



**Addendum to SQC Scheme Standard October 2024
April 2025**

This addendum modifies and supplements the publication of the SQC Scheme Standard Manual issued in October 2024.

Amendments to wording (no substantive changes to Standards) – as outlined below – have been undertaken to comply with requirements through the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001.

Full document: All references to 'Renewable Energy Directive (RED) (EU) 2018/2001' should be replaced with:

- **Revised Directive EU/2018/2001**

Page 5 – At the end of the assessment

Additional text added to the end of this section – which reads:

“The Certification Team will undertake an evaluation of the completed assessment report submitted by the assessor together with any corrective evidence for non-compliances identified during the assessment that has been submitted by the grower. Note - The audit team shall have the competence, experience and the generic and specific skills necessary for conducting the audit taking into account the scope of the audit. Where there is only one auditor, the auditor shall also have the competence to perform the duties of an audit team leader applicable for that audit. The certification body shall ensure that the certification decision is taken by a technical reviewer that was not part of the audit team.”

Page 6 – European Union Database

The statement “The Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 specifies that relevant economic operators shall enter data onto the European Union database as soon as this comes into operation” to be replaced with:

“The Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 specifies that relevant economic operators shall enter data onto the European Union database in a timely manner.”

Page 20 – Title of Section 3.0

The current title of Section 3.0 – ‘Standards for the Production, Harvesting of Crops and Biodiversity Land (HACCP 1 and 6) to be replaced with:

‘Standards for the Production and Harvesting of Crops (HACCP 1 and 6)

Page 20 – Introductory paragraph to Section 3.0

The following notes have been added to the Introduction to Section 3.0

- **Note – Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 was as previously referred to as Renewable Energy Directive (RED) (EU) 2018/2001.**

Page 20 – Introductory paragraph to Section 3.0

The final paragraph which states “Detailed information on high biodiversity land can be found here.” to be replaced with:

“Detailed information on high biodiversity land, high carbon stock and peatland can be found on the SQC website – and is also available at the end of this Section”.

Page 20 – Introductory paragraph to Section 3.0

The document as referred to in the final paragraph has been fully revised in line with the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001 (a copy of which is included at the end of this addendum). It is entitled ‘SQC Standards 3.0 – Production and Harvesting of Crops – Additional Guidance.’

Page 20 – Standard 3.1

Under the column entitled ‘Requirements’ – paragraph ‘Growers must provide this information to produce biofuel crops compliant with the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001. Growers must comply with the Articles 29 (3) to (7), the land-based sustainability criteria, of Directive EU 2018/2001’ – to be replaced by:

- **Growers must provide this information to produce biofuel crops (biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels produced from agricultural biomass) compliant with the Revised Directive EU/2018/2001. Growers must comply with the**

Articles 29 (3) to (7), the land-based sustainability criteria, of Revised Directive EU/2018/2001.

Page 20 – Standard 3.1

Under the column entitled 'Requirements' – paragraph currently stating 'Crops (raw materials) must not be obtained from land with a high biodiversity value, namely land that had one of the following statuses on or after 01 January 2008', the bullet points will now read as follows:

- **Land with high biodiversity or**
- **Land with a high carbon stock or**
- **Land that was peatland unless evidence is provided that the cultivation and harvesting of those crops does not involve drainage of previously drained soil**

SQC STANDARDS 3.0 – PRODUCTION AND HARVESTING OF CROPS ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE	
Scope and definitions	<p>‘Biomass’ means the biodegradable fraction of products, wastes and residues from biological origin from agriculture, including vegetal and animal substances from forestry and related industries, including fisheries and aquaculture as well as the biodegradable fraction of waste including industrial and municipal waste of biological origin.</p> <p>‘Agricultural biomass’ means biomass produced from agriculture.</p> <p>‘Biofuels’ means liquid fuel for transport produced from biomass.</p> <p>‘Bioliquids’ means liquid fuels for transport produced from agriculture.</p> <p>‘Biomass fuels’ means gaseous and solid fuels produced from biomass.</p>
Additional definitions	<p>“High biodiversity land” is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary forest and other wooded land, namely forest and other wooded land of native species, where there is no clearly visible indication of human activity and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed, and old growth forest. • Highly biodiverse forest and other wooded land which is species-rich and not degraded, or has been identified as being highly biodiverse by the relevant competent authority, unless evidence is produced that the production of the crops did not interfere with those nature protection purposes. • Areas designated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. by law or by the relevant competent authority for nature protection purposes or ii. for the protection of rare, threatened or endangered eco-systems or species recognised by international agreements or included in lists drawn up by intergovernmental organisations or the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, subject to their recognition in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 30(4) (unless evidence is provided that the production of that raw material did not interfere with those nature protection purposes) • Highly biodiverse grassland spanning more than one hectare that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. natural, namely grassland that would remain grassland in the absence of human intervention and that maintains the natural species composition and ecological characteristics and processes: or ii. non-natural, namely grassland that would cease to be grassland in the absence of human intervention and that is species-rich and not degraded and has been identified as being highly biodiverse by the relevant competent authority, unless evidence is provided that the harvesting of the raw material is necessary to preserve its status as highly biodiverse grassland. • Heathland¹: Heathland vegetation occurs widely on mineral soils and thin peats (0.5m). For the purposes of this plan upland heathland is defined as lying below the alpine or montane zone (at about 600–750m) and usually above the upper edge of enclosed agricultural land (generally at around 250–400m but descending to near sea-level in northern Scotland). <p>Lowland heathland occurs below the upper limit of agricultural enclosure and supports a range of birds, reptiles and invertebrates not found on</p>

¹ [UK BAP Priority Habitat Descriptions \(Dwarf Shrub Heath\) \(2008\) | JNCC Resource Hub](#)

	<p>upland heath; this habitat is covered by a separate habitat action plan. Montane heaths, restricted to high-altitude mountain summits and ridges, are also excluded from the upland heathland plan.</p> <p>Blanket bog and other mires, grassland, bracken, scrub, trees and woodland, freshwater and rock habitats frequently form intimate mosaics with heathland vegetation in upland situations. This plan recognises the importance of this habitat mosaic. Habitat action plans have been produced for some elements of this complex, for example, blanket bog and upland calcareous grassland.</p> <p>Upland heath in 'favourable condition' is typically dominated by a range of dwarf shrubs such as heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>, bilberry <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>, crowberry <i>Empetrum nigrum</i>, bell heather <i>Erica cinerea</i> and, in the south and west, western gorse <i>Ulex gallii</i>. In northern areas juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i> is occasionally seen above a heath understorey.</p> <p>Wet heath is most commonly found in the wetter north and west and, in 'favourable condition', should be dominated by mixtures of cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i>, deer grass <i>Scirpus cespitosus</i>, heather, and purple moor-grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i>, over an understorey of mosses often including carpets of <i>Sphagnum</i> species. This habitat is distinct from blanket mire which occurs on deeper peat and which usually contains frequent occurrence of hare's-tail cotton grass <i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i> and characteristic mosses.</p> <p>High quality heaths are generally structurally diverse, containing stands of vegetation with heather at different stages of growth. Upland heath in 'favourable condition' also usually includes areas of mature heather. Upland heathland encompasses a range of National Vegetation Classification (NVC) plant communities. <i>Ulex gallii</i> - <i>Agrostis curtisii</i> (H4) and <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> - <i>U. gallii</i> (H8) are restricted to southern Britain. <i>Calluna</i> - <i>V. myrtillus</i> (H12) is particularly widespread in the east. <i>Calluna</i> - <i>E. cinerea</i> (H10), <i>Calluna</i> - <i>V. myrtillus</i> - <i>Sphagnum capillifolium</i> (H21), and <i>Scirpus cespitosus</i> - <i>E. tetralix</i> (M15) are especially characteristic of western margins. <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> - <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> (H18) is generally widespread in the uplands but other communities are more local in distribution, notably <i>Calluna</i> - <i>D. flexuosa</i> (H9), <i>Calluna</i> - <i>Arctostaphylos uva-urii</i> (H16) and <i>E. tetralix</i> - <i>Sphagnum compactum</i> (M16).</p> <p>The distribution of these communities is influenced by climate, altitude, aspect, slope, maritime influences and management practices including grazing and burning. An important assemblage of birds is associated with upland heath, including red grouse <i>Lagopus lagopus</i>, black grouse <i>Tetrao tetrix</i>, merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> and hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>. Some forms of heath also have a significant lower plant interest, including assemblages of rare and local mosses and liverworts that are particularly associated with the wetter western heaths.</p> <p>Note: The following definitions shall be applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Old growth forest' means a forest stand or area consisting of native tree species that have developed, predominantly through natural processes, structures and dynamics normally associated with late-seral developmental phases in primary or undisturbed forests of the same type. Signs of former human activities may be visible, but they are gradually disappearing or too limited to significantly disturb natural processes².
--	--

² COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Commission Guidelines for Defining, Mapping, Monitoring and Strictly Protecting EU Primary and Old-Growth Forests, SWD(2023) 62 final (section 2.3)).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Degraded’ means characterised by long-term loss of biodiversity due to, for instance, over- grazing, mechanical damage to the vegetation, soil erosion or loss of soil quality. • ‘Species-rich’ means it is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. a habitat of significant importance to critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable species as classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species or other lists with a similar purpose for species or habitats laid down in national legislation or recognised by a competent national authority in the country of origin of the raw material; or ii. a habitat of significant importance to endemic or restricted-range species; or iii. a habitat of significant importance to intra-species genetic diversity; or iv. a habitat of significant importance to globally significant concentrations of migratory species or congregatory species; or v. a regionally or nationally significant or highly threatened or unique ecosystem. • “High carbon stock” is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Land that was wetland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wetland is land that is covered with or saturated by water permanently or for a significant part of the year ii. Land that was continuously forested <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously forested areas are defined as land spanning more than one hectare with trees higher than 5m and a canopy cover of more than 30% or trees able to reach those thresholds in situ • Continuously forested areas do not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use. Agricultural land refers to tree stands in agricultural production systems, such as fruit tree plantations, oil palm plantations and agroforestry systems when crops are grown under tree cover. iii. Land that was forested with canopy cover between 10% and 30% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land spanning more than one hectare with trees higher than 5m and canopy cover of between 10% and 30%, or trees able to reach those thresholds in situ, unless evidence is provided that the carbon stock of the area before and after conversion is such that, when the methodology laid down in Part C of Annex 5 of the Directive is applied, the conditions laid down in Article 29 (10) would be fulfilled. <p>These provisions shall not apply if, at the time the raw material was obtained, the land had the same status as it had in January 2008.</p>
--	---