

ABR PROGRAM TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE GUIDE



Volume III:

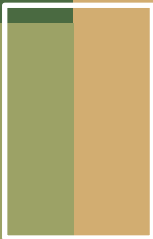
AGRICULTURAL GOOD PRACTICES, ENVIRONMENT, AND UNIT MANAGEMENT | Criteria 7 and 8

Agriculture can generate both positive and negative impacts on the environment depending on the practices adopted. To maximize benefits and reduce damage, it is fundamental to implement actions that protect forests, biodiversity, water resources, and the climate. One of the main pillars of the ABR Program is environmental management, aiming to ensure that farms do not contribute to illegal deforestation or ecosystem degradation. On the contrary, it seeks to promote preservation and recovery.

To achieve this, techniques are implemented to: Reduce water and soil contamination. Minimize waste generation. Optimize energy use. Protect ecosystems.

Special attention is given to practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, helping to mitigate climate change and strengthen the resilience of agricultural communities. By adopting sustainable agricultural practices, farms use essential resources like water and soil more efficiently, promoting a more responsible agriculture aligned with global environmental challenges.

Criterion 7 – Environmental Performance
Criterion 8 – Agricultural Good Practices



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In the context of sustainable crop management, Criteria 7 and 8 highlight the importance of agricultural practices that balance productivity, profitability, and the preservation of natural resources. By adopting diversified and sustainable practices, farms increase their resilience, preparing themselves better to face environmental challenges. The program encourages producers to declare the good practices already in place in cotton cultivation, seeking to demonstrate a balance between production and environmental conservation.

Requirements focus on the efficient use of inputs, the optimization of natural cycles, proper water management, and the reduction of pesticide use. One of the main tools promoted is Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which involves a combination of biological, cultural, and mechanical tactics to control pests, reducing dependence on pesticides. IPM not only decreases the excessive use of chemicals but also helps mitigate insect resistance and the emergence of secondary pests, in addition to reducing production costs.



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IPM follows three basic steps:

1. Evaluation of the agroecosystem, including crop monitoring;
2. Decision-making based on the information collected;
3. Selection of appropriate control methods, such as biological, cultural, behavioral (traps), mechanical, genetic, varietal (resistant plants), and chemical control, when necessary.

This approach contributes to more sustainable management, promoting economic and environmental advantages. The ABR Program, thus, reinforces the importance of agricultural practices that not only increase productivity but also minimize negative impacts on the environment, promoting a balance between agricultural efficiency and the conservation of natural resources.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity. It has a growing impact on cotton production, affecting various stages, from crop quality to water availability and soil management. High temperatures, irregular precipitation patterns, and extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, can significantly reduce productivity, in addition to increasing production costs. These challenges not only threaten the cotton production chain but also jeopardize the livelihoods of communities.

In order to face these impacts, the adoption of more resilient and sustainable agricultural practices becomes increasingly essential. These initiatives must promote resilience, adaptation, and sustainability, aiming to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

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NATIONAL POLICIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

In Brazil, the National Policy for Adaptation to Climate Change (PNAC) serves as an important pillar in this process. This plan aims to implement actions that reduce climate risks in the country, seeking to minimize the adverse effects of climate change on society, the economy, and the environment. In the agricultural sector, the PNAC aims to provide tools and information so that rural producers and public managers can make more informed and secure decisions, despite climate uncertainties. The strategy involves access to technologies, technical data, and production processes that favor the implementation of more sustainable and resilient agricultural systems.

In addition to the PNAC, a new "Climate Plan" will be presented in 2025, with the intention of being the main guide for Brazilian actions toward climate neutrality. This new plan will bring national mitigation targets that will be detailed in eight sectoral plans, all based on technical-scientific data and prepared with the active participation of society.

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Within this federal government policy, there are some tools already used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAPA) as an integrated strategy, aiming to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure the continuity of Brazilian agricultural production in an increasingly challenging climate scenario. These tools are the ABC+ Plan and the Agricultural Climate Risk Zoning (ZARC).

The ABC+ Program is another Brazilian public policy aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural practices and adapting agriculture to climate change. The main objective is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increase the resilience of agricultural systems between the years 2025 and 2030.

The main strategies used by the program, seeking reduction, are:

- Carbon accumulation in the soil through the adoption of low-carbon agricultural management practices, such as the No-Till System (SPD);
- Recovery of degraded pastures;
- Integrated production systems (which combine crops, livestock, and/or forests in the same area - ILPF);

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- Biological nitrogen fixation;
- Animal waste treatment;
- Forest planting;
- Genetic improvement.

Agricultural Climate Risk Zoning (ZARC) is used to guide crop planting according to climate conditions and the agricultural suitability of different regions, reducing the risks associated with production losses.

Other strategies and actions that can be developed to ensure the sector's resilience are:

- Development of resilient cultivars;
- Conservation of natural resources;
- Promotion of the use of efficient irrigation systems;
- Rural insurance policy;

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- Promotion of digital technologies and real-time climate monitoring, such as moisture sensors and climate forecasting platforms;
- Encouraging agricultural research in institutions such as EMBRAPA (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation), to develop innovative solutions that increase the sector's adaptation capacity;
- Stimulating the adoption of systems that integrate trees, crops, and livestock, offering ecological and productive benefits.

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ADAPTATION

Adaptation to climate change consists of adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. Adaptation in agricultural systems has become a central element in policies and research because these systems represent the widest scope of land use occupation on the planet.

Adaptation to climate change in cotton cultivation is crucial, as the crop is highly sensitive to temperature variations, water availability, and soil quality, all of which are affected by these changes.

To face these challenges, it is important to find ways to monitor and minimize the risks and impacts of climate change on cotton fields. Certain techniques and strategies can be implemented to increase the resilience of agricultural systems, allowing them to adapt to transforming climatic conditions, such as unpredictable precipitation patterns, more intense droughts, and rising temperatures. These practices contribute to the protection of ecosystems and ensure the long-term viability of production.

As primary practices, we can cite several adaptation approaches:

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- Selection of Resilient Varieties
- Efficient Water Management
- Soil Conservation Practices
- Sustainable Use of Fertilizers and Pesticides
- Climate Forecasting and Monitoring

Within this theme, the ABR Program guides and encourages participating producers to adopt new practices through audit requirements, which are focused on actions that promote adaptation to climate change.

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MITIGATION

Climate change mitigation refers to actions and strategies implemented to reduce or limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the atmosphere, in order to decrease the speed and magnitude of global warming.

Mitigation in cotton cultivation is a central issue, as agriculture—combined with forestry and other land uses—contributes substantially to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In cotton farming, there are several strategies that can be adopted to reduce these emissions, increase sustainability, and contribute to mitigating climate impacts. These strategies are designed to minimize environmental effects while ensuring productivity and competitiveness, utilizing market-available technologies with lower costs and environmental impacts.

Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) stands out as an essential tool for climate change mitigation. It integrates strategies to increase agricultural productivity, promote adaptation to climate effects, and reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions associated with agriculture. CSA aims to make agriculture more sustainable, efficient, and resilient, serving as a multifunctional approach to face the challenges imposed by changes in the climate.

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As primary mitigation practices within climate-smart approaches, we have:

- Sustainable Soil Management and No-Till Farming;
- Crop Rotation;
- Efficient Use of Water Resources;
- Management of Fertilizers and Inputs;
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM);
- Precision Agriculture;
- Adoption of Climate-Resilient Plant Varieties;
- Carbon Sequestration and Storage.

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The ABR program establishes specific requirements related to sustainability and climate, with indicators that are evaluated and listed in its guidelines.

REFERENCES

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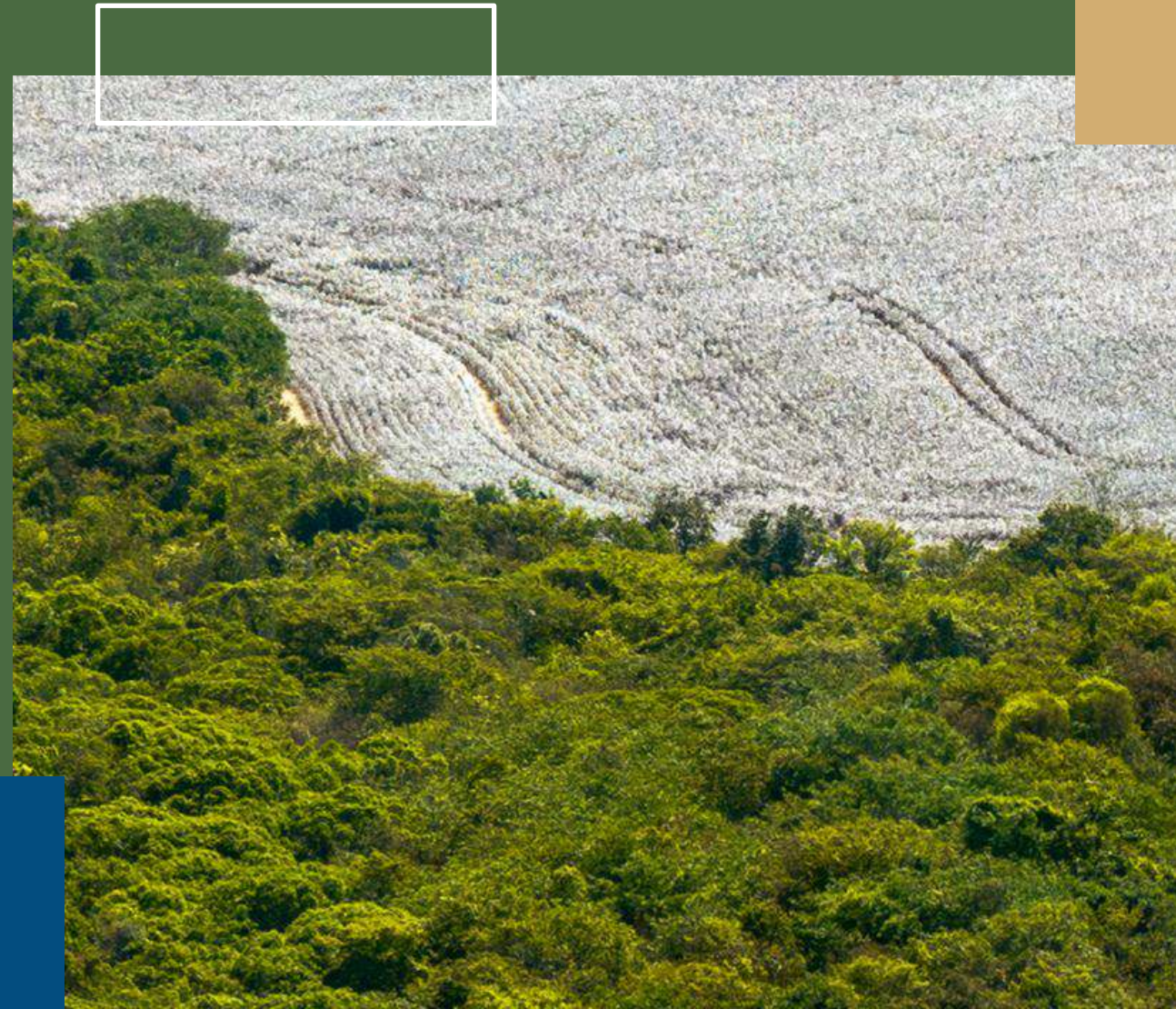
https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2023-2026/2024/Lei/L14904.htm



CRITERION 7

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Conservation of
Forests, Other Natural
Ecosystems, and
Protected Areas



7.2

Does the farm have a legal reserve and respect the minimum legal preserved area according to its biome and prohibit hunting and fishing?

LEGAL BASIS:

Law No. 9,605 of February 12, 1998,
Law No. 12,651, of May 25, 2012.
Decree No. 9,640, of December 27, 2018.
Decree No. 8,225, of May 05, 2014.

Interviews: With the farm representative and employees to determine if the farm prohibits hunting and fishing, has a Legal Reserve, and displays "No Hunting and Fishing" signs.

Physical Verification: Check through visits to the reserve areas if they are isolated and have Legal Reserve signs, "No Hunting and Fishing" signs, or internal information flyers in locations easily accessible to people. **On farms where there is no native vegetation, nor rivers, streams, or lakes, this item should be considered Not Applicable.**

Documentary Analysis: Analyze, where available: Legal Reserve Ratification Terms, or Reserve Registration on the Property Deed, or an active/validated CAR (Rural Environmental Registry), or CEFIR (State Forestry Registry of Rural Property), or Environmental License. If the production unit does not meet the minimum required percentage, present the Legal Reserve Compensation Term or the orientation/instruction provided to employees regarding the prohibition of hunting and fishing.

Comments:

If the audit team identifies any discrepancy between the informed Legal Reserve (RL) areas and those evidenced documentarily, regularization must be carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the competent state environmental agency. It is recommended to consult the responsible agency to adopt necessary measures and appropriate adjustments.

For the verification of compliance regarding the prohibition of hunting and fishing, an in loco visit is not strictly necessary. The existence of signs informing the prohibition, installed at strategic points of the unit, is sufficient to validate fulfillment of the requirement.

7.3

Have identification, mapping and preservation of riparian areas, springs, water bodies and watercourses been developed, with characterization of existing vegetation on the farm?

LEGAL BASIS:

Law No. 12,651, of May 25, 2012.

CONAMA Resolution No. 302, of March 20, 2002.

Interviews: With the farm representative, to determine if the farm possesses identification maps showing the mapping of springs, water bodies, and watercourses, along with the characterization of the existing vegetation on the farm.

Physical Verification: Verify through sketches and maps.

Documentary Analysis: Analyze the maps, identification, and mapping of springs, water bodies, and watercourses, including the characterization of the existing vegetation on the farm. Analyze the CAR.

7.4

Is there an activity and monitoring plan in place to ensure the conservation of native vegetation and wildlife?

Interviews: With the person responsible for the farm to verify if the unit has developed an activity plan for environmental conservation. Identify the main actions implemented to maintain native vegetation and wildlife. Confirm if there is any type of continuous monitoring of these areas, even if based on periodic observations.

Documentary Verification: Evaluate pertinent documentation, which must demonstrate proactive actions to ensure native vegetation is conserved. The plan may be developed based on guidelines provided by state associations.

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7.5

Does the farm carry out actions that maintain native vegetation and wildlife conserved?

Interviews: With the person responsible for the farm to cite the actions or planning in place to conserve native vegetation. Identify which daily actions are performed to protect natural areas and fauna. Verify if the farm conducts any type of follow-up.

Physical/Visual Verification: Visit farm areas to confirm the existence of preserved vegetation (APP, Legal Reserve, woodlands, protected springs, etc.). Observe if there are signs of protection, such as fences, signs, or firebreaks, and if there is a presence of wild animals, indicating a conserved environment.

Documentary Verification: Check documents showing actions taken to conserve vegetation, such as the CAR, maps, photos, training records, or a conservation plan.

7.6 Does the farm have any degraded areas? If so, does it have a Degraded Area Recovery Plan (PRADA)?

LEGAL BASIS:

Normative Instruction 11, of December 11, 2014.

Law No. 6,938, of August 31, 1981.

Interviews: With the person responsible for the farm. Inquire about the recovery actions being carried out in the degraded area.

Documentary Analysis: If the farm possesses such areas, request the Conduct Adjustment Agreement (TAC) or verify if the PRADA is being complied with, where applicable. To establish compliance for this item, the auditor must analyze the indication and delimitation of the degraded area in the CAR.

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7.7 Have managers, area heads and employees been guided and instructed on the importance of adopting good environmental protection practices as a way to guarantee sustainability for the agribusiness chain, as well as quality of life for current and future generations?

LEGAL BASIS:

Law No. 12,651, of May 25, 2012.

Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988.

Interviews: With the farm representative and employees, to determine if the farm guides managers, area heads, and employees on the importance of adopting environmental protection best practices to ensure sustainability for the agribusiness chain and quality of life for current and future generations.

Physical Verification: Verify the existence of booklets and guidance signs for farm employees.

Documentary Analysis: Verify the content of courses or specific training documentation for managers, area heads, and employees regarding the importance of adopting environmental protection best practices to ensure sustainability for the agribusiness chain and quality of life for current and future generations.

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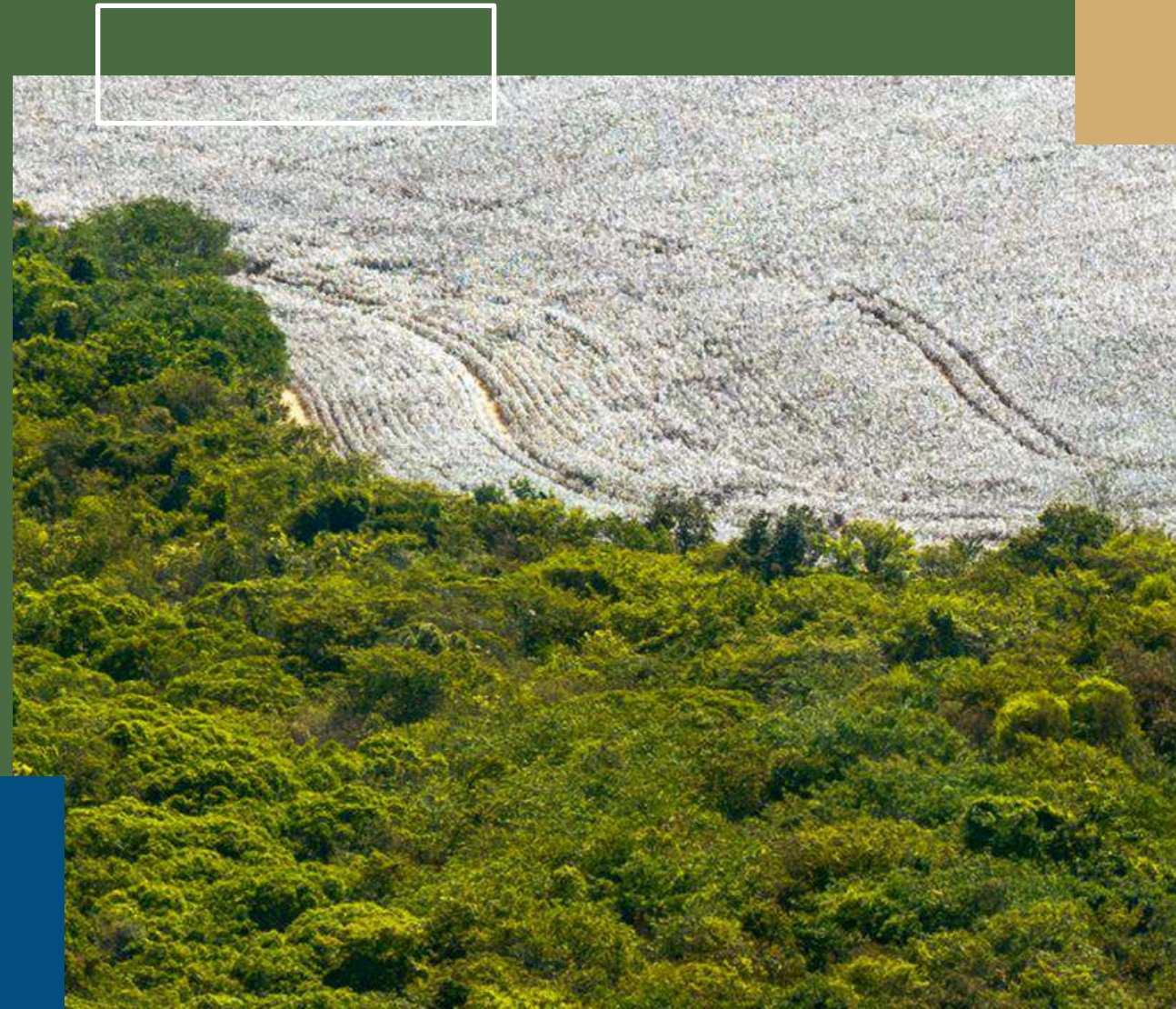
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CRITERION 7
**ENVIRONMENTAL
PERFORMANCE**

Land Use



7.8 Is the production unit in compliance with national legislation related to legal land use?

Documentary Analysis: Analyze documentation related to land tenure regularization with clear terms signed by the landowners (possession, deed, title, lease agreement, and others).

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7.9 Is land conversion for cotton cultivation in compliance with national legislation related to agricultural land use?

LEGAL BASIS:

Law No. 12,651, of May 25, 2012.

Interviews: With the farm representative, to verify when the last land-use conversion occurred in the unit and if there are formal records of this process.

Visual Assessment: During the property visit, observe for areas showing recent signs of vegetation suppression or land-use alteration.

Documentary Evidence: Present the land-use conversion authorization, including registration and licensing with the competent environmental agency. If the area is already consolidated (i.e., used for productive activities prior to current environmental legislation and without the need for new authorizations), there is no requirement to present specific documentation, provided this condition can be proven.

Comments: Conversion areas must not overlap with areas protected by law or Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

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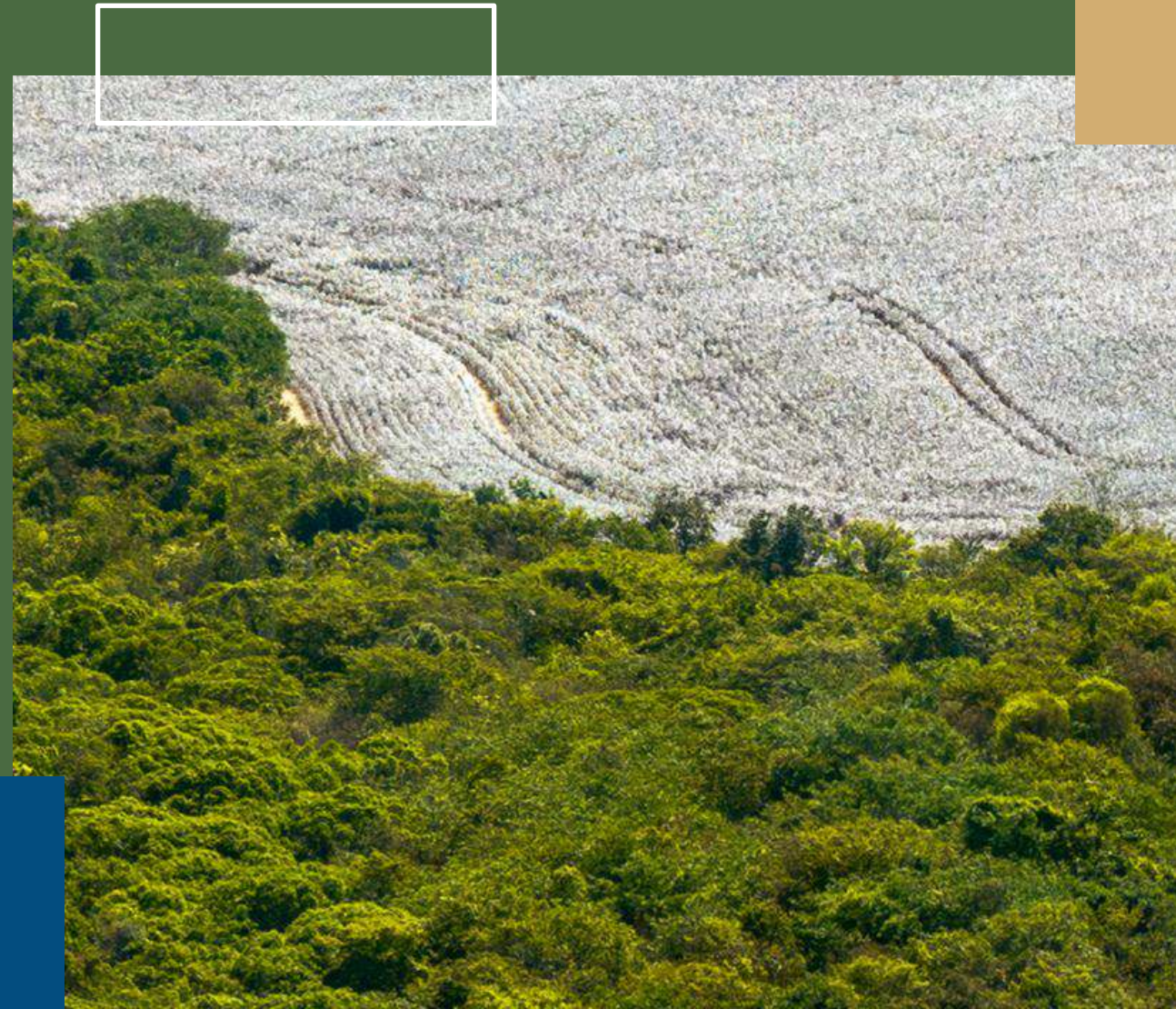
7.10	Do conversion areas not overlap with protected areas (conservation units, environmental preservation parks and APPs (riparian forest)) and key biodiversity areas?
Visual Assessment: During the visit to the property areas, evaluate the existence of suppression areas. Documentary Evidence: Present the CAR to evaluate the existence or absence of overlaps.	
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7.11	Was the BCI-licensed cotton in the current harvest implemented only in areas where there was no conversion of natural ecosystems after 12/31/2020?
The auditor must follow the procedures established in the document “Guidance for Auditors – Natural Ecosystem Area Conversion Item,” ensuring that the verification is conducted according to the defined criteria.	
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CRITERION 7

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Water Resource
Management and
Conservation



7.12	Is it possible to prove that the farm uses management practices that optimize water use in soil and minimize water evaporation from soil?							
LEGAL BASIS: Resolution No. 1,938, of October 30, 2017. Law No. 9,443, of January 08, 1997.		Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm practices no-till farming, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover, or mulching, and maintains the property's internal roads. Physical Verification: Evidence the areas to verify if the farm practices no-till farming, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover, or mulching, and manages the conservation of internal roads. Documentary Analysis: Through the harvest plan, verify if the farm practices no-till farming, contour plowing, terracing, minimum tillage, green cover, or mulching, and manages the conservation of internal roads.						
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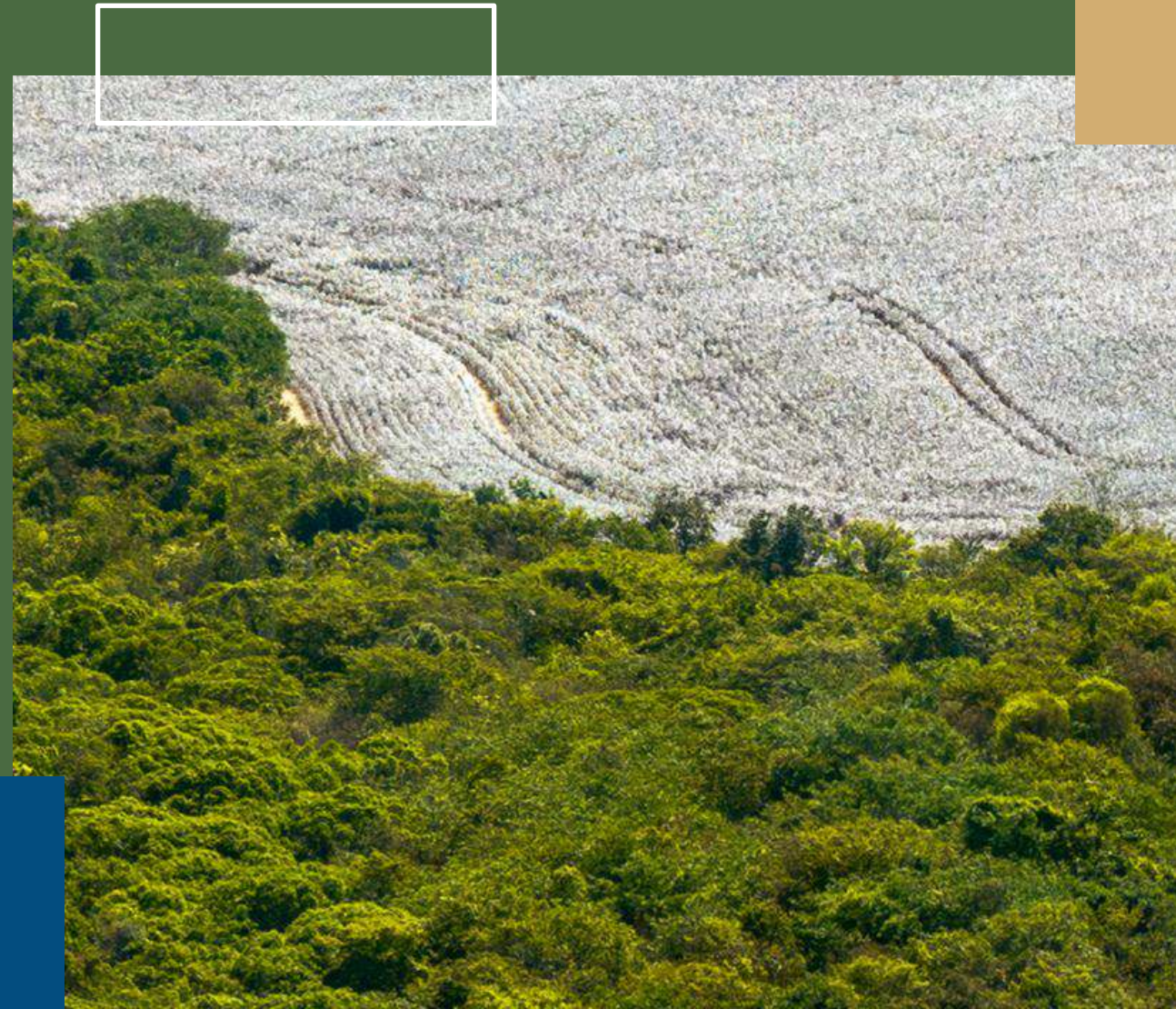
7.13	If the farm uses any irrigation process, is the procedure documented according to professional technical recommendations for irrigation efficiency? Is daily volume measured and recorded? And is irrigation time planned to maximize productivity, and not conducted on a rigid predetermined calendar/schedule? Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm uses irrigation. Physical Verification: Verify if the property has a map with the location of irrigated areas and evidence those areas. Check for the presence of water meters or measuring devices/systems. Documentary Analysis: Check for the existence of technical recommendations made by a qualified professional; present a description of how measurements are taken via water meters or measuring devices. It must be verified if irrigation water use in cotton crops is supplementary to rainfall. If supplementary, request the log of days or hours the crop was irrigated, cross-referencing it with the technically recommended irrigation management, and verify water consumption measurements against the permitted volume.
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7.14	Does the farm have a control planning for water management practices to ensure that its extraction does not have adverse effects on groundwater or watercourses? Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm holds a water permit or a permit waiver, and identify the locations of water abstraction. Physical Verification: Evidence the locations where water is abstracted and the water meters or measuring devices/systems that record the volume captured. If the unit does not use irrigation systems, a water use permit waiver may be presented. Documentary Analysis: If the farm holds a water permit, provide evidence by requesting the ordinance number or authorization informing the property's permit, or the protocol for the permit renewal request or equivalent document.
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CRITERION 7

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Waste
Management



7.15 Does the farm regularly send empty pesticide containers and packaging to authorized receiving units and keep return receipts on file?

LEGAL BASIS:

NR 31 item 31.7.3 letter "h".

Interviews: With employees from the HR departments, responsible office, SESTR, and the pesticide sector to determine if the farm regularly sends empty pesticide containers and packaging to authorized receiving units and maintains the return receipts on file.

Physical Verification: Verify the storage location for empty containers and see if it meets the requirements of NR 31 (properly locked, signposted, and preventing the entry of animals). Also, verify proof of the forwarding of empty containers to licensed units. Ensure that empty containers are properly punctured and triple-washed.

Documentary Analysis: Verify the proof of delivery of empty containers to licensed disposal or recycling units. The delivery must be accompanied by a "simple remittance" invoice (nota fiscal de simples remessa), detailing the material and weight, upon which the receiver will place their stamp with date and signature. This signed invoice or other document issued by the receiving unit must be kept with the purchase documentation and the agronomic prescription. Verify in the Service Orders (OS) or instructions the prohibition of reusing empty containers, as well as the guidance to perform triple-washing (or pressure-washing) and subsequent puncturing.

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7.16 Does the farm have adequate storage for batteries?

LEGAL BASIS:

Law No. 12,305, of August 02, 2010.
CONAMA Resolution No. 401, of November 4, 2008.

Interviews: With the farm representative to determine if the farm has a storage area for batteries.

Physical Verification: Verify where they are stored. They must be organized (not scattered around the farm), protected from the weather, and kept on an impermeable floor.

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7.17 Does the farm have adequate storage for tires?

LEGAL BASIS:

Law No. 12,305, of August 02, 2010.
CONAMA Resolution No. 416, of September 30, 2009.

Interviews: With the farm representative to determine if the farm has a storage area for tires.

Physical Verification: Verify the storage location. Tires must be organized, not scattered, and protected from the weather (to prevent water accumulation).

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7.18 Are vehicles and equipment that the farm uses for transporting pesticides, adjuvants, additives and related products, including those subsequently used for other purposes, completely sanitized and decontaminated, so as not to contaminate wells, springs, rivers and water collections?

LEGAL BASIS:

NR 31 item 31.7.3 letters “k”, “l”, and item 31.7.12.

Interviews: With employees from the HR departments, responsible office, SESTR, and the pesticide sector, to determine if the vehicles and equipment used by the farm to transport pesticides, adjuvants, and related products—including those later used for other purposes—are fully sanitized and decontaminated to avoid contaminating wells, springs, rivers, and water bodies.

Physical Verification: Verify the decontamination status of vehicles and equipment used for the **land transport** of pesticides, adjuvants, and related products. **Verify the machinery and equipment used for transport and spraying.** Verify the site where vehicles, machinery, and equipment are washed to check if they have an impermeable pad with drainage channels directed to containment tanks.

Documentary Verification: Procedures and/or Work Instructions detailing the decontamination process, including measures to prevent the contamination of water bodies.

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7.19	Does the farm have containment, drainage, leak or waste recovery systems at machine and vehicle refueling stations?
LEGAL BASIS: ANP Resolution No. 12 of 03/21/2007. Resolution No. 273 of November 29, 2000. NR 20 item 20.5.1 and item 20.14.4.	Interviews: With the farm representative and the professional responsible for the fueling sector to determine if the farm has containment, drainage, and leak/residue recovery systems at the machinery and vehicle fueling stations. Physical Verification: Verify fueling sites for vehicles and machinery and confirm if containment systems are adequate by checking: if the tank is inside a containment dike; if this dike's drain valve is closed; if there is a fueling pad that is impermeable and equipped with collection channels; and if it has oil-water separator (SAO) tanks that are correctly performing the separation function.
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7.20	Does the farm have containment, drainage and leak or waste recovery systems at machine and vehicle washing locations?
LEGAL BASIS: Resolution No. 273 of November 29, 2000.	Physical Verification: Verify the washing areas for vehicles and machinery to confirm if the farm has containment, drainage, and leak/residue recovery systems by checking: if there is a washer pad that is impermeable and equipped with collection channels; if it has a sand trap that is functioning; and if it has oil-water separator (SAO) tanks that are correctly performing the separation function. This requirement does not apply to transport, machinery, and equipment used for pesticide application.
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7.21 Does the farm have containment, drainage and leak or waste recovery systems at machine and vehicle lubrication locations?

LEGAL BASIS:

Resolution No. 273 of November 29, 2000.

Interviews: With the farm representative and the professional responsible for the lubrication sector to determine if the farm has containment, drainage, and leak/residue recovery systems at the machinery and vehicle lubrication sites.

Physical Verification: Verify the lubrication sites for vehicles and machinery to confirm if the farm has containment, drainage, and leak/residue recovery systems by checking: if the farm has a lubrication pad that is impermeable and equipped with collection channels; and if it has oil-water separator (SAO) tanks that are correctly performing the separation function.

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7.22 Does the farm not practice burning of waste or crop residues, except for authorized burning or intended for energy production?

LEGAL BASIS:

Decree No. 2,661, of July 08, 1998.

Interviews: With the farm representative or employees to determine if the farm practices the burning of Class I and hazardous waste—such as pesticide packaging, used tires, waste oil, etc.—as well as crop residues and area clearing.

Physical Verification:

1. Evidence the areas to verify if the farm practices the improper burning of Class I waste (mineral oils, lubricants, greases, etc.), crop residues, or hazardous waste, such as pesticide packaging, used tires, waste oil, etc.
2. Verify if fire is used for area clearing after the crop harvest, with the exception of authorized burning or that intended for energy production.

Documentary Verification: Verify proof of the correct disposal of Class I waste.

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7.23 Has the farm implemented any process or measure to minimize impacts on water quality caused by chemical waste?	LEGAL BASIS: MAPA Normative Instruction 02/2008. Interviews: With the farm representative and employees to determine if the farm has an adequate structure for aircraft decontamination. Physical Verification: Verify if at the site for mixture preparation and/or decontamination for aerial application there are mechanisms such as: impermeable flooring, adequate slope for drainage, containment or channels, a reservoir for contaminated water, an ozonizer, and a containment/evaporation reservoir (if applicable), or any other measure presented that prevents the contamination of natural resources by the use of chemical products. Documentary Analysis: If applicable, a water quality report prepared by a competent company or professional upstream and downstream, when there is a discharge of sewage or residues from machinery washing or mixture preparation into any water body, or if cesspools are located near them.
ABR  CMP  BCI  CMP  CMP = Critério Mínimo de Produção (item obrigatório).  Aplicável à certificação ABR ou licenciamento BCI.  Não aplicável à certificação ABR ou licenciamento BCI.	