Overview of major changes in PEFC GD 1007:201X – ED

1 Changes in the structure of the standard

- The previous Chapter 6 on system development and review has been removed. The system development and review are addressed in PEFC ST 1001. Where necessary chapters 6 and 7 link to standard development activities.
- The structure of the standard is simplified by reducing the level of headers. One consequence is that the process is less described in different phases, but more or less chronological (chapter 6.3)
- The endorsement is addressed in a separate chapter, and is fully ‘overhauled’.
- From Informative Guides to appendices:
  - The format of IGD is dropped in GD 1007.
  - Two appendices remain: the appointment of assessors and the assessment report.
  - The checklist will be available as a separate support document, so it can be easily updated and improved editorially.
  - The appendix on the Panel of Experts is removed (see 6.3.10).

2 Explaining specific clauses

3.2 Applicant system

The definition specifies who is responsible for the application. Added the differentiation between system applied within a country and systems applied in more than one country. It also specifies that the application can be done on behalf of the NGB. This addresses a situation where an entity that is technically not the NGB can still do the application, ensuring the formal NGB is aware. In relation to that, clause 6.3.2, 1) ensures that NGB’s are always aware of regional system operational in their country.

3.9 Review date

The review date is key to determining whether the endorsement of an endorsed system is maintained. It is always the approval date of the endorsed system’s SFM standard PLUS FIVE YEARS. It is the date by which the periodic review shall have been started.

An NGB may decide to start a periodic review sooner than after five years, but for the purpose of endorsement, the formal review date counts.

6.2.2 Assessment decisions

The wording is amended to make it clearer that the decision on minor or major nonconformity has to be based on the intended outcome of a requirement/standard. It is not important whether there is a small or big gap between a system’s requirement and the PEFC requirement. What is important is how big the impact of the nonconformity is on achieving the intended outcome.

6.3 Steps in the assessment process
The steps that are presented would make up a “full assessment”. Depending on the type of assessment some of the steps would apply partially or be not applicable. This is specified in chapter 6.4. So the steps are explained in 6.3, the different assessment types in 6.4.

6.3.2 Application

- Bullet 1 describes the need for support of other NGB’s in case of regional systems. A system can apply in more than one country, if there is support from the NGB in the other country.
- Bullet 4 details the minimum content of the development report. The list is based on the requirements for development of PEFC Council standards (GD 1003:2009)
- The NOTE clarifies that records can be submitted in the native language, but the assessor can request translation of those parts that it needs for making a proper assessment decision.

6.3.4 International consultation

To get more people interested in the international consultation the NGB shall present their system in a webinar. The webinar is hosted by the Secretariat, but the NGB shall do the presentation. This could be NGB staff itself, or any other person involved in the development (e.g. the chairman of the working group).

6.3.10 Internal review

The Panel of Experts review is replaced with an internal review done by the Secretariat. The main reasons being that it is not a current stakeholder demand, it had a limited influence on the assessment quality, and it will save costs.

6.3.12 Interruption of the assessment process

Interruptions have been quite common in the past assessments. The assessment contract used to have a brief clause on interruptions, but this new clause provides some transparent rules and principles for an interruption of the process. The most important aspect is that interruptions may lead to additional assessment fees.

6.4 Types of assessment

This chapter introduces the different assessment types. The table provides an overview of the differences in assessment process between the different types.

Generally, compared to the previous version, three things have changed:
- Assessments of revised systems can focus on introduced changes alone.
- Specific process for the assessment of reaffirmed systems. This option was implicitly mentioned in the previous version, but now much clearer presented as an option.
- Assessments of amendments go directly to an assessor for assessment.

6.4.2 Assessment of a revised system

A Full assessment process is no longer required for revised systems. It is still an option, but a new option is the assessment of changes. It works on the basis that the results of the previous full assessment are still valid.
Especially when a limited number of changes was made in the applicant system’s SFM standard the assessment of changes can save time and money. An important element is that the assessor needs to compare the revised system with the endorsed version to identify any other changes. This could be done quite practically with comparison of documents in MS Word.

### 6.4.3 Assessment of a reaffirmed system

One outcome of a periodic review can be the reaffirmation of the current standard/system. This means there’s no need identified to revise the system. This outcome is now explicitly addressed in both ST 1001 and this guide. The assessment is focused on the assessment of the review process: is the decision to reaffirm the standard justified and based on gap analysis and stakeholder consultation. Also, the assessor needs to compare the submitted reaffirmed system with the current version.

### 6.4.4 Assessment of amendments

This assessment type replaces the previous “assessment process as defined by the PEFC Council Board of Directors” and the “simplified assessment process ... by the Panel of Experts”.

- Amendments between periodic reviews will be assessed directly by a PEFC Registered Assessor. There will be no tender for such an assessment (see Appendix 1, 4.1.2). Instead, the Secretariat will directly appoint one of the assessors.
- The Board maintains the possibility to require endorsed systems to ensure compliance with specific requirements between the periodic review.

### 7 The endorsement

The chapter on endorsement has been revised to accommodate a new approach to endorsement; an endorsement without expiry date.

The change has been made to better align the endorsement process with the standard development/revision process. Previously, a system needed to be re-endorsed within five years. ST 1001 has now adopted the approach that the standard review and subsequent revision have to start five years after approval of the standard. Given that the standard review will take some time, the five year periodic review does not align with a five year expiry of the endorsement.

For a first endorsement of a new system nothing has changed. There is a full assessment process, a Board recommendation and endorsement decision by the General Assembly. Then things change:

- The endorsement is without expiry date
- The endorsement needs to be maintained however
- The endorsement can be maintained by meeting specific endorsement milestones
- The milestones are all related to the determined review date (see 3.9 above)
- When endorsement milestones are not met, the endorsement is automatically suspended.

#### 7.3.1 Endorsement milestones

This is where the link between the standard development process (ST 1001) and the endorsement process (GD 1007) is most visible. The milestones consist of the timely performing of the periodic...
review/revision as required in ST 1001. and subsequent application of the reaffirmed or revised system, or any amendments to PEFC.

From the review date (see 3.9) the NGB has:

- 24 months to achieve a positive recommendation on a reaffirmed system (including the time necessary for the assessment process)
- 36 months to achieve a positive recommendation on a revised system (including the time necessary for the assessment process)

This means that when the actual periodic review/revision is started before the review date, more time is available.

### 7.3.3 Suspension process

The suspension of the endorsement follows automatically when an endorsement condition is not met. Before that, the Secretariat will first send a reminder and after that a warning, to give the NGB a chance to take action.

### 7.4 Suspension and termination of endorsement

The clause introduces the different consequences of suspension and endorsement.

- Suspension means that any new certificates, group members will not be PEFC recognized. Existing certificates will still be PEFC recognized
- Termination means that also existing certificates will be “not PEFC recognized”

### 7.5 Transition of revised applicant system

This clauses addresses the issue where revised standards are already applied (and certificates are being issued) without the standard being covered by PEFC endorsement. Ideally national standards are only applied after they received endorsement, but practice has shown this is not always the case.

To have better oversight/control of these situations, this clause allows the practice of applying a standard before an assessment results in a positive recommendation, but based on specific conditions.

The NGB can apply separately for a temporary endorsement. This application has to be submitted before the application date of the revised standard. This allows the Secretariat to assess the changes and the risk that the revised standard might not comply with the PEFC requirements. The temporary endorsement is really intended to cover the gap until the assessment of the revised standard/system is finalized and should therefore not exceed a period of one more year.