PEFC INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Requirements for certification schemes

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Standard setting – requirements

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Foreword

PEFC Council (the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) is a worldwide organisation promoting sustainable forest management through forest certification and labelling of forest based products. Products with PEFC claim and / or label deliver confidence that raw material originates in sustainably managed forest.

PEFC Council provides endorsement of national forest certification schemes which are required to comply with PEFC Council requirements subject to regular evaluations.

This document has been developed in an open, transparent, consultative and consensus based process covering a broad range of stakeholders.

Introduction

PEFC Council endorses national forest certification schemes for sustainable forest management. Forest conditions, their ecological, social, economical, and historical aspects vary amongst different regions and countries. PEFC Council reflects this fact though incorporating national forest certification schemes and standards which are suitable to local situations.

Sustainable forest management is a holistic approach taking into account ecological, social and economic aspects. Participation of local and national interested parties, which are affected by forest management; in an open, transparent and consensus based process, is an essential element in the development of a forest certification scheme and definition of sustainable forest management.

The document is based on ISO/IEC Guide 59. In addition, ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards was taken into consideration.
1 **Scope**

This document covers the requirements for a standardising body for the development and revision of forest management and scheme specific chain of custody standards.

2 **Normative references**

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For both dated and undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendment) applies.


3 **Terms and Definitions**

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996 apply.

3.1 **Consensus**

General agreement, characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interest and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.

Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity (ISO Guide 2)

3.2 **Enquiry draft**

Proposed document that is available for public consultation.

3.3 **Final draft**

Proposed document that is available for formal approval.

3.4 **Normative document**

Document that provides rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results.

Note 1: The term "normative document" is a generic term that covers such documents as standards, technical specifications, codes of practice and regulations.

Note 2: A "document" is to be understood as any medium with information recorded on or in it.

Note 3: The terms for different kinds of normative documents are defined considering the document and its content as a single entity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)

3.5 **Revision**

Introduction of all necessary changes to the substance and presentation of a normative document.

Note: The results of revision are presented by issuing a new edition of the normative document (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.6 **Review**
Activity of checking a normative document to determine whether it is to be reaffirmed, changed or withdrawn.

3.7 Standard

Document, established by consensus and approved by a recognised body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree or order in a given context.

Note: Standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, and aimed at the promotion of optimum benefits (ISO/IEC Guide 2)

3.8 Standardising body

Body that has recognised activities in standardisation (ISO Guide 2)

Note: Standardising body for forest management scheme / standard is a body which is responsible for the development and maintenance of standards of the forest certification scheme. The standardising body can be a PEFC national governing body or the standardising body can be separated from the governance of the forest certification scheme.

3.9 Working draft

Proposed document that is available generally for comments or voting within the working group / committee.

4 Standardising body

4.1 The standardising body shall have written procedures for standard setting activities describing:

a) its status and structure, including a body responsible for consensus building (see 4.4) and for formal adoption of the standard (see 5.10),

b) record keeping,

c) procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,

d) standard setting process,

e) mechanism for reaching consensus, and

Note: Where a vote is used as a part of decision making procedures, the standard setting procedures include decision making threshold(s) that is considered to achieve the consensus and that are consistent with the consensus.

f) revision of standards / normative documents.

4.2 The standardising body shall make its standard setting procedures publicly available and shall conduct their regular review, including consideration of comments from interested parties.

4.3 The standardising body shall keep records relating to the standard setting process providing evidence of compliance with the requirements of this document and the standardising body’s own procedures. The records shall be kept for a minimum of five years and shall be available to interested parties upon request.

4.4 The standardising body shall establish a permanent or temporary working group / committee responsible for standardising work. The working group / committee shall:

a) be accessible to materially and directly affected interested persons and organisations,

b) have balanced representation and decision making of stakeholder categories relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard where single concerned interests shall not dominate nor be dominated in the process, and
c) include interested persons and organisations with an expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that are materially affected by the standard and those that can influence the implementation of the standard. The materially affected persons and organisations shall represent a meaningful segment of the participants.

4.5 The standardising body shall establish procedures for dealing with any substantive and procedural complaints relating to the standardising activities which are accessible to interested parties. Upon receipt of the complaint, the standard setting body shall:

a) acknowledge the complaint to the complainant,

b) gather and verify all necessary information to validate, impartially and objectively evaluate and make decision upon the complaint, and

c) formally communicate the decision on the compliant and of the complaint handling process to the complainant.

4.6 The standardising body shall establish at least one contact point for enquiries and complaints relating to its standard setting activities. The contact point shall be made easily available.

5 Standard setting process

5.1 The standardising body shall identify interested persons and organisations that are relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard setting work.

Note: A stakeholder mapping exercise that includes defining which interest sectors are relevant and why, and, for each sector, what are likely to be the key issues, who are the key stakeholders, and what means of communication will best reach them; is a recognised means of meeting the requirement.

5.2 The standardising body shall identify those interested persons and organisations who might be financially or otherwise disadvantaged in participation in the standard setting work or whose participation is critical for the results of the standard setting work, here in after “disadvantaged and key persons and organisations”. The standardising body shall address the constraints of their participation and proactively seek their participation and contribution.

5.3 The standardising body shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard setting process and invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and in suitable media as appropriate to afford interested persons and organisations an opportunity for meaningful contributions. The announcement and invitation shall include:

a) information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard setting process and its timetable,

b) information about opportunities of interested persons and interested parties to participate in the process,

c) an invitation to interested persons and organisations to nominate their representative to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key persons and organisations shall be made by a means ensuring that the information reaches its recipient and is understandable,

d) an invitation to comment on the scope and the standard setting process

e) reference to publicly available standard setting procedures.

5.4 The standardising body shall review the standard setting process based on comments received from the public announcement and establish a working group / committee or adjust the composition of an already existing working group / committee based on received nominations. The acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group / committee and resources available for the standard setting.

5.5 The work of the working group/ committee shall be organised in an open and transparent manner:

a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group / committee,
b) all members of the working group shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and submit comments to the working drafts, and

c) comments and views submitted by any member of the working group / committee shall be considered in an open and transparent way and their resolution and proposed changes shall be recorded.

5.6 The decision of the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of a consensus. In order to reach a consensus the working group / committee can utilise the following alternative processes to establish whether there is opposition:

a) a face-to-face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, show of hands for a yes/no vote; a statement on consensus from the Chair where there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal balloting process, etc.,

b) a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote,

c) an e-mail meeting where a request for agreement or objection is provided to members and the members providing a written response (a proxy for a vote), or

d) combinations thereof.

5.7 In the case of a negative vote which represents sustained opposition of any important part of the concerned interests to a substantive issue, the issue shall be resolved using the following mechanism:

a) discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group / committee in order to find a compromise,

b) direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise,

c) dispute resolution process.

5.8 The standard setting body shall organise a public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that:

a) the start and the end of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in suitable media,

b) the invitation of disadvantaged and key interested persons and organisations shall be made by a means ensuring that the information reaches its recipient and is understandable,

c) the enquiry draft is publicly available and accessible,

d) the public consultation is at least 60 days,

e) all received comments are considered by the working group/committee in an objective manner,

f) a synopsis of received comments compiled by material issue, including results of their consideration, is sent to all parties that submitted comments and is publicly available.

5.9 The standardising organisation shall prepare and make publicly available a standard setting report describing the standard setting process and its compliance with the standard setting procedures.

5.10 The standardising body shall formally approve the standards / normative documents based on evidence of consensus reached by the working group / committee.

5.11 The formally approved standards/normative documents shall be published in a timely manner and made publicly available.
6 Revision of standards / normative documents

6.1 The standards / normative documents shall be reviewed and revised at intervals that do not exceed a five years period. The procedures for the revision of the standards / normative documents shall follow chapter 5.

6.2 The revision shall define the application date and transition date of the revised standards / normative documents.

6.3 The application date shall not exceed a period of one year from the publication of the standard. This is needed for the endorsement of the revised standards / normative documents, introducing the changes, information dissemination and training.

6.4 The transition date shall not exceed a period of one year except in justified exceptional circumstances where the implementation of the revised standards / normative documents require a longer period.
Bibliography