 2.5 $m^3$ |
| W1.3 Energy wood | 1 $m^3$ solid wood | 10.0 $m^3$ |
| W2 Charcoal | 1 t | 63.0 $m^3/t$ |
| W3 Wood industry by-products | 1 $m^3$ solid wood | 6.4 $m^3$ |
| W4 Treated or preserved timber | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 6.4 $m^3$ |
| W5 Sawn timber | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 5.7 $m^3$ |
| W6 Planed timber | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 6.7 $m^3$ |
| W7 Glulam, solid wood, structural wood products and CLT | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 8.2 $m^3$ |
| W8 Veneer and plywood | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 6.7 $m^3$ |
| W9 Particleboard and fibreboard | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 5.2 $m^3$ |
| W10 Other wood compo*site**s and wood-based panel products | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 6.2 $m^3$ |
| W11 Panels and cladding products | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 9.0 $m^3$ |
| W12 Building components and timber elements | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 9.7 $m^3$ |
| W13 Indoor furniture | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 8.3 $m^3$ |
| W14 Outdoor furniture and garden structures | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 8.5 $m^3$ |
| W15 Wooden interior decoration products | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 9.8 $m^3$ |
| W16 Household products and small wooden items | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 13.5 $m^3$ |
| W17 Other wood products | 1 $m^3$ net wood content | 9.9 $m^3$ |
| P1 Pulp | 1 t dry pulp | 10.0 $m^3/t$ |
| P2 Printing and office papers | 1 t of paper containing virgin fibre | 10.5 $m^3/t$ |
| P3 Packaging board and paper | 1 t of product containing virgin fibre | 11.1 $m^3/t$ |
| P4 Tissue paper and hygiene products | 1 t of product containing virgin fibre | 11.8 $m^3/t$ |

Glossary of terms:

***AEFC*:** The Association for Ecological Forestry Certification ry. Association for Ecological Forestry Certification. The organisation responsible for the development, ownership, administration and oversight of the EverCover certification system. AEFC establishes and maintains the applicable standards, certification and audit requirements, trademark rules, registry system and other requirements necessary for the operation and integrity of the EverCover certification scheme.

***Registry*:** An electronic registry system maintained by AEFC for recording information related to EverCover certification, including data on organisations, certificates, forests, harvesting, supply chains, and the information required for tracking EverCover materials and claims.

***EverCover Claim*:** A statement used by an organisation to indicate that a product, material, or transaction complies with the requirements of an applicable EverCover chain of custody method, such as EverCover Matching, EverCover Credit, or EverCover Direct.

**Audit (including its grammatical forms)**: A systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining and evaluating objective evidence to determine the extent to which an organisation, activity, process, product or management system conforms to applicable EverCover and AEFC requirements. An audit includes the planning and conduct of audit activities, collection and verification of relevant evidence, identification and documentation of findings and nonconformities, and preparation of an audit report that provides a sufficient basis for the certification decision.

***Auditing unit*:** The organisational entity responsible for organising and conducting EverCover audits in accordance with applicable AEFC requirements. The Auditing Unit is responsible for ensuring that audits are appropriately planned, resourced, conducted and documented, and that auditors assigned to audits have the required competence, qualifications and authorisation

**Auditor:** A person who has the required competence, qualifications and authorisation to conduct EverCover audits in accordance with applicable AEFC requirements. The auditor is responsible for planning and carrying out assigned audit activities, obtaining and evaluating objective evidence, assessing conformity with applicable requirements, documenting audit findings and conclusions, and contributing to or preparing the audit report.

***Chain of Custody*:** The system for identifying, tracking and controlling EverCover materials and claims through the supply chain, from the certified forest to the final product.

***Certificate holder:*** The organisation that holds the EverCover Chain of Custody group certificate and is responsible for administering the group certification, ensuring that participating group members comply with the applicable EverCover requirements.

***Conversion Factor*:** A ratio used to calculate the quantity of output material or products that can be produced from a given quantity of input material, taking into account processing losses and yield

***Contractor*:** An external person or organisation engaged by an organisation to carry out specific activities, processes or services on its behalf under a contractual or equivalent arrangement. A contractor operates outside the organisation’s own personnel structure but may perform activities that fall within the scope of the organisation’s EverCover certification. The organisation remains responsible for ensuring that relevant activities carried out by the contractor comply with applicable EverCover requirements.

***Contracting*:** The arrangement by which an organisation engages an external person or organisation to carry out specific activities, processes or services on its behalf under a contractual or equivalent agreement. Contracting may include activities that fall within the scope of the organisation's EverCover certification, while the certified organisation retains responsibility for ensuring compliance with all applicable EverCover requirements.

***Controlled material:*** Material that is certified under the FSC system or verified as FSC Controlled Wood (FSC CW) and is therefore eligible for use as controlled material within applicable EverCover Chain of Custody methods. Such material may be mixed with EverCover-certified material where permitted by the applicable EverCover requirements.

***Corrective action*:** Action taken to eliminate the cause of an identified nonconformity and to prevent its recurrence. Corrective action may include identifying the root cause of the nonconformity, implementing necessary measures, correcting affected practices or processes, and providing evidence that the action has been effectively implemented within the required timeframe.

***EverCover Trademark*:** Any name, logo, symbol, mark, label, claim or other distinctive sign owned or controlled by AEFC and used to identify, communicate or promote EverCover certification, certified products, materials or services. Use of the EverCover Trademark is subject to applicable AEFC trademark requirements, licensing conditions and other rules governing its use.

***EverCover Direct*:** Refers to timber harvested from a specific *AEFC**-certified forest and fully traceable through the entire value-added chain to the end user. All processing stages in the chain are *CoC**-certified and verified, ensuring that the timber batch can be traced back to the forest, providing transparency and confidence throughout the supply chain.

***EverCover Credit*:** The credit system is an accounting system that tracks the quantities of *AEFC**-certified wood products. It ensures that the *Organisation** can sell *AEFC**-certified products only up to the amount recorded as credits. A credit thus represents a specific quantity of certified material and serves as a tool for monitoring the use of certified material.

***EverCover Matching*:** Is a guarantee to the purchaser that an amount of timber equivalent to the end product will be harvested in accordance with the *AEFC** Forest Management Standard, as close as possible to the purchaser's location and within the same latitude. This does not include other chain-of-custody tracking, except that the origin of the harvested timber and its forest location are documented and verifiable.

***EverCover direct / credit / matching claim*:** see EverCover or Claim.

***EverCover direct / credit / matching trademark*:** see EverCover or Trademark

***Group certification*:** A Chain of Custody certification arrangement in which multiple eligible organisations or sites participate under a single EverCover CoC certificate managed by a Certificate Holder. The Certificate Holder is responsible for administering the group, monitoring participating members, maintaining required records and ensuring that all group members comply with the applicable EverCover Chain of Custody requirements. Individual group members operate under the group certificate and are subject to the group's internal control and monitoring system as well as applicable external audit requirements.

***Group member*:** A forest owner, community, community member, or leaseholder that participates in a group for *AEFC** Forest Certification through their management unit(s). *Group member**s do not hold individual *AEFC** certificates, but their management units are covered under the group certificate issued to and managed by the *Group certification** Manager (GCM).

***Multiple site:*** A Chain of Custody certification arrangement in which two or more sites operated by the same organisation are included within the scope of a single EverCover CoC certificate. The organisation is responsible for ensuring consistent implementation of the applicable EverCover requirements across all included sites, maintaining central oversight and records, and ensuring that each site complies with the requirements relevant to its activities.

***Nonconformity*:** The failure to fulfil an applicable EverCover or AEFC requirement. A nonconformity may relate to an organisation's activities, procedures, records, controls, products, claims or other elements within the scope of certification and shall be documented and addressed in accordance with the applicable corrective action requirements.

***Organisation*:** A legal or administrative entity that applies for, holds or participates in EverCover certification and is responsible for implementing and maintaining the applicable EverCover requirements within the scope of its activities. An organisation may consist of a single site, multiple sites or, where applicable, act as the Certificate Holder of a group certification arrangement.

***Outsourcing*:** An arrangement in which an organisation contracts an external person or organisation to carry out activities, processes or services that are within the scope of its EverCover Chain of Custody certification. Outsourced activities may include processing, manufacturing, storage, handling or other operations affecting EverCover materials or claims. The certified organisation retains responsibility for ensuring that outsourced activities comply with all applicable EverCover requirements and that appropriate controls, records and agreements are maintained.

***Product group*:** A defined group of products or product types that share similar characteristics, materials, production processes or intended use and are managed under the same applicable EverCover Chain of Custody requirements. A product group is used to define how products are classified, controlled, recorded and, where applicable, sold with an EverCover claim.

***Single site:*** A Chain of Custody certification arrangement in which the scope of an EverCover CoC certificate covers one physical location or operational unit of an organisation. The organisation is responsible for ensuring that all activities carried out at the site within the certification scope comply with the applicable EverCover Chain of Custody requirements.

***Site:*** A single physical location or operational unit of an organisation where activities within the scope of EverCover Chain of Custody certification are carried out. A site may include facilities for purchasing, processing, storage, handling, sales, administration or other relevant operations and is subject to the applicable EverCover CoC requirements.