

**THE MINISTRIES**

**THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Circular No. 34/2009/TT-BNNPTNT of  
June 10, 2009, on criteria for forest  
identification and classification**

*Pursuant to the Government's Decree No. 01/  
2008/ND-CP of January 3, 2008, defining the  
functions, tasks, powers and organizational  
structure of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural*

*Development;*

*Pursuant to the 2004 Law on Forest Protection and Development;*

*The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development guides criteria for forest identification and classification as follows:*

### *Chapter I*

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

##### **Article 1.** Scope of regulation

This Circular provides for criteria for identification of forests and the forest classification system in service of forest survey, inventory and statistics, forest protection and development planning, forest resource management and formulation of forestry programs and projects.

##### **Article 2.** Subject of application

1. Organizations and individuals engaged in the management of forests and forest land shall implement this Circular.

2. This Circular applies to all forest areas, including consolidated forests and scattered forest trees nationwide.

### *Chapter II*

#### CRITERIA FOR FOREST IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION

##### **Article 3.** Criteria for forest identification

An area will be identified as a forest if it meets all the following 3 criteria:

1. Being an ecosystem of which the major component is perennial timber trees, bamboos

and palms of all kinds of a height of at least 5 meters (except new forest plantations which comply with separate regulations below and some species of coastal submerged forest trees and bamboos with a height of less than 5 meters at maturity), and capable of providing timber and non-timber forest products and bringing about other direct and indirect values such as biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and landscape.

New forest plantations of timber trees and newly regenerated forests after exploitation of forest plantations will be identified as forests if they reach the average height of over 1.5 meters for slow-growing trees (for example, pine trees and some indigenous trees) and over 3 meters for fast-growing trees (such as wattle and eucalyptus) and a density of at least 1,000 trees per hectare.

Agricultural and aquacultural ecosystems with scattered perennial timber trees, bamboos or palms will not be regarded as forests.

2. Having a canopy cover of at least 0.1 for trees which constitute its major component.

3. Having forest plots of at least 0.5 hectare each or forest tree strips of at least 20 meters in width and be composed of at least 3 tree lines.

Consolidated forest trees on areas of less than 0.5 hectare and forest strips of less than 20 meters in width are called scattered trees.

**Article 4.** Classification of forests based on use purposes

1. Protection forests are forests used mainly for protection of water sources and soil, prevention of erosion and desertification,

restriction of natural disasters, climate regulation and environmental protection.

2. Special-use forests are forests used mainly for nature conservation, preservation of standard specimens of the national ecosystems and forest biological gene sources; scientific research; protection of historical and cultural relics and landscape preservation for recreation and tourism purposes in combination with environmental protection.

3. Production forests are forests used mainly for production and sale of timber and non-timber forest products in combination with environmental protection.

#### **Article 5.** Classification of forests based on

1. Natural forests are forests which exist in the nature or are restored through natural regeneration, including:

a/ Primary forests, which are forests not yet or less influenced by humans or natural disasters and having a relatively stable structure.

b/ Secondary forests, which are forests influenced by humans or natural disasters, leading to changes in their structure, including:

- Restored forests, which are forests formed through natural regeneration on land areas already deforested due to milpa cultivation, forest fires or exhaustive exploitation;

- Post-exploitation forests, which are forests undergone exploitation of timber or other forest products

2. Forest plantations are forests formed through plantation, including:

a/ Forest plantations on land without forests;

b/ Forest plantations on lands after exploitation of existing forest plantations;

c/ Forests naturally regenerated after exploitation of forest plantations.

Based on growth time, forest plantations are classified according to age levels. Depending on each tree species, the time period prescribed for each age level may vary.

#### **Article 6.** Classification of forests based on geographical conditions

1. Soil mountain forests are forests growing on soil hills and mountains.

2. Rocky mountain forests are forests growing on rocky mountains or rocky areas without or with a sparse soil surface.

3. Floodplain forests are forests growing on regularly or periodically flooded areas, including:

a/ Saline-submerged forests, which are forests growing on coastal areas and big estuaries regularly or periodically flooded with saline water.

b/ Alkaline soil forests, which are forests growing on alkaline soil such as cajuput forests in the southern region.

c/ Freshwater-submerged forests, which are forests growing on areas regularly or periodically flooded with freshwater.

4. Dune forests are forests growing on sand dunes or sand banks.

#### **Article 7.** Classification of forests based on tree species

1. Timber forests are forests mainly consisting of timber trees

a/ Broadleaf forests are forests in which broadleaf trees account for more than 75% of the total number of trees.

- Evergreen broadleaf forests are forests which remain green throughout the year;

- Deciduous broadleaf forests are forests with trees which shed all leaves during certain seasons accounting for 75% or more of the total number of trees;

- Semi-deciduous broadleaf forests are mixed forests of evergreen trees and deciduous trees each accounting for between 25% and 75% of the total number of trees.

b/ Needleleaf forests are forests with needleleaf trees accounting for more than 75% of the total number of trees.

c/ Mixed forests of broadleaf trees and needleleaf trees are forests with each kind of these trees accounting for between 25% and 75% of the total number of trees.

2. Bamboo forests are forests consisting of tree species of the bamboo family.

3. Palm forests are forests with the major component of palm trees of all kinds.

4. Mixed forests of bamboos and timber trees  
a/ Timber tree-bamboo mixed forests are

forests with timber trees accounting for more than 50% of their canopy;

b/ Bamboo-timber tree mixed forests are forests with bamboo trees accounting for more than 50% of their canopy.

**Article 8.** Classification of forests based on timber reserves

1. For wood forests:

a/ Extremely rich forests are forests with a timber reserve of standing trees of over 300 m<sup>3</sup>/hectare;

b/ Rich forests are forests with a timber reserve of standing trees of between 201 and 300 m<sup>3</sup>/hectare;

c/ Average forests are forests which have a timber reserve of standing trees of between 101 and 200 m<sup>3</sup>/hectare;

d/ Poor forests are forests with a reserve of standing trees of between 10 and 100 m<sup>3</sup>/hectares;

e/ Forests with no reserve are forests having a timber tree average diameter of less than 8 cm and a timber reserve of standing trees of less than 10 m<sup>3</sup>/hectare.

2. For bamboo forests: Forests are classified according to bamboo species, tree diameter and density

Species of bamboo	Tree diameter (cm)	Status	Density (trees/hectare)
Neohouzeaua	Big trees (D ≥ 5)	- Rich forests (dense)	≥ 8,000
		- Average forests	5,000 - 8,000
		- Poor forests (sparse)	< 5,000
	Small trees (D < 5)	- Rich forests (dense)	≥ 10,000
		- Average forests	6,000 - 10,000
		- Poor forests (sparse)	< 6,000

Arundinaria sp	Big trees (D ≥ 6)	- Rich forests (dense)	≥ 3,000
		- Average forests	1,000 - 3.000
		- Poor forests (sparse)	< 1,000
	Small trees (D < 6)	- Rich forests (dense)	≥ 5,000
		- Average forests	2,000 - 5.000
		- Poor forests (sparse)	< 2,000
Bamboo and dendrocalamus barbatus	Big trees (D ≥ 6)	- Rich forests (dense)	≥ 3,000
		- Average forests	1,000 - 3.000
		- Poor forests (sparse)	< 1,000
	Small trees (D < 6)	- Rich forests (dense)	≥ 5,000
		- Average forests	2,000 - 5.000
		- Poor forests (sparse)	< 2,000
Bambusa procera	Big trees (D ≥ 6)	- Rich forests (dense)	≥ 4,000
		- Average forests	2,000 - 4.000
		- Poor forests (sparse)	< 2,000
	Small trees (D < 6)	- Rich forests (dense)	≥ 6,000
		- Average forests	3,000 - 6.000
		- Poor forests (sparse)	< 3,000

**Article 9.** Land without forests planned for forestry

1. Land with forest plantations not yet constituting forests are land areas with forest plantations reaching an average height of less than 1.5 meters, for slow-growing trees, or 3 meters, for fast-growing trees, and a density of less than 1,000 trees per hectare.

2. Bare land with regenerated timber trees are

land areas without forests covered with brushy plants, grass expanses, canebrakes and regenerated timber trees of a height of at least 0.5 meter and a density of at least 500 trees/hectare, which are planned for forestry purposes.

3. Bare land without regenerated timber trees are land areas without forests which are planned for forestry purposes, including bare land and land with brushy plants, grass expanses,

canebrakes, redflower banana, tiger grass and silver grass.

4. Rocky mountains without trees are bare rocky mountains or rocky mountains with trees which fail to meet criteria for being identified as forests.

*Chapter III*

IMPLEMENTATION PROVISIONS

**Article 10.** Effect

1. This Circular takes effect 45 days from the date of its signing.

Previous regulations on criteria for forest identification and classification which are contrary to this Circular are annulled.

2. Localities, organizations and individuals are requested to promptly report any difficulties and problems arising in the course of implementation to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for consideration, amendment and supplementation.-

*For the Minister of  
Agriculture and Rural Development*  
Vice Minister  
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