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

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1. Introduction

This standard is part of a series of seven Finnish PEFC forest certification standards. The series follows the SMS standard series drafted in 1997 and 1998 and FFCS standard series drafted in 2002 and 2003. Finnish PEFC standard series will be implemented after the endorsement of the PEFC Council taking into consideration the timelines of the transition periods.

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

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

2. Purpose and Scope of Application

This English translation is based on the original Finnish PEFC forest certification standard PEFC FI 1005:2009 that was approved by PEFC Finland on 8.7.2009. The Finnish original standard applies in case of interpretational dispute.

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

The standard includes the requirements for the competence of external auditors and certification bodies as well as for certification procedures.

3. References

This standard is used together with other standards belonging to the Finnish PEFC certification system:

- PEFC FI 1000:2009; Forest Certification Vocabulary
- PEFC FI 1001:2009; Implementation Levels of the Forest Certification System
- PEFC FI 1002:2009; Criteria for Group Certification; Level of a Forestry Centre or a Forest Management Association
- PEFC FI 1003:2009; Criteria for Certification; Level of Forest Holdings of Individual Owners
- PEFC FI 1004:2009; Regional Committees of Forest Certification
- PEFC FI 1005:2009; Qualification Criteria for Certification Bodies and Certification Procedures
- PEFC FI 1006:2008; Standard Setting Process for Forest Certification

and additionally updated references to ISO and SFS standards.

4. Terms and Definitions

The terminology on PEFC certification in Finland is included in standard PEFC FI 1000:2009; 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 19011:2002 Guidelines for Quality and Environmental Management System Auditing, or SFS-EN 45011 General Requirements for Bodies Operating Product Certification Systems.
2. Have a good knowledge on the Finnish Forest Certification 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 for Wood

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 19011:2002 Guidelines for Quality and Environmental Management System Auditing,
2. Have a good knowledge on the PEFC forest certification standards with regard to the verification of chain of custody for wood, 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 17011:2004¹ and other documents approved by the IAF.

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 for wood system related to PEFC forest certification.

The certification body shall provide to PEFC Finland the following:

- a) Without delay the information on the issuance of forest certificates and certificates for the chain of custody for wood system 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, and
- c) without delay 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.

The certification body commits itself to informing its clients, applying for/holding PEFC forest certificates and/or PEFC certificates of the chain of custody for wood system, of the following: (i)

¹ ISO/IEC 17011:2004 Conformity assessment -- General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

the possible payment practices set by PEFC Finland for the holders of certificates and of which the certification body has been informed, and (ii) other issues mentioned in this agreement as the certification body considers appropriate.

PEFC Finland commits itself to informing the certification body without delay of such changes in PEFC Council's practices or documents that affect this agreement.

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 used in certification audits are based on general criteria for certification bodies operating quality and environmental 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 (Conformity Assessment. Requirements for Bodies Providing Audit and Certification of Management Systems),
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 for Wood

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 SFS-EN 45011 (General Requirements for Bodies Operating Product Certification Systems).
2. Use a documented method, according to which the chain of custody for wood system 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.

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 1001:2009, PEFC FI 1002:2009, PEFC FI 1003:2009 and PEFC Annex 4: Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements.

The purpose of the pre-sent material and the first phase audit is to ensure that the requirements of the standards PEFC FI 1001:2009, PEFC FI 1002:2009, PEFC FI 1003:2009 and PEFC Annex 4: Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements 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 1001:2009, PEFC FI 1002:2009, PEFC FI 1003: 2009 and PEFC Annex 4: Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements. 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.

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 sectoral 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 other appropriateness 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 adequate amount of audit evidence, based on which the auditee's operation's conformity of to the criteria is evaluated. The evaluation results of 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 observations, 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.

The audit evidence to determine the conformity to the forest management standard shall include relevant information from external parties (e.g. government agencies, community groups, conservations organisations, etc.) as appropriate.

A summary of the forest certification report, including a summary of findings on the auditee's conformity to the forest management standard, compiled by the certification body, shall be made available to the public by PEFC Finland – Finnish Forest Certification Council.

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 and environmental competence of the auditors.

The criteria for forest management, as defined in the standards PEFC FI 1001:2009, PEFC FI 1002:2009 and PEFC FI 1003:2009, include:

- Criteria related to the implementation of group certification and certification of forest holdings of individual owners, and
- Group certification criteria measuring and describing the quality of forest management (29 in total on the level of a forestry centre, and 28 in total on the level of a forest management association) and criteria for certification of forest holdings of individual owners, or those of a group of individual forest owners (26 in total).

Possible other auditing criteria are agreed upon with the auditee, but their results have no effect on the certification decision conforming to the PEFC Finland Standard requirements.

7.2.3 Chain of Custody for Wood

The team auditing the management of chain of custody of wood system 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 certification criteria for the chain of custody of wood system are defined in PEFC Annex 4: Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements.

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 conforming 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 the 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, postponing or withdrawal of the certificate. Non-conformities are classified as minor and major. Minor non-conformities are not necessarily an obstacle for certification. Major non-conformities prevent the issuance of a certificate in all cases.

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 regional forest certification council.

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 adequate, 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 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.