
**PEFC Qualification Criteria for Certification Bodies
and Certification Procedures**

PEFC Finland

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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 1005:2014 that was approved by PEFC Finland on 27.10.2014 and text amendments 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 PEFC Qualification Criteria for Certification Bodies and Certification Procedures.

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.

5. Qualification Criteria for Auditors

5.1 Certification of Forest Management

The qualification criteria for auditors used in certification audits are based on the general auditing guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems, or on the competence criteria of product certification, complemented with sectoral expertise.

The auditors shall:

1. Fulfil the general criteria, as appropriate, for environmental auditors defined in SFS-EN ISO 19011:2011¹,
2. Have a good knowledge on the PEFC standards with regard to forest management and
3. Have general knowledge on forest management and its environmental impacts.

Professional expertise in forest management and its environmental impacts is proved on the basis of appropriate education and/or professional experience.

5.2 Verification of Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products

The qualification criteria for auditors used in certification audits are based on the general auditing guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems, complemented with sectoral expertise.

The auditors shall:

1. Fulfil the criteria, as appropriate, defined in SFS-EN ISO 19011:2011,
2. Have a good knowledge on the PEFC forest certification standards with regard to the verification of chain of custody of forest based products and
3. Have general knowledge on wood procurement and material flows in forest industries.

Professional expertise in wood procurement and material flows in forest industries is proved on the basis of appropriate education and/or professional experience.

6. Qualification Criteria for Certification Body

6.1 Accreditation

Certification bodies carrying out forest management certification and/or chain of custody certification are accredited by a national accreditation body.

The accreditation is issued by an accreditation body which is a part of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) umbrella and which implements procedures described in ISO/IEC 17011:2004² and other documents approved by the IAF.

¹ SFS-EN ISO 19011:2011 Guidelines for auditing management systems

² ISO/IEC 17011:2004 Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

Information on accreditation shall accompany any issued forest certificate and chain of custody certificate.

6.2. PEFC Notification

Certification bodies make an agreement with PEFC Finland on the administrative tasks to be performed in order to implement PEFC Notification requirements.

The agreement on PEFC Notification does not limit the possibilities of the certification body to operate in an impartial and independent manner in forest certification and/or in certification of the chain of custody of forest based products related to PEFC forest certification.

The certification body shall promptly provide to PEFC Finland the following:

- a) the information on the issuance of forest certificates and certificates for the chain of custody of forest based products in accordance with the Finnish PEFC forest certification system, on changes in the validity of certificates, and on other information on the scope of certificates possibly requested by PEFC Finland.
- b) area and other information related to operations covered by forest certificates; and production volumes, turnovers and other information related to operations covered by certificates of the chain of custody for wood system to the extent that this information is needed in order to determine the fees possibly requested by PEFC Finland from the certificate holders,
- c) the information on the current and future changes in its accreditation that will have an effect on the implementation of PEFC Technical Documentation Annex 6 (Certification and Accreditation Procedures) requirements and
- d) compile a summary of the forest certification audit report, including a summary of findings on the conformity to the forest management standard and provide the summary report to PEFC Finland within two months after a positive certification decision (certification audit, periodic audit and re-certification audit). PEFC Finland shall make the summary available to the public on its website without delay.

The certification body commits to inform its clients, applying for or having a PEFC forest management certificate and/or a PEFC chain of custody certificate, the following: (i) the possible payment practices set by PEFC Finland for the certificate holders and of which the certification body has been informed of, and (ii) other issues the certification body considers appropriate.

PEFC Finland commits itself to inform the certification body without a delay of any changes in PEFC Council's procedures of PEFC Notification.

PEFC Finland has the right to publish the PEFC Notification of a certification body and give this information to PEFC Council for publishing.

6.3 Certification of Forest Management

The qualification criteria for the certification bodies doing certification audits are based on general criteria for certification bodies operating quality and environmental management system certification, complemented with sectoral expertise and applied to forest management.

The certification body shall:

1. Fulfil the general criteria, as appropriate, for certification bodies defined in SFS-EN ISO/IEC 17021:2011³,
2. Use a documented method, according to which forest management may be audited and certified, and
3. Have general knowledge on forest management and its environmental impacts.

Professional expertise in forest management and its environmental impacts is proved on the basis of certification experience in the field and/or appropriate education and professional experience of the staff.

6.4 Verification of Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products

The qualification criteria for the certification bodies used in certification audits are based on the general criteria for certification bodies operating in product certification, complemented with sectoral expertise and applied to wood procurement and material flows in forest industries.

The certification body shall:

1. Fulfil the general criteria, as appropriate, for certification bodies defined in ISO/IEC 17065: 2012⁴
2. Use a documented procedure, according to which the chain of custody of forest based products may be verified and certified, and
3. Have general knowledge on wood procurement and material flows in forest industries.

Professional expertise in wood procurement and material flows in forest industries is proved on the basis of certification experience in the field and/or appropriate education and professional experience of the staff.

³ SFS-EN ISO/IEC 17021:2011 Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

⁴ ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services

7. Certification Procedure

7.1 Phases of Certifying Process

The certification process consists of temporally and functionally consecutive actions:

1. Application of the auditee to the certification body,
2. Review of the application and currently available material by the certification body,
3. Voluntary pre-audit,
4. First phase of the certification audit (focus on assessing the documents) and second phase of the certification audit (in the certification area) carried out separately, or the certification audit carried out in one entity,
5. Assessment/decision by the certification body, and
6. Surveillance audits.

Before sending the application to the certification body, the auditee shall comply in its operations with appropriate sections of the standards PEFC FI 1001:2014⁵, PEFC FI 1002:2014⁶ and PEFC ST 2002:2013⁷.

The purpose of the pre-sent material and the first phase audit is to ensure that the requirements of the standards PEFC FI 1001:2014, PEFC FI 1002:2014 and PEFC ST 2002:2013 are adequately taken into account and appropriately applied by the auditee or its units.

Phases 4, 5 and 6 of the certification procedure are specified later on in Chapters 7.2 and 7.3.

7.2 Auditing

7.2.1 General Principles

The definition of the objective of the audit is always the responsibility of the auditee. The scope and limits are defined so that the objective of the audit is achieved. The scope of the audit is defined by the lead auditor nominated by the certification body.

The purpose of the audit is to evaluate whether the evidence collected from the auditee or its unit conforms to the auditing criteria.

The auditing criteria are primarily the requirements of the forest certification standards PEFC FI 1001:2014, PEFC FI 1002:2014 and PEFC ST 2002:2013. In addition, the auditee may define other auditing criteria, e.g., policy, legislation, guidelines, practices and procedures.

The objective, scope and auditing criteria are documented in the auditing plan, which guides the practical execution of the audit. The auditing plan must also indicate the timetables, places, persons and other information, for which preparations are required in advance by the auditee or its unit.

⁵ PEFC FI 1001:2014 Implementation of PEFC Forest Certification System

⁶ PEFC FI 1002:2014 Criteria for PEFC Forest Certification

⁷ PEFC ST 2002:2013 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements

The audit is carried out by an audit team. In addition to the lead auditor, the audit team has an adequate number of auditors. The sectorial competence of auditors may be complemented, if necessary, with technical experts who are not auditors. The audit team is set up by the certification body, which ensures competence and independence and feasibility to the task of the team members.

Auditing includes the following phases:

1. Initial meeting,
2. Collection of audit evidence,
3. Evaluation of audit evidence,
4. Final meeting and
5. Audit report on the conformance to the audit criteria.

The audit team collects audit evidence that is adequate to evaluate the conformity of operations to the criteria.

When auditing forest management, the audit must, amongst other relevant information, include sufficient consultation with external stakeholders to ensure that all relevant issues are identified relating to conformity to the requirements.

The evaluation results based on the audit evidence (especially those relating to non-conformities) are reviewed with the auditee. In the final meeting, the audit results of all the units audited are collectively presented to the auditee.

The audit results, which are not in conformity to audit criteria, are always documented in the audit report. Otherwise, the auditee and the lead auditor agree upon the content of the audit report.

7.2.2 Forest Management

When auditing forest management, the audit team shall include at least one auditor qualified in forest management and one auditor qualified in environmental issues. Technical experts may complement the forest management, environmental and social competence of the auditors.

The requirements for forest management, as defined in the standards PEFC FI 1001:2014, and PEFC FI 1002:2014 include:

- requirements related to the implementation of certification of forest holdings of individual forest owners, group certification and regional group certification and
- criteria for certification of forest holdings of individual owners, group certification and regional group certification.

Possible other auditing criteria are agreed upon with the auditee, but conformance to them does not impact the certification decision in view of PEFC standards' requirements.

7.2.3 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products

The auditing team assessing chain of custody of forest based products shall include at least one auditor qualified in wood procurement and one auditor qualified in forest industries. Technical experts may complement the wood procurement and forest industry competence of the auditors.

The requirements for certification bodies and auditors doing chain of custody certification are stated in the PEFC ST 2002:2013⁸. The certification criteria for the chain of custody of forest based products are defined in PEFC ST 2002:2013.

Possible other auditing criteria, such as monitoring of the auditee's conformity to the requirements on the use of environmental/product labels, are agreed upon with the auditee, but the results have no effect on the certification decision on the conformance to the PEFC standard requirements.

7.3 Certification

7.3.1 Audit by a Certification Body

The certification decision is made by the certification body on the basis of the audit report. The decision may be positive or negative. A positive decision leads to immediate certification and issuance of a certificate.

The basis for a negative certification decision is based on non-conformity to the certification criteria.

7.3.2 Non-conformities and Corrective Actions

Non-conformities to the certification criteria will always lead to corrective actions and possibly to the rejection, suspension or withdrawal of the certificate. Non-conformities are classified as minor or major.

In the regional group certification of forest management, non-conformities are divided into group-level non-conformities and member-level non-conformities. A member-level non-conformity may lead to the expulsion of a forest owner or other actor from the certification group if corrective actions agreed upon are not implemented. The decision on expelling and actor from the certification group is made by the applicant of the certificate.

7.3.3 Follow-up Audits and Surveillance Audits

If the certification decision has been negative, a follow-up audit can be arranged (within a time period to be agreed upon) in order to verify that the corrective actions have been implemented. If corrective actions are satisfactory, the certificate is granted to the applicant.

Surveillance audits are carried out at least once a year during the validity of the certificate. The scope of surveillance audits may be limited compared to certification audits. In surveillance audits

⁸ PEFC ST 2003:2012 Certification Body Requirements – Chain of Custody

the implementation of corrective actions or the progress towards their implementation are always assessed. Surveillance audits may also concentrate only on certain elements of certification criteria.

7.3.4 Amendments

If the content of the certification standards is revised, certification criteria shall be introduced taking into consideration the timelines of possible transition periods.

7.3.5 Validity of Certificate

A certificate is valid for a maximum of five years. The certification body may withdraw a granted certificate permanently or suspend it for a specified time period. A decision on withdrawal or suspension and its justification shall be communicated to the auditee in writing.

The auditee may denounce the certificate any time during its validity. The denouncement takes effect immediately after the certification body has received a notice of it in writing.

8. Informing of the Certificate

The certification body shall without delay provide PEFC Finland – Finnish Forest Certification Council, that manages the PEFC certification system, information on all issued forest management certificates and certificates that verify the chain of custody, and on changes concerning the validity and scope of these certificates.