

**PEFC Finland Standard**  
Implementation of PEFC Forest Certification  
System

**PEFC FI 1001:2014\_v3**

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## **Implementation of PEFC Forest Certification System**

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## 1. Introduction

This standard is part of a series of five Finnish PEFC forest certification standards. The series follows the SMS standard series elaborated in 1997 and 1998 and FFCS standard series elaborated in 2002 and 2003 as well as the PEFC FI standards elaborated in 2008 and 2009. The revised PEFC FI standard series will become into force after the PEFC Council's re-endorsement taking into account the transition period.

Standards of the Finnish PEFC standard series cover forest certification vocabulary, implementation and criteria, certification procedures and standard setting.

PEFC Finland manages the Finnish PEFC FI standard series and owns the standards.

## 2. Purpose and Scope of Application

This English translation is based on the original Finnish standard PEFC FI 1001:2014 that was approved by PEFC Finland on 27.10.2014 and text amendments on 19.5.2015 and on 8.2.2016. The translated standard versions are informal and the Finnish original standard applies also to the interpretation of their content.

The original Finnish standard and its English and Swedish translations are available from PEFC Finland website or upon request.

This standard includes Implementation of the Forest Certification Scheme.

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## 3. References

Finnish PEFC forest certification system includes five updated standards:

- PEFC FI 1000:2014; PEFC Forest Certification Vocabulary
- PEFC FI 1001:2014; Implementation of the PEFC Forest Certification System
- PEFC FI 1002:2014; Criteria for PEFC Forest Certification
- PEFC FI 1005:2014; PEFC Qualification Criteria for Certification Bodies and Certification Procedures
- PEFC FI 1006:2014; Standard Setting Process for PEFC Forest Certification

#### 4. Terms and definitions

The terms and definitions on PEFC certification in Finland are included in standard PEFC FI 1000:2014; PEFC Forest Certification Vocabulary.

In this standard the terms and definitions set out in the standard PEFC FI 1000:2014 are applied including the following definitions:

**certified area:** A total area of the certified forests.

**certification group:** A certification group consists of a managing entity and members of the certification group.

**forest owner's confirmation:** A document submitted to forest owners or other entities responsible for forest management participating in a group certification. The document refers to the forest certificate and indicates membership in a certification group

**group certificate:** A document which indicates that an activity taking place on the certified area complies with the requirements determined in the standard-documents and implied by the certification system.

**group certification:** Certification of forest management concerning a certification group.

**managing body of a certification group:** A managing body of a certification group is an applicant or another entity authorized by an applicant for certification, which represents members of the group in matters related to forest certification and is responsible for assuring that requirements determined in the requirement setting documents and implied by the certification system are fulfilled within the certified forest holding.

**member of a certification group:** A forest owner participating in group certification, another body possessing a right for making decisions on the forest management or any other entity belonging to a certification group, which complies with the standard requirements and implied by the certification system.

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## **5. Implementation of forest certification**

### **5.1 Options for implementation**

Certification can be implemented as individual certification of forest owners, group certification or regional group certification.

### **5.2 Scope of certification**

The Scope of forest certification is forest management carried out on the certified forest area.

Certification concerns

- in case of individual certification of forest owners – one or several forest holdings belonging to a forest owner which are announced for certification
- in case of group certification – all forest holdings announced for certification.

Certification covers the whole area of each forest holding.

Certified forests may include forest land, poorly productive forest land, unproductive land and other forestry land, as well as other areas where forest management activities are being carried out.

A certificate holder maintains the data concerning the certified forest area.

The reported certified forest area is a sum area of certified forest land and poorly productive forest land.

### **5.3 Applicant for certification**

An applicant for certification is an organization or another legal entity that is responsible for assuring that the requirements defined in the standard documents and implied by the certification system are complied with in the certified forest holdings.

### **5.4 Standards**

The standard documents for certification include PEFC FI 1001:2014 (Implementation of PEFC Forest Certification) and PEFC FI 1002:2014 (Criteria for PEFC Forest Certification).

### **5.5. Obligation of an applicant for certification to provide information**

The applicant shall submit the following information to the PEFC Finland for publishing:

- a) without any delay, information concerning the issuance of the certificate, potential changes in its validity period and on its possible withdrawal
- b) contact information of a person responsible for responding to enquiries concerning the certification and possible complaints
- c) annually up-to-date information on the area covered by forest certification and
- d) annually a report on the results of an external audit including any documented non-conformities due to activities not complying with the criteria for certification.

The applicant shall submit to PEFC Finland information about the cases where a forest owner or another actor has caused a non-conformity. PEFC Finland shall inform other holders of PEFC forest certificates about these cases in order to be addressed in any other forest management certification that covers the forest owner or another actor.

Certificate holder shall disclose on request A summary and a plan of forest management activities carried out in the certified forests (with the exception of confidential data, information regarding the property and personal data).

## **5.6 Participation of forest service enterprises**

Entrepreneurs offering services in certified forests commit by registering themselves to act in accordance with the standard requirements and other requirements implied by the certification system.

The PEFC Finland maintains a national internet database of entrepreneurs registered in the PEFC.

An enterprise can register in the database directly or with the help of an information provider.

Enterprises registering directly into the PEFC database of entrepreneurs declare that they are aware with the certification system's requirements and commit to comply with them.

On the basis of an application the PEFC Finland may recognize as an information provider/informant a party:

- having knowledge on the certification system and its requirements and evidence on activities helping enterprises applying for registration to comply with the certification requirements and
- convincing that the enterprises are aware of the PEFC registration and obligations related to participation in the certification.

The application is accessible from the PEFC Finland office.

Information providers recognized by PEFC Finland may be:

- forestry related associations of entrepreneurs on behalf of their members and
- applicants for forest certification on the behalf of the enterprises that have made a registration to them.

An applicant for individual forest owner certification, group certification, regional group certification and the organizations participating in group certification make a commitment to procure services for certified forests from the enterprises registered in the PEFC.

Before concluding an agreement on the provision of services a client shall verify that the enterprise is registered in the PEFC.

An applicant for certification and an organization participating in group certification are not obliged to use services from an enterprise registered in the PEFC in the case where the size of the order does not require compliance with the Act on Contractor's Obligations.

## 5.7 Appeals procedures

Disputes and complaints regarding implementation of forest certification in group and regional group certification will be addressed in line with the procedures of the group management (see chapter 7.2 Obligations of an applicant for certification).

In case of (i) an appeal regarding individual certification of a forest owner, or (ii) if a dispute case or a complaint cannot be resolved by the group management or (iii) if an appellant is not satisfied with the adopted ruling, the case can be submitted to appeal panel for examination. The panel is convened by PEFC Finland and it includes a chairman and two other members.

PEFC Finland appoints an independent chairman for the panel for each particular case. Each party of a dispute or a complaint appoint one member to the panel. The chairman and panel members have one vote each in decision making.

A request for appeal examination by the panel shall be submitted in writing to the secretary general of PEFC Finland who is responsible for responding to inquiries regarding examination of disputes and complaints and notification of the party who has requested the examination about acceptance of the request.

PEFC Finland shall appoint a chairman of the panel within two weeks from receiving the request and immediately after that submit a dossier of the case to the chairman of the panel who without any delay shall launch the examination of the case. The contact details of the secretary-general of PEFC Finland are available on the website of PEFC Finland.

The request for examination shall include (i) name and contact details of a party requesting examination by a panel, (ii) the appeal and justifications for it, (iii) a dossier in which a requesting party explains his requirements and (iv) other necessary material for the examination of the case.

The request shall be signed by the party requesting the examination.

The panel shall act on the basis of a consensus meaning that it shall follow working practices which support development of mutual understanding among members of the panel, but in adopting a decision the panel does not need to reach unanimity.

The panel shall give its decision in writing signed by the chairman and the members of the panel. The decision shall include a short summary of the case, justification as well as the panel ruling on the case. The panel shall inform the disputing parties and PEFC Finland on the ruling. The ruling of the panel is final.

Disputing parties are responsible for their own costs resulting from appeals process.



## **6. Individual certification for forest owners**

### **6.1 Applicant for certification**

An applicant for certification may be a forest owner or an entity responsible for forest management on the certified area.

The certification covers one holding or an entity formed from several holdings.

### **6.2 Obligations of an applicant for certification**

An applicant for certification commits to act in accordance with and bear the responsibility for assuring that the requirements determined in the standard documents and those implied by the certification system are complied with in the certified forest holding.

An applicant for forest certification is responsible for the administration implied by certification and communication with the local people and other stakeholder groups.

## **7. Group certification**

### **7.1. Applicant for certification**

An applicant for certification is an organization or another legal entity which is responsible for assuring that the requirements determined in the standards and implied by the certification system are complied with in the certified forest holding.

A member of a certification group may act as an applicant for certification upon authorization of group members.

### **7.2. Obligations of an applicant for certification**

The applicant for group certification

- a) represents members of the certification group in a certification process, is responsible for communication and relations with the certification body, for application for certification and conclusion of an agreement related to provision of certification services,
- b) on the behalf of the certification group, commits to act in accordance with the requirements determined in the standards and implied by the certification system,
- c) defines and implements an internal monitoring programme that provides confidence in the conformity of the whole certification group with the requirements
- d) compiles a written description of group management procedures including preventive and corrective actions, resolution of cases of negligence and breach of certification requirements, as well as examination of internal disputes within the certification group and resolution of complaints,

- e) delivers a document of admittance<sup>1)</sup> according to which a member commits to act in compliance with the requirements determined in the standards and implied by the certification system,
- f) implements internal data collection to demonstrate compliance of the certification group and its members with the requirements
- g) submits a forest owner's confirmation to forest owners who are members of the certification group and other bodies responsible for forest management
- h) provides members of the certification group with the information and guidance on effective implementation of the requirements of forest certification and other requirements set by the forest certification system,
- i) reviews and makes a report on compliance of activities of the certification group, including results of internal monitoring, audits carried out by certification bodies and a report on the effect of preventive and/or corrective measures and
- j) is responsible for communication with the local people and other stakeholder groups.

<sup>1)</sup> A document of admittance signed with an association representing members participating in group certification (for example, a forest management association) or an organization otherwise representing participating forest owners on a contractual basis (for example, a forest service company) is considered to comply with the requirement concerning submission of document of admittance also in regards to members representing the organization/forest owners.

In order to perform the above-mentioned duties/responsibilities (a...j) the certificate holder maintains, among other things, records of

- i. group management procedures,
- ii. annual internal monitoring programme covering the whole certification group, review of its results and implementation of preventive and/or corrective measures,
- iii. members of the certification group with their contact details, their documents of admittance as well as holdings belonging to the certified area and their forest cover,
- iv. complaints/appeal handling process,
- v. internal data collection of compliance of activities with the requirements set in the certification system and
- vi. information from external parties relating to the certification group's and its members' compliance with the requirements.

Internal monitoring programme covers:

- an evaluation of the participants' documents of admittance,
- an internal data collection,
- an evaluation of information from external parties relating to the certification group's and its members' compliance with the requirements,
- preventive and/or corrective measures and
- handling of complaints/appeal.

Internal data collection:

- 1) is executed according to procedures defined by the applicant,
- 2) covers the certification group and all its members,
- 3) may include data collection executed by various actors,
- 4) is based on sampling taking into account, among other things, forest ownership type, number of participants/members of the certification group, size of the participants' forest estates and their geographical distribution
- 5) is executed taking into account information from external parties and results of previous audits.

Internal data collection may be based on:

- i. evaluation of management system, such as quality management system or environmental management system or other self-monitoring systems of the participant
- ii. evaluation carried out by third parties,
- iii. evaluation carried by forest service providers,
- iv. evaluation carried out by associations representing their members (e.g. forest management associations) or other organisations representing forest owners on contract basis (e.g. forest service providers) in forest certification,
- v. in case of regional group certification evaluation organized by regional certification committee
- vi. in case of regional group certification evaluation organized by forestry related associations of entrepreneurs
- vii. evaluation of monitoring data of public authorities and
- viii. any other independent evaluation.

The applicant for group certification submits the following information to the certification group:

- a) standards and possible guidelines concerning compliance with the requirements for forest management or an access to standards and guidelines,
- b) terms and conditions of an agreement signed with a certification body concerning a right of the certification body and the accreditation body to have an access for auditing group members' activities and disclosure of information concerning members to third parties.
- c) a description of a program of internal monitoring and auditing by the certification body
- d) issuance of a certificate, potential changes in its validity and possible withdrawal of the certificate and
- e) results of an external audit.

An applicant for group certification shall submit a description of the group management procedures to the PEFC Finland.

### **7.3 Member of a certification group**

A forest owner or another body which possesses a right to make decisions on forest management may be approved as a member of the certification group if it commits to comply with the requirements set in the Chapter 7.4 of this standard along with other conditions of the agreement concluded with the certificate holder.

### **7.4 Obligations of members of a certification group**

A member of a certification group shall

- a) submit a signed document of admittance<sup>1)</sup> concerning participation in the certification group to an applicant for certification
- b) act in accordance with the requirements determined in requirement setting documents and implied by the certification system
- c) cooperate with an applicant for certification and a certification body, submit required data, documents and other information for audits, monitoring and other inspection, as well as offer a possibility for carrying out an inspection in his forest or premises of a member.

<sup>1)</sup> A document of admittance submitted by an association representing members participating in group certification (for example, a forest management association) or an organization otherwise representing participating forest owners on a contractual basis (for example, a forest service company) is considered to fulfill the requirement concerning submission of a document of admittance also in regards to members representing the organization/forest owners.

## **8. Regional group certification**

### **8.1. Applicant for certification**

An applicant for regional certification is an organization or another legal entity which is responsible for assuring that the requirements determined in the standards and implied by the certification system are complied with in certified forests.

A member of the certification group may act as an applicant for certification upon authorization of members of the group.

An applicant for certification determines the geographical area of forests which can be included into regional certification.

### **8.2. Obligations of an applicant for certification**

An applicant for regional certification is responsible for carrying out the tasks of an applicant for group certification described in the Chapter 7.2 of this standard.

In addition, an applicant for regional group certification:

- adopts procedures concerning registration in the certification group described in the Chapter 8.3,

- establishes a regional certification committee comprised of representatives of organizations participating in group certification as described in the Chapter 8.5 and
- determines practices of the certification committee.

### **8.3. Member of a certification group**

In regional certification an approved member of the certification group can be a body that commits to act in accordance with the requirements set in the Chapter 8.4 along with other conditions of the agreement concluded with a certificate holder.

The following bodies may participate in a regional certification group:

- 1) Forest owners and other similar bodies which have a right to make decisions regarding forest management:
  - i) private forest owners,
  - ii) community forest owners (including municipalities, parishes, jointly owned forests, Metsähallitus - state forest organization),
  - iii) companies holding forest ownership rights and
  - iv) other forest owners.
- 2) Other bodies fulfilling the requirements of the requirement setting documents in their activities
  - i) forest management associations,
  - ii) wood procurement and industrial forest companies
  - iii) entrepreneurs providing harvesting, logistics and forestry services.
- 3) Other organizations representing actors whose focus of operations relies on certified forests
  - i) associations of employees and workers
  - ii) other organizations promoting forest certification

Forest owners participate in the certification group either by filing their own application or an application submitted by a body representing the forest owner (for example, forest management association or a company providing the forest owner with services).

Entrepreneurs participate in the certification group either by filing their own application or through application of a body representing the entrepreneur.

An organization representing members/forest owners participating in regional group certification may upon authorization of an applicant for certification keep a record of forest owners that participate in certification through the application from this organization.

By the decision of an organization of regional group certification (for example, enterprises providing harvesting, logistics and forestry services) organizations representing its members may upon authorization of an applicant for certification keep a record of entrepreneurs and enterprises participating in certification by the application of this organization.

## 8.4 Obligations of a member of a certification group

In regional group certification a member of the certification group shall comply with obligations described in the Chapter 7.4.

An organization representing its members by their decision (for example, a forest management association or an association of entrepreneurs) or an organization representing participants of group certification otherwise on a contractual basis (for example, a forest service company) shall

- possess sufficient knowledge of the certification system and the requirements set in it and
- provide information and guidance for participants of the certification group on participation in certification, obligations of membership and opportunities for an opt-out from the certification.

## 8.5. Regional certification committee

An applicant for certification establishes a regional certification committee that represents participants of regional group certification.

The committee promotes implementation of the PEFC certification system.

The aim of a committee is to take care of the tasks related to application and maintenance of a certificate. The aim of the committee is to manage tasks of group management related to application and maintenance of a certificate in collaboration with an applicant for certification.

The guiding principle of the regional certification committee is to provide open access to participate in its activities and work in the committee.

A chairman of the committee is a representative nominated by an applicant for certification.

The committee:

- chooses among itself a vice-chairman and a secretary for a period of one year at a time,
- may invite experts which have a right to actively participate and attend meetings
- convenes at least twice a year in a meeting upon receiving an invitation from a chairman or a vice-chairman, at least seven days in advance in accordance with procedures approved by the committee,
- has a quorum when in addition to the chairman, at least half of the other members of the committee are attending the meeting,
- decides on the basis of a consensus and
- applies practices of group management set by the applicant,
- applies practices of group management set by the applicant in regards to cases of negligence and breach of the certification requirements and
- determines appeals procedures to address possible disagreements concerning regional implementation of forest certification. if a regional committee does not manage to resolve a dispute case internally, the committee may pass the matter for resolution by the applicant for certification.

In cases of suspicion of negligence and breaching of the requirements a suspected body does not participate in the case examination or decision making in the committee.

The committee meeting shall be documented in minutes that are signed by the chairman and secretary of the meeting.