
Standard Setting Process for PEFC Forest Certification

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 1006:2014 that was approved by PEFC Finland on 27.10.2014 and text amendment 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 Standard Setting Process for Forest Certification.

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. Standard Setting process

5.1 Initiating the Revision of Standards

The Finnish PEFC forest certification requirements on forest management are drafted and revised by the Standard Setting Working Group, which is convened by PEFC Finland. Periodic revision is done every five years.

The standards (requirements) on forest management will be applied in practice in line with the decisions made on transition periods. In case a need for additional specifications of the content occurs in the practical application of the requirements, PEFC Finland may convene the Standard Setting Working Group also in between the periodic revisions for preparing additional specifications.

PEFC Finland calls in members to the Standard Setting Working Group as comprehensively as possible from responsible and interested parties, such as forest owners; organisations manufacturing and marketing forest industry products; professional, entrepreneurs', environmental, consumer, recreational, and youth associations, as well as; forest research institutes, and parties representing special interests (e.g. indigenous people).

Before convening the Standard Setting Working Group, PEFC Finland identifies key stakeholder groups that are associated to forest management either directly or indirectly and disadvantaged stakeholders. PEFC Finland addresses the constraints of their participation, proactively seeks their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities, defines the actions of communication to inform these groups of their possibility to participate, and clarifies any possible barriers of their participation.

A precondition for the activities of the Standard Setting Working Group is that representatives of the following stakeholders participate in its work: forest owners, organisations manufacturing and marketing wood-based products, parties receiving income from forests and parties using forests for immaterial goods and for recreational purposes.

PEFC Finland gives the Standard Setting Working Group an assignment in which the purpose and deadline as well as possible intermediate goals for the working group are defined.

PEFC Finland sends a written invitation to the parties to be invited to the Standard Setting Working Group. The invitation includes (i) a time period for the reply (at least two weeks), (ii) the assignment and timetable of the working group, and possibility to comment on the scope the standard setting process and the policies on preparing a standard specified in the Finnish PEFC forest certification system, (iii) the list of invited parties, and (iv) the method by which other than invited parties can express their willingness to participate in the standard setting process.

PEFC Finland shall communicate actively about the beginning of the standard drafting process in its website and in other suitable media as appropriate, the objectives, timetable and contents of the work, as well as the convocation of the Standard Setting Working Group, and about the possibility of other parties, apart from those invited in writing, commenting on the scope and the standard setting process and taking part in the working group work.

After the reply time has lapsed, PEFC Finland informs the parties that have signed in for the Standard Setting Working Group about the constitutive meeting that will be held at the earliest two weeks after sending the meeting call.

Before the initiation of the Standard Setting Working Group's work, comments on the standard setting process can be submitted to PEFC Finland, who will attend to them without delay and take necessary measures.

5.2 Forest Certification Standard Setting Working Group

Working Principles

The Standard Setting Working Group shall be transparent as regards to participation in the working group and working methods of the group. Each party participating in the Standard Setting Working Group has equal and meaningful opportunity to have an influence on the final result of the work.

The Standard Setting Working Group defines the details of its own working methods.

The costs of participants in the Standard Setting Working Group are defrayed by their respective parties.

Composition of the Standard Setting Working Group

The Standard Setting Working Group has a chairman, a secretary and members. Each party that has signed in for the Standard Setting Working Group on the basis of the invitation by PEFC Finland appoints a representative and possibly a personal deputy representative for the Standard Setting Working Group.

At the kick-off of the Standard Setting Working Group's work, the Group decides, taking into account the precondition of stakeholders' participation in its work, on supplementing its membership according to the suggestions made by the members of the group and the notifications submitted to the chairman/secretary of the Standard Setting Working Group.

The Standard Setting Working Group may establish a working committee and call in experts or otherwise organise its work as it considers appropriate. The working committee works under the Standard Setting Working Group and prepares motions for it. The working committee is chaired by the chairman of the Standard Setting Working Group and the committee secretary is the secretary of the Standard Setting Working Group. The experts that have been called in have the right to be present and to speak in the meeting of the Standard Setting Working Group, but they cannot participate in the decision-making.

Certification bodies and the accreditation organisation shall not participate in the work of the Standard Setting Working Group, but certification bodies can be used as experts in e.g. testing the draft standard.

Constitutive Meeting

In its constitutive meeting, the Standard Setting Working Group (i) discusses the assignment given by PEFC Finland and (ii) the policies presented in this standard pursuant to which the Standard Setting Working Group will define its working methods.

In the constitutive meeting (iii) a chairman is elected for the Standard Setting Working Group from within or outside the parties its members represent. The chairman shall have the necessary understanding of the Finnish forestry and forest certification systems as well as capacity for organizing the work and chairing the Standard Setting Working Group. The secretary shall have a solid understanding of the Finnish PEFC certification system, of other tools for promoting sustainable forest management, and of the common elements in forest certification and other systems of forest management.

The constitutive meeting is chaired by a person appointed by PEFC Finland until the Standard Setting Working Group has elected a chairman.

Decision-making

The work of the Standard Setting Working Group shall be based on consensus and it shall follow working methods that support the emergence of mutual understanding among its members. The Standard Setting Working Group's working methods are based on an open exchange of views among the members and direct negotiations between the stakeholders in order to find a compromise and reach a mutual understanding.

In order to reach a consensus the views of the Standard Setting Working Group members are clarified by voting in Working Group's meetings to establish whether there is opposition and by a statement on consensus from the chairman where there are no dissenting voices. Also postal ballots can be used.

The working group may acquire additional information relevant to the solution of an issue from experts outside the group.

The views received from working group members, experts and parties outside the working group shall be dealt with transparently. The working group shall provide a reply in writing to the views received from parties outside the working group.

The decisions made by the working group and replies to written comments will be included in the minutes of the meetings. All comments received during the open public consultation period will be compiled, and the compilation will be submitted to PEFC Finland for publication.

If the working group does not reach consensus within internal discussions, the handling of the issue shall be continued by a Panel explained further in Chapter 5.3.

Minutes are written of each Standard Setting Working Group's meeting they are signed by the meeting chairman and secretary. The meeting minutes shall be sent to the Working Group members prior to the following meeting in which the minutes will be revised and approved. The minutes shall include not only the issues discussed and decisions made in the meeting, but also the comments that the defender of the view requests to be included, with their justifications. Working drafts of the standard shall be sent to Standard Setting Working Group members.

The approved meeting minutes shall be submitted to PEFC Finland that will publish them without delay in the web pages presenting the work of the Standard Setting Working Group and file all documents of the Annex 1 of this document for five years at the minimum. All documents are available from PEFC Finland upon request.

Action Plan

The Standard Setting Working Group writes a draft action plan, discusses any comments received on the draft, and makes a decision on the final action plan. The Standard Setting Working Group submits the action plan to PEFC Finland that examines it to ensure that it complies with the assignment attached to the invitation sent to the participants of the working group, and the requirements specified in this standard for the work of the Standard Setting Working Group. PEFC Finland shall publish the action plan without delay in the web pages presenting the work of the Standard Setting Working Group.

The Standard Setting Working Group shall inform PEFC Finland without delay if there appear any changes or deviations from the planned contents of the action plan or in the timetable of its implementation. The Standard Setting Working Group shall take into account any feedback from PEFC Finland on the action plan's conformance to the assignment.

The action plan of the Standard Setting Working Group shall include (i) a description of procedures according to which the assignment is carried out as well as an implementation schedule including interim goals; (ii) practices on convening meetings and on meeting organisation, preparation of motions and drafts as well as internal communication; (iii) a communication plan describing, inter alia, practices and arrangements of public seminars, of internal communication and external communication for parties not taking part in the standard setting work and for other external parties in general, practises of inviting stakeholders for the 60-day-minimum public consultation of the draft standards and means to communicate the public consultation and its timelines effectively; (iv) practices on handling the written comments received from members of the Standard Setting Working Group and external parties and replying principles to them; as well as (v) a proposal on how to test the draft standard to ensure the practical suitability of its comments and observations.

The Standard Setting Working Group shall include in the standard testing outline a description of the impacts the proposed changes to the standard induce on the procedures of forest certification's data collection, and a justified opinion of the necessity of standard testing.

PEFC Finland is responsible for the implementation of the testing considered necessary by the Standard Setting Working Group and shall inform the group of the testing results. Based on these results the group then decides on possible changes to the standard. The Standard Setting Working Group will prepare a report on the implementation of the testing and its results.

The Standard Setting Working Group shall communicate publicly, inter alia, the start of its work, its action plan, the progress of its work and the possibility of giving comments to the draft standards during public consultation. The Standard Setting Working Group is responsible for its own communication and is independent of PEFC Finland.

5.3 Handling of Disagreements and Appeals

Disagreements on the contents of the standards as well as appeals on the activities and procedures of the Standard Setting Working Group are considered by a Panel that has a chairman and two members.

PEFC Finland appoints an impartial chairman to the Panel. The parties in a dispute or appeal case appoint, case by case, one member to the Panel.

A written request to resolve a disagreement or complaint is addressed to the chairman of PEFC Finland, who acts as a contact point for enquiries and shall deliver the related material immediately to the chairman of the Panel, who shall without delay initiate handling of the issue. Contact information of PEFC Finland's chairman is shown on PEFC Finland's website.

The request shall include (i) the name and contact information of the requesting party, (ii) the demands and their justification, (iii) the documents upon which the demands are based, and (iv) other pertinent material. The requesting party shall sign the appeal. PEFC Finland shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint to the complainant.

The Panel shall handle the request impartially and properly.

The Panel gives its decision in writing, and it is signed by the chairman and members of the Panel. The decision shall include a short description of the matter, justification and the outcome of the Panel. The Panel shall inform the Standard Setting Working Group and the complainant about its decision. The decision of the Panel is final.

The Panel shall solve all matters given for it to discuss prior to the Standard Setting Working Group's approval of the final draft version.

Each party involved shall defray the costs incurred to them by the appeals process.

5.4 Completing the Assessment of Standards

When the Standard Setting Working Group has reached consensus, approved the final standard draft and finished its assignment in other respects, it submits the standard draft containing the requirements on forest management and use to PEFC Finland. The Standard Setting Working Group shall also submit other documents related to the standard setting process, including a description of the Standard Setting Working Group's process in order to assess the compliance with the requirements of standard setting. The documents shall be submitted to PEFC Finland that shall publish the standard draft.

PEFC Finland shall make the decision on the approval of the final draft version submitted by the Standard Setting Working Group, and publish the approved standard without delay.

Annex 1. Documents produced by Standard Setting Working Group

- Plan of action
- Minutes of the meetings
- Compilation of comments received during the open public consultation period and their consideration
- Minutes of the of disagreements/appeals processes
- Report on the testing of the Draft Standard
- Draft Standard/Standards
- Final draft version of the Standard.