

Model Regulations for a Regional Forest Certification Committee in the Area of a Forestry Centre

Referred in Standard FFCS 1001:2003, Alternative Implementation Levels of the Finnish Forest Certification System

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Table of Content

1. Name of the Committee
2. Purpose of the Committee
3. Policy of the Committee
4. Composition of the Committee
5. Calling Assemblies and Their Quorum
6. Tasks of the Committee
7. Procedures in Cases of Non-conformity to the Forest Certification Criteria and Regulations of the Committee
 - 7.1 Procedures in Cases of Non-conformity
 - 7.2 Written Notice
 - 7.3 Written notice on Expulsion from Forest Certification
 - 7.4 Expulsion from Group/Regional Forest Certification
 - 7.5 Non-conformities Identified in External Audits

1. Name of the Committee

The name of the regional forest certification committee operating in the area of (*name of the Forestry Centre*) is (*name of the province/region*) and its registered office is (*registered office of Forest Owners' Union*).

2. Purpose of the Committee

The Committee promotes the implementation of the Finnish Forest Certification System at the regional level.

The purpose of the Committee is to manage tasks related to application for the certification and its maintenance within the above mentioned forest certification system, in the area of (*name of the Forestry Centre*).

3. Policy of the Committee

Transparency is the guiding principle in participation to the Committee work and in the Committee working procedures. The Committee is responsible for ensuring that no individual operator will use confidential information revealed during the process of forest certification for their own benefit or that this information is not revealed to any external party without the Committee's authorisation.

4. Composition of the Committee

Representatives from organisations participating in forest certification are the members of the Committee. Each of the nominated members has a named deputy. (*Name*) Forest Owners' Union, Forest Management Associations of (*list of names*), (*name*) Forestry Centre, Metsähallitus, largest timber procuring and processing organisations (*list of names*), METO – Forestry Experts' Association, the Wood and Allied Workers' Union, The Trade Association of Finnish

Forestry and Earth Moving Contractors may each nominate one member and vice member to the Committee if they so wish.

The Committee nominates other optional members and deputy members aiming at a balanced and representative composition of all the relevant parties participating in forest certification in the region.

The nominated Committee members participate to the Committee work on the expense of the party they represent.

A person nominated by the Forest Owners' Union chairs the Committee.

The Committee elects a vice-chairman and a secretary among its members for a one year period.

The Committee may invite, if needed, external experts. The experts will have the right to attend and to speak in the meetings.

5. Calling Assemblies and Their Quorum

The Committee will meet upon the call for meeting by the Chair or the Vice-Chair at least twice a year. The call for meetings shall be submitted as agreed by the Committee, at least seven days prior the meeting.

The Committee has a quorum if at least half of the Committee members in addition to the Chair, or Vice Chair are presenting attendance.

Decisions by the Committee shall be unanimous. In cases of neglect and fraudulence, as defined in Chapter 7, the suspected party has no voice, and is excluded from the decision making on the issue. Possible disagreements in the Committee on the implementation of forest certification in the region can be submitted through the member organisations of the Finnish Forest Certification Council to the Forest Certification Appeals Panel for the Panels consideration. The Panel is called upon for each case separately.

Minutes of all the Committee meetings are kept and signed by the Chair and the Secretary of the meeting.

6. Tasks of the Committee

Tasks of the Committee include:

- 1) maintaining a register on the forest owners and parties belonging to the forest certification in the region;
- 2) monitoring the level of compliance of the participating parties to the requirements of standards FFCS 1001:2003 and FFCS 1002-1:2003;
- 3) organising internal data collection according to the document on procedures in data collection approved by the Committee;
- 4) deciding on the application for the certificate. The Committee shall be informed on the respective preceding decision made by the (*name(s)*) Forest Owners' Union;
- 5) preparing proposals on forest certification to improve the conformance to the criteria on forest management (FFCS 1002-1:2003) and enhance compliance to the criteria in general;
- 6) deciding on the sharing of fees to the certification body and on other possible expenses on forest certification approved by the Committee among the participating organisations;
- 7) deciding on measures to be taken as defined in the Chapter 7 when possible non-conformities in the forest management are found among the participating parties;
- 8) maintaining a register on the cases of neglect or fraudulence informed to the Committee members representing member organisations and to contact the suspected party for neglect or fraudulence as defined in the Chapter 7 when necessary;
- 9) informing forest owners in the region and other operators as well as other parties on the results of an external audit as considered appropriate by the Committee;
- 10) informing immediately Finnish Forest Certification Council on the issuance of the certificate, on possible changes in the validity of

the certificate and on possible withdrawal of the certificate;

11) providing Finnish Forest Certification Council with the regulations approved and implemented by the Committee and on any possible revisions, reports on the results of external audits and information on the scope of the certificate and

12) maintaining a register on members, vice members and experts nominated to the Committee.

7. Procedures in Cases of Non-conformity to the Forest Certification Criteria and Regulations of the Committee

7.1 Procedures in Cases of Non-conformity

Every Committee member shall inform without delay the Committee Chair on any cases of the non-conformity caused by neglect or fraudulence that is reported in writing to the organisation represented by the Committee member.

However, information on cases still under official assessment by authorities is not taken to the Committee.

The Committee shall within a period of two months, after being notified of the case – if not otherwise indicated e.g., due to the schedules of official assessments by authorities – discuss the notification and decide whether the procedure is against the requirements of forest certification. Before the decision the Committee shall hear the party suspected for neglect or fraudulence against the requirements of forest certification.

7.2 Written Notice

If the Committee concludes considering the content and scope of the activities that a participant in forest certification has acted against the requirements of forest certification, the Committee shall immediately give a written notice on the issue to the respective participant. The activity not conforming to the forest certification criteria shall be described and the notice

shall indicate the measures the Committee has taken in the matter.

The Committee gives a special emphasis on monitoring the activities related to forest certification of the notified participant in internal data collection and audit during the monitoring period following the notification.

If the Committee considers that an operator, which is a member of an organisation that participates in forest certification acts against forest certification criteria, the Committee shall in cooperation with the respective organisation ensure through individual consultation that the operator is aware of (i) the requirements of the forest certification system that apply to his/her work, (ii) commitment to forest certification through the membership of the respective organisation and (iii) the possibility to resign from the commitment to participate in the forest certification through the membership of the respective organisation.

The Committee maintains a register on the operations that it has considered be essentially in non-conformity with the forest certification criteria and informs this list to certification body.

7.3 Written Notice on Expulsion from Forest Certification

If the Committee finds that an organisation/operator participating in forest certification has repeatedly acted against the forest certification criteria, the Committee shall immediately after considering the situation send to the respective party a written notice on the date when the party shall be expelled from the group/regional forest certification.

If the Committee concludes that an operator being a member of an organisation committed to forest certification, has acted repeatedly against the requirements of forest certification despite the individual consultation given, the Committee shall immediately after considering the situation send to the operator a written notice on

the date when the operator shall be expelled from the group/regional certification.

If the Committee concludes that the non-conforming activities have included aggravating circumstances, the Committee shall immediately after considering the situation, inform the respective party or to the operator participating in forest certification through the membership to this party, the date when the party or its member shall be expelled from group/regional forest certification, although the non-conforming activity had not been repeated.

The Committee maintains a register on the actions that it has considered to be essentially aggravating in the cases of non-conformities to the requirements and informs this list to certification bodies.

7.4 Expulsion from Group/Regional Forest Certification

The Committee makes the decision on the expulsion from group/regional certification until further notice or for a fixed term. The Committee shall hear the party under the thread of expulsion before the decision is made.

If the member to be expelled is a forest owner, the forests under his/her management shall be removed from the database on certified forests.

7.5 Non-conformities Identified in External Audits

The Committee ensures that the organisation or its member that has received a non-conformance note in a certification or surveillance audit, presents to the Committee a plan for corrective actions in the schedule set by the Committee. If needed, the Committee supports the plan preparation within the available resources. The Committee discusses the corrective actions, makes amendments if needed and informs the organisation or its member on the revised plan. When the parties agree that the planned actions are adequate, the Committee submits the approved plan to the certification body.

If the organisation or its member, referred to in above, does not make the plan or does not participated in the preparation of the plan demanded by the Committee or does not implement the corrective actions according to the plan approved by the Committee, the Committee takes measures to implement the procedures defined in the Chapters 7.2 or 7.3 and 7.4.