

ENABLING **SUSTAINABILITY** IN FOREST MANAGEMENT

PEFC's unique approach
to forest certification





ABOUT PEFC

PEFC, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, is a leading global alliance of national forest certification systems. We were founded by small- and family forest owners to demonstrate excellence in sustainable forest management.

“ Forest certification is at the core of our work, as we promote and enable sustainable forest management around the world.

We recognize that while the concept of sustainable forest management is global in nature, its implementation is local. We therefore work with local organizations and people to advance responsible forestry.

This brochure will provide you with an overview of how we approach the core of our work, forest certification. ”



Ben Gunneberg,
*PEFC International CEO
and Secretary General*

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WHY SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Forests provide food, heat, energy, medicine, wood and a variety of products; they promote biodiversity by giving habitats and shelter; they are an integral part of the water and carbon cycles; and they have a fundamental role in climate regulation.

More than one in five people worldwide – an estimated two billion people – are believed to depend on forests and the services they provide for their livelihoods, yet forests are among the world's most vulnerable ecosystems.

If forests are to continue to deliver the full range of benefits that people and nature are dependent on, they need to be conserved and managed sustainably.

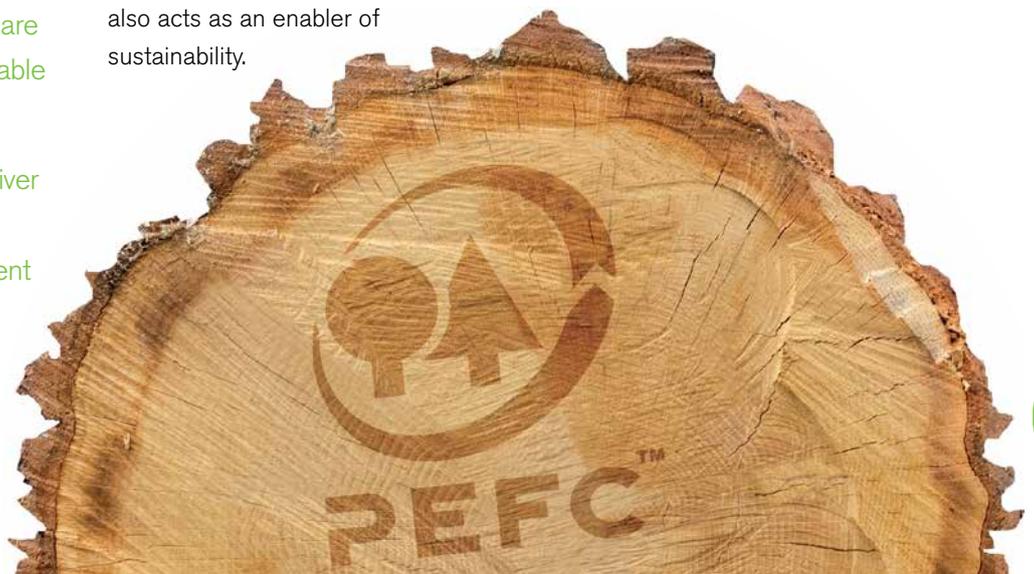
Forest Certification: An enabler of sustainability

While forest management is a long-term process, forest certification allows forest managers to demonstrate that the practices they apply in the forest today are sustainable and that their forests meet both our needs and those of future generations.

As well as providing assurance of sustainable practices, forest certification also acts as an enabler of sustainability.

Certification empowers consumers and companies to choose sustainably-sourced, PEFC-labeled products, thereby allowing us to reward responsible forest owners and creating an incentive for uncertified forest owners to obtain certification.

This means all of us interested in safeguarding forests – responsible businesses, public authorities, organizations and consumers alike – can use our purchasing power to support the sustainable management of the world's forests.



SEEING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH A LOCAL LENS

PEFC recognizes that while the concept of sustainable forest management is global in nature, its implementation is local. This is why we work with local organizations to advance responsible forestry and endorse national forest certification systems that have demonstrated compliance with our globally recognized Sustainability Benchmarks. National forest management standards must be tailored to country-specific priorities and conditions and developed through multi-stakeholder, consensus-driven processes.

National Forest Certification Systems: Why we work through local organizations

Forests are highly diverse, from evergreen eucalyptus forests in Tasmania to tropical rainforests in South America and the Congo Basin and boreal forests in Canada. Similarly, their management differs greatly, along with local traditions, cultural and spiritual expectations, average property sizes and support structures such as forest owner associations.

As framework conditions may vary vastly from country to country, we must address this diversity when defining sustainable forest management requirements in forest certification standards. We must ensure that these requirements are tailored to the needs of the specific forest ecosystems, the legal and administrative framework, the socio-cultural context and other locally relevant factors.

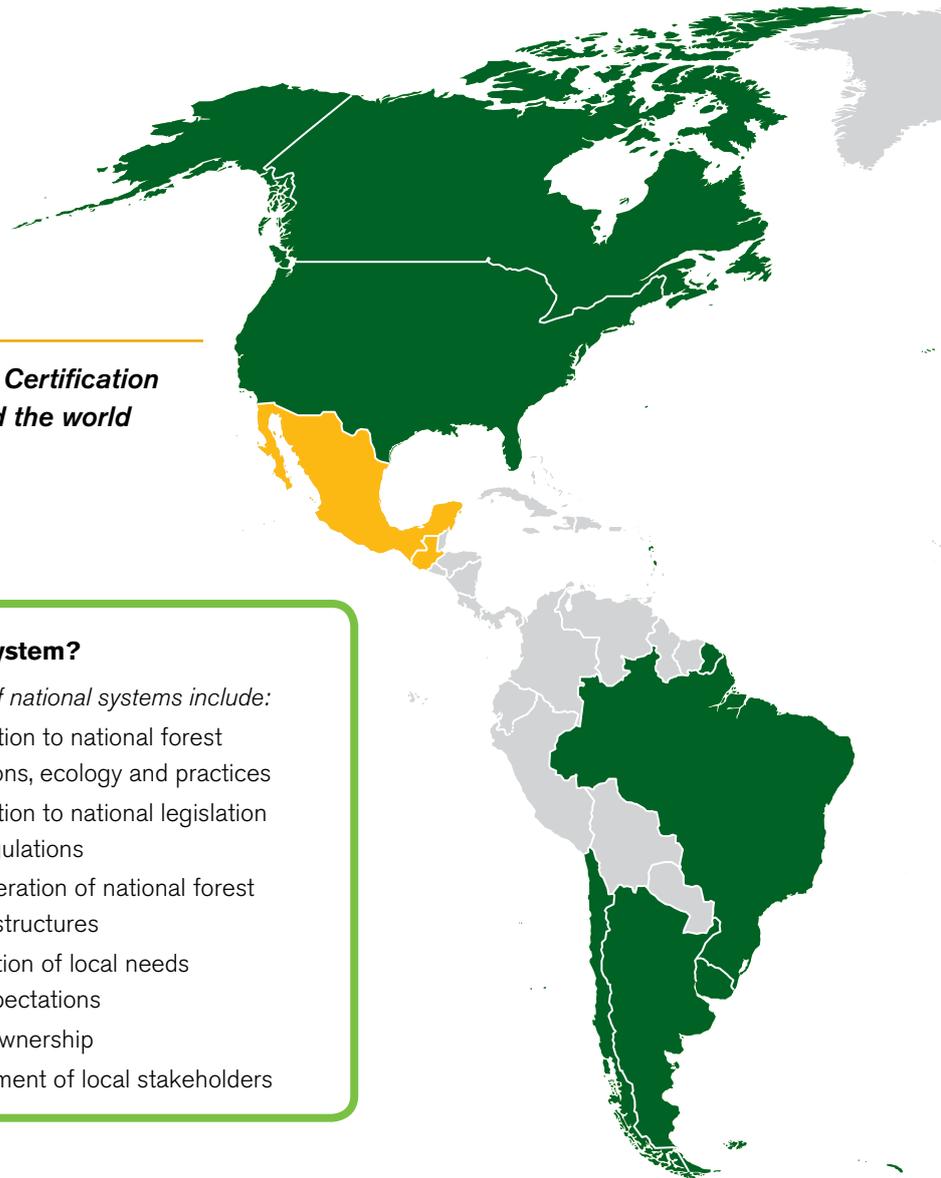
National Forest Certification Systems around the world

What is a National Forest Certification System?

A national forest certification system outlines the rules, procedures and management criteria for carrying out forest certification at national level, in line with the PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks. It also incorporates all operational aspects involved in managing a forest certification system.

Benefits of national systems include:

- Adaptation to national forest conditions, ecology and practices
- Adaptation to national legislation and regulations
- Consideration of national forest owner structures
- Integration of local needs and expectations
- Local ownership
- Involvement of local stakeholders





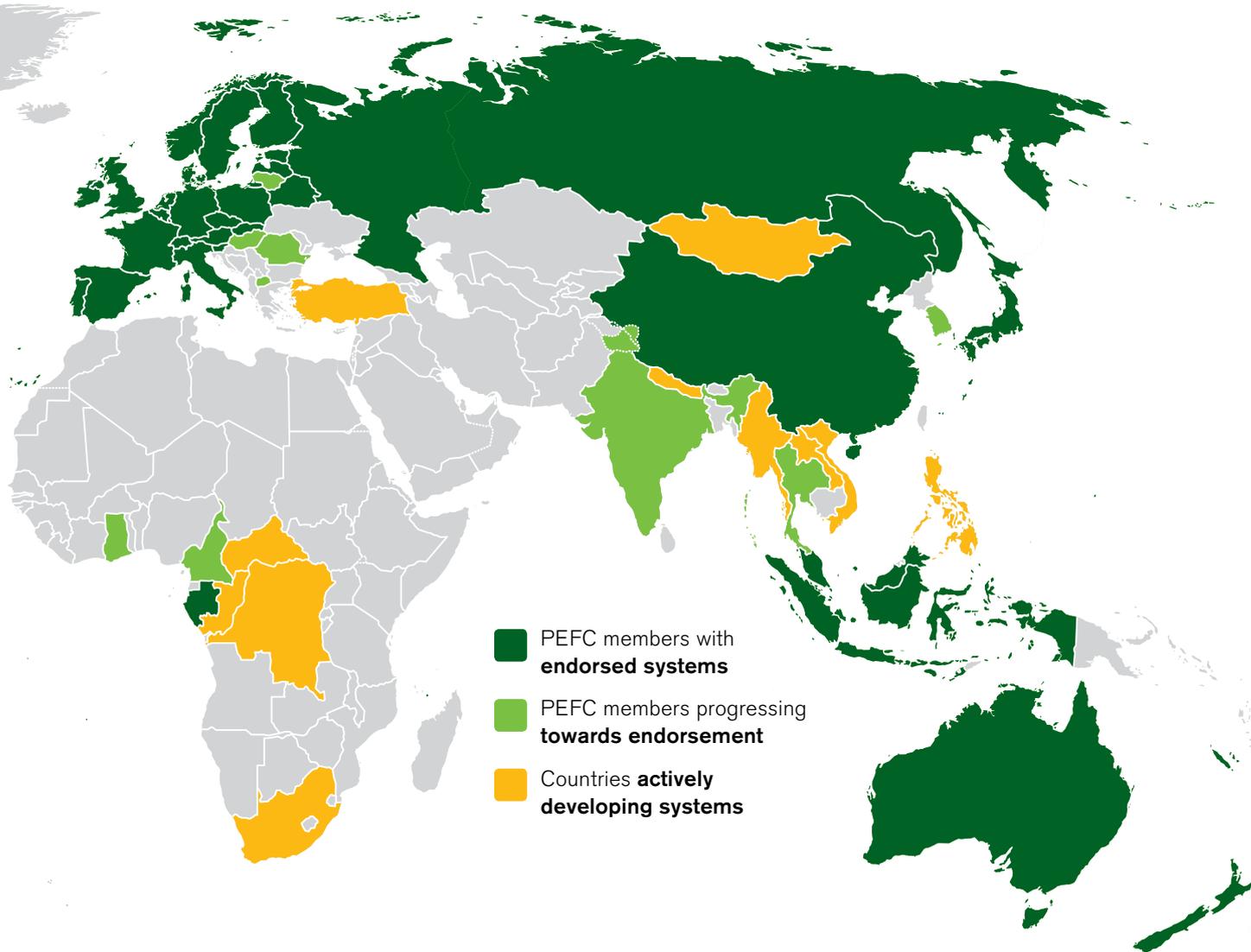
Added to this, there is a wide range of stakeholders that need to be involved and participate in determining what sustainable forest management means in the context of their country and how it can best be implemented locally.

PEFC's bottom-up approach to forest certification is well placed to respond to these challenges. Based on our fundamental belief that forest certification needs to be local, we work through national forest certification systems and national sustainable forest management standards.

This ensures that all our standards are developed independently at local level, and that local stakeholders from within the country own the process and are responsible for moving it forward. It is this ownership that is the key to the success of PEFC, as it empowers those managing forests – small- and private forest owners, communities and companies – to do so in compliance with the standards that they themselves helped develop, in alignment with their unique local circumstances.

Through our process we can ensure that these national standards meet globally accepted sustainable forest management requirements and are internationally recognized.

PEFC is the only global forest certification system that requires all standards to be developed with the open participation of all interested parties at national level in a consensus-driven decision-making process.



Standard Setting: How national standards are developed

PEFC sets out requirements for national standard setting, as well as the performance and management requirements to be addressed within national forest management standards. For us, the standards development process is as important as the final content.

As we recognize that forest management concerns all of us, issues such as balanced stakeholder participation, transparency and openness, and consensus-driven processes are at the heart of the standard setting process at national level. In particular, we ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders - from public or private forest owners to local communities and indigenous peoples, from forest industry to labor unions to environmental and social NGOs - throughout the standards development process.

Notification

There must be a public invitation to participate in the standard setting process. Disadvantaged and key stakeholders need to be identified, their proactive participation sought, and constraints to their participation considered.

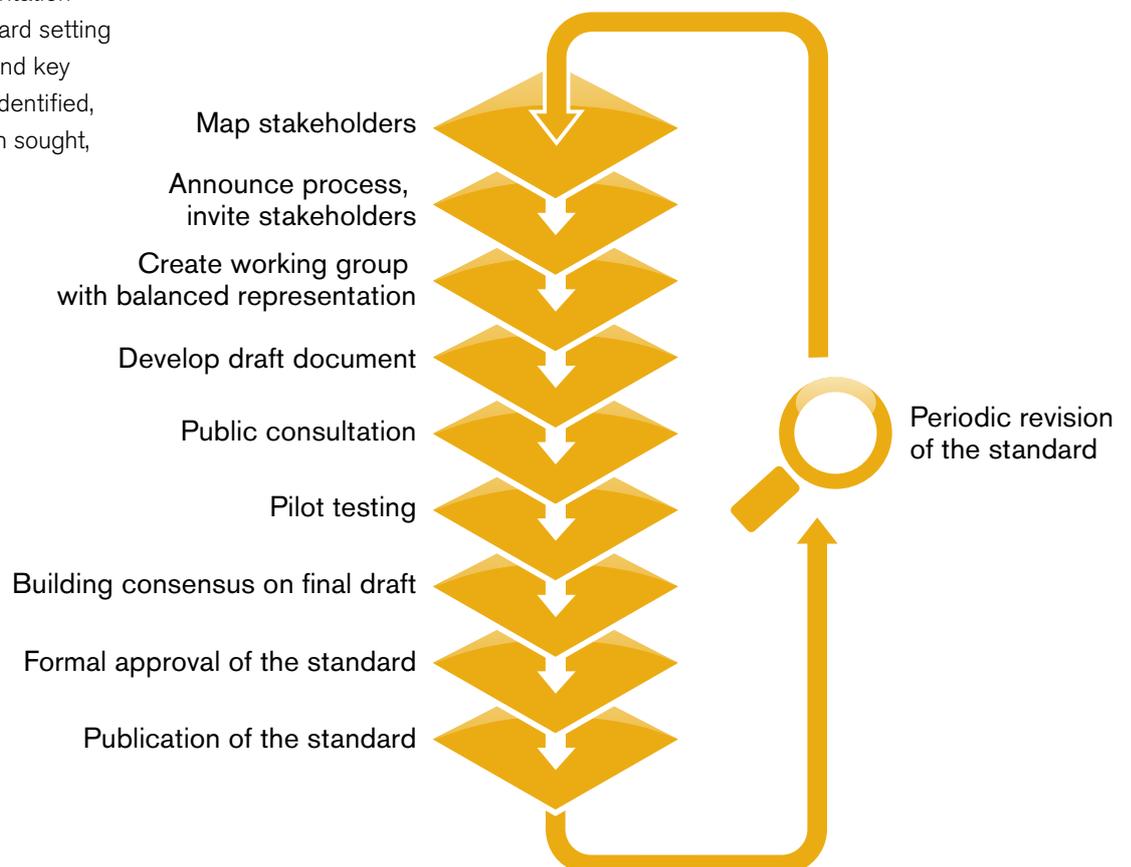
Participation

Standards must be developed by a working group with balanced representation. Ideally, we strive for a balance as defined in Agenda 21 and include business and industry, children and youth, forest owners, indigenous people, local authorities, NGOs, scientific and technological communities, women, and workers and trade unions. The standard setting process is consensus driven, with no single interest dominating.

Consultation

To allow for additional feedback, input and comments, draft standards are subject to public consultation. PEFC only recognizes national forest certification systems with standards developed in compliance with our requirements for a highly inclusive process, and we require regular revisions every five years.

PEFC standard setting process



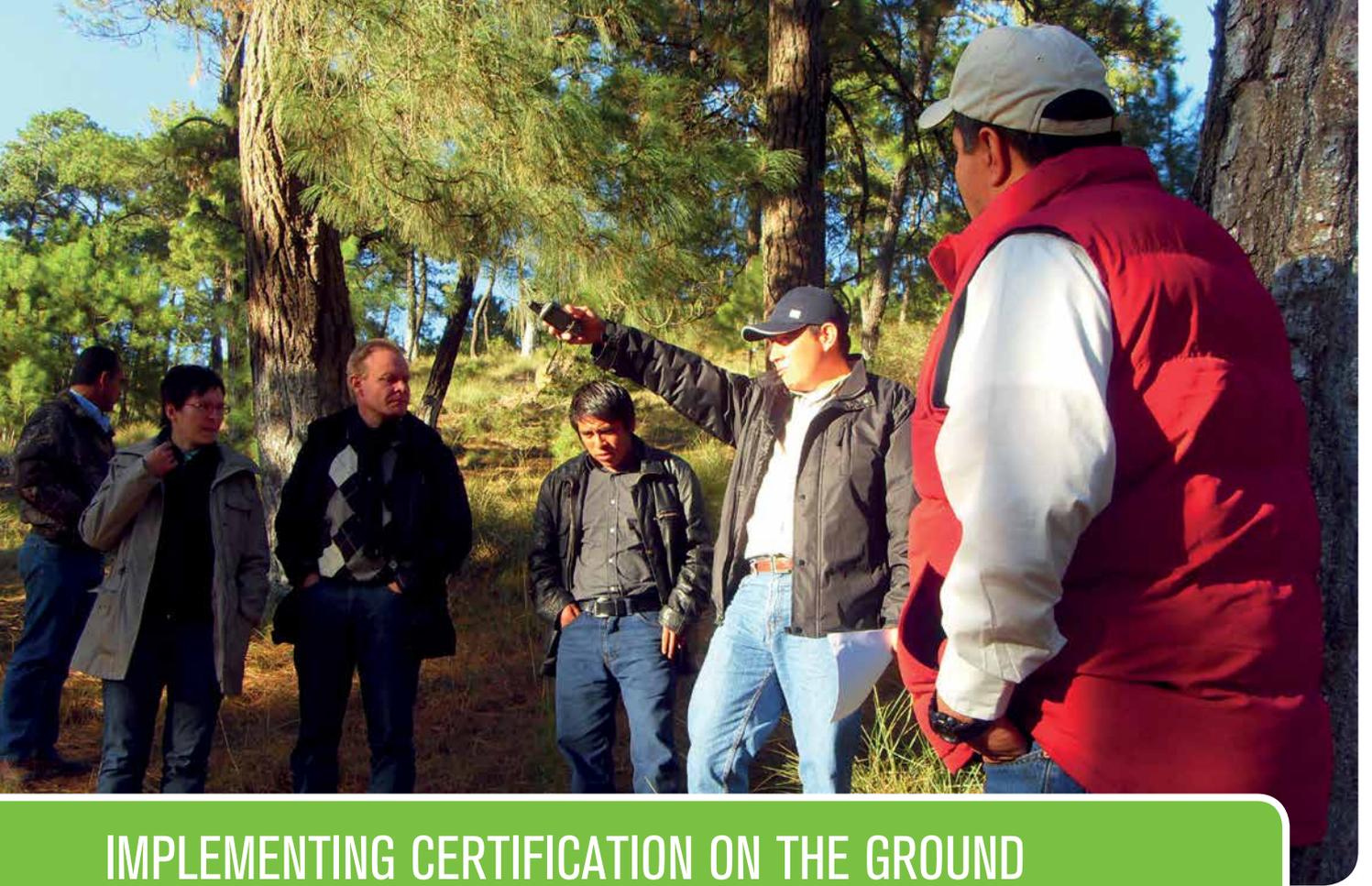


National Standards: Exceeding Global PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks

We require local stakeholders to develop their own national standards. As a result, issues considered to be relevant and significant at national level, but that are not captured in our globally applicable requirements, are naturally incorporated into these standards.

This means that while the PEFC endorsement process ensures that all national forest certification systems are in compliance with the global PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks, they tend to exceed our international requirements.

In fact, significant advancements in forest certification have been pioneered by national systems, such as social requirements in Chain of Custody certification. Initially introduced in the Malaysian national forest certification system more than a decade ago, stakeholders felt that such requirements would add value at a global level, and integrated them into the PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks.



IMPLEMENTING CERTIFICATION ON THE GROUND

Forest certification as a voluntary, market-based instrument to promote sustainable forest management is implemented through two separate but linked processes: sustainable forest management certification and Chain of Custody certification.

Sustainable Forest Management: Size is no barrier

PEFC sustainable forest management certification enables forest owners to provide assurances that their forests are managed in line with challenging environmental, social and economic requirements – balancing people, planet and profit.

For the many large companies owning or managing huge areas of forest land, individual certification is the perfect mechanism to demonstrate compliance with PEFC requirements. However for the millions of small-, family- and community forest owners, the cost of individual certification, both in terms of time and resources, can pose a significant obstacle.

With this in mind, PEFC developed and popularized the Group Certification approach over a decade ago. Group Certification is a mechanism through which groups of small forest landholders can organize themselves, pool their resources, and work together to achieve certification. This makes certification affordable for small-forest owners.

Internationally, nearly one million small-forest owners have achieved PEFC certification through the Group Certification mechanism. This number is testimony to the fact that forest certification is possible for small landholders, and that it is a powerful and cost-effective mechanism for promoting forest conservation and sustainable management.

More information:
treee.es/SFMapproaches

Chain of Custody: How we ensure that certified products originate from certified forests

Forest certification, while crucial in maintaining the valuable services forests provide, does not in itself establish the link from the forest to the market. This link is established through PEFC Chain of Custody certification, which tracks forest-based products from sustainable sources to the final product. It closely monitors each step of the supply chain through independent auditing to ensure that certified, sustainable material reaches the consumer while unsustainable sources are excluded.

Chain of Custody certification provides evidence that wood contained in a product originates from certified forests, and requires all companies along the supply chain to be PEFC Chain of Custody certified. As long as this is the case, products are considered PEFC-certified and can use the PEFC label.

As a globally trusted mark, the PEFC label assists consumers, businesses, governments, forest owners and managers, and other stakeholders in identifying, buying and promoting products and goods from forests that are managed sustainably. In fact, governments and companies from around the world require PEFC certification within their procurement policies.

As with forest management certification, we recognize that one size does not always fit all for Chain of Custody certification. In addition to single site certification, we have made specific provisions for three particular situations: for small businesses, for companies operating several facilities to simplify administration, and for specific, one-off or short term projects such as construction projects.

The PEFC Label: Assisting consumers in identifying responsibly sourced products

Chain of Custody certification comes with an additional benefit: it allows companies to use the PEFC label on certified products. This is positive for both the company and the consumer, as by communicating responsible sourcing practices, companies strengthen the positive perception of their brand while enabling consumers to make informed ethical shopping choices.

In fact, an overwhelming majority of consumers globally - more than 80% - want companies to use labels on products, and consider the PEFC label the most trusted global certification label, according to the first PEFC/GfK Global Consumer Survey.



Promoting
Sustainable Forest
Management
www.pefc.org



PEFC SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Abridged version

All national certification systems that wish to obtain PEFC endorsement must comply with PEFC's globally recognized Sustainability Benchmarks, including its requirements for sustainable forest management.

The criteria and indicators listed here represent an abridged version of *PEFC ST 1003:2010 - Sustainable Forest Management - Requirements*.

CRITERION 1: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle

- Forest management planning shall aim to maintain or increase forests and other wooded areas and enhance the quality of the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of forest resources.
- Forest management shall comprise the cycle of inventory and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and shall include an appropriate assessment of the social, environmental and economic values. Practices shall safeguard the quantity and quality of resources, and appropriate silvicultural measures shall be employed.
- Inventory and mapping of forest resources shall be established and maintained, adequate to local and national conditions.
- Plans or their equivalents, appropriate to the size and use of the forest area, shall be elaborated, and periodically updated. A summary of the plan is made publicly available.
- Monitoring of forest resources and evaluation of their management shall be periodically performed, and results fed back into the planning process.
- Conversion of forests to other types of land use shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion:

- is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation;
- entails a small proportion of forest type; and
- does not have negative impacts on threatened forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats; and
- contributes to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.

CRITERION 2: Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality

- Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and increase the health and vitality of forest ecosystems and to rehabilitate degraded forest ecosystems.
- Plans shall specify ways to minimise the risk of degradation of and damages to forest ecosystems.
- Practices shall make best use of natural structures and processes and use preventive biological measures wherever possible, encouraging genetic, species and structural diversity.
- Health and vitality of forests shall be periodically monitored.
- Consideration shall be given to the effects of naturally occurring fire, pests and other disturbances.
- Lighting of fires shall be avoided and is only permitted if it is necessary for the achievement of the management goals of the forest management unit.
- Reforestation and afforestation should occur with tree species and provenances that are suited to the site conditions and management techniques that minimise tree and/or soil damage shall be applied.
- The use of pesticides shall be minimised and appropriate silvicultural alternatives and other biological measures preferred. The WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides like those that accumulate in the food chain, shall be prohibited in most cases.
- Where fertilisers are used, they shall be applied in a controlled manner and with due consideration for the environment.

CRITERION 3: Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood)

- Forest management planning and practices shall aim to maintain the capability of forests to produce a range of wood and non-wood forest products and services on a sustainable basis.
- Planning shall aim to achieve sound economic performance exploring new markets for all relevant goods and services.
- Plans shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area.
- Productive capacity of the site shall be maintained through appropriate regeneration, tending and harvesting operations.
- Harvesting levels of both wood and non-wood forest products shall not exceed a rate that can be sustained in the long term.
- Exploitation of non-timber forest products is regulated, monitored and controlled.
- Infrastructure shall be planned, established and maintained with consideration to minimising negative environmental impact.

CRITERION 4: Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems

- Forest management planning shall aim to maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity on ecosystem, species and genetic levels and, where appropriate, diversity at landscape level.
- Planning, inventory and mapping of forest resources shall identify, protect and/or conserve ecologically important forest areas containing significant concentrations of:
 - protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems;
 - areas containing endemic species and habitats of threatened species;
 - endangered or protected genetic *in situ* resources; and
 - globally, regionally and nationally significant large landscape areas



- Protected and endangered plant and animal species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures shall be taken for their protection and, where relevant, to increase their population.
- Management shall ensure successful regeneration through natural regeneration or, where not appropriate, planting.
- For reforestation and afforestation, native species and local provenances shall be preferred. Use of introduced species, provenances or varieties shall be evaluated to ensure negative impacts are avoided. Activities that contribute to the improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity shall be promoted.
- Genetically-modified (GMO) trees shall not be used.
- Practices shall promote a diversity of both horizontal and vertical structures such as uneven-aged stands and aim to maintain and restore landscape diversity. Moreover, standing and fallen dead wood, old groves and special rare tree species shall be left in quantities and distribution necessary to safeguard biological diversity.
- Traditional management systems that have created valuable ecosystems, such as coppice, on appropriate sites shall be supported.
- Balance between the pressure of animal populations and successful forest regeneration, growth and biodiversity shall be sought.
- Tending and harvesting operations shall be conducted in a way that does not cause lasting damage to ecosystems.
- Infrastructure shall be planned and constructed in a way that minimises damage to ecosystems, and that takes threatened or other key species – in particular their migration patterns – into consideration.

CRITERION 5: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)

- Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance protective functions

of forests for society, such as protection of infrastructure, protection from soil erosion, protection of water resources and from adverse impacts of water such as floods or avalanches.

- Areas that fulfil specific and recognised protective functions for society shall be registered and mapped, and forest management plans or their equivalents shall take full account of these areas.
- Special care shall be granted to minimize soil erosion and adverse impacts on water resources during forest management planning and operations.

CRITERION 6: Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions

- Forest management planning shall aim to respect the multiple functions of forests to society, give due regard to the role of forestry in rural development, and especially consider new opportunities for employment in connection with the socio-economic functions of forests.
- Forest management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the forest management area.
- Property rights and land tenure arrangements shall be clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. Likewise, legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land shall be clarified, recognised and respected.
- Management activities shall be conducted in recognition of the established framework of legal, customary and traditional rights such as outlined in ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which shall not be infringed upon without the free, prior and informed consent of the holders of the rights, including the provision of compensation where applicable.
- Adequate public access to forests for the purpose of recreation shall be provided where suitable.
- Sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meeting the basic needs of

local communities (e.g. health, subsistence) shall be protected or managed in a way that takes due regard of the significance of the site.

- Operations shall take into account all socio-economic functions, especially the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests.
- Forest managers, contractors, employees and forest owners shall be provided with sufficient information and encouraged to keep up-to-date through continuous training.
- Practices shall make the best use of local forest-related experience and knowledge, such as those of local communities, forest owners, NGOs and local people.
- Management shall provide for effective communication and consultation with local people and other stakeholders relating to sustainable forest management and shall provide appropriate mechanisms for resolving complaints and disputes.
- Management shall comply with fundamental ILO conventions. Working conditions shall be safe, and guidance and training in safe working practices shall be provided to all those assigned to a task in forest operations. Health and accident risks shall be identified and all reasonable measures to be applied to protect workers.

CRITERION 7: Compliance with legal requirements

- Forest management shall comply with legislation applicable to forest management issues including forest management practices; nature and environmental protection; protected and endangered species; property, tenure and land-use rights for indigenous people; health, labour and safety issues; and the payment of royalties and taxes.
- Management shall provide for adequate protection of the forest from unauthorised activities such as illegal logging, illegal land use, illegally initiated fires, and other illegal activities.

More information:
treee.es/PEFC-SFM-standard

ENSURING COMPLIANCE AND CONSISTENCY - GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY

Ensuring compliance and consistent application of our requirements is a vital aspect of our work, from implementing third-party certification in line with the ISO framework to obtaining independent verification that national standards meet our globally recognized Sustainability Benchmarks.

Certification & Auditing: How compliance with certification requirements is verified

Certification is the actual process of validating that individuals or organizations wishing to obtain PEFC forest management or Chain of Custody certification are in compliance with our requirements.

To ensure that certification is objective and impartial, it is not carried out by PEFC, but by independent accredited certification bodies.

After a forest owner or company is satisfied that they meet our requirements, they need to contact a certification body and request an audit to confirm their practices. During an audit, the auditor will assess whether practices on the ground or in a factory meet our requirements through, for example, visits in the field and consultations with stakeholders.

If compliance is demonstrated, the certification body issues a certificate valid for three to five years, after which operators must become re-certified. Additional checks are done through annual surveillance audits to proactively verify on-going compliance with our requirements. Only if operations continuously meet our standards do they earn the right to make “PEFC-certified” claims and use the PEFC label.

To ensure the credibility and competence of their work, certification bodies must be accredited by national accreditation bodies. These accreditation bodies, in turn, need to be members of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), the world association of national accreditation bodies.

PEFC is the only global forest certification system that strictly separates standard setting, certification and accreditation.

The Three Pillars of Credible Certification

Credible certification requires certification decisions to be impartial, independent and competent. This means that standard setting, certification and accreditation must be completely separate in order to eliminate the risk of conflicts of interest and ensure the highest level of competency.

Standard setting:

the process of defining certification requirements in collaboration with stakeholders.

Certification:

the process of checking whether a forest owner or company fulfills the certification requirements, carried out by a certification body.

Accreditation:

the process of assessing the competence of the certification body, carried out by a national accreditation body recognized by its respective government.

Endorsement of National Systems: How compliance with PEFC's Sustainability Benchmarks is verified

We want to be confident that all national systems we endorse meet our globally recognized Sustainability Benchmarks.

To ensure that our requirements are consistently applied at national level, all national forest certification systems applying for PEFC endorsement go through a comprehensive and thorough independent assessment and quality assurance process.

This process takes on average nine months to complete, and includes the following elements:

Assessment

An independent assessor evaluates compliance of the national system with PEFC requirements. A global public consultation of a minimum of sixty days provides additional input into the assessment.

Quality assurance

PEFC has implemented a two-step quality assurance process to ensure that national systems meet PEFC's Sustainability Benchmarks. The Panel of Experts, comprised of independent specialists, provides quality assurance of the assessment report by reviewing the draft assessment report for consistency, quality and robustness. The Board of Directors provides quality assurance of the assessment process, ensuring that the assessment is sound and completed in accordance with PEFC requirements.

Endorsement

After a national system has successfully passed the assessment and quality assurance process, the PEFC General Assembly votes on its endorsement. A two-thirds majority is required for a system to be endorsed.

Documentation concerning all endorsed systems, including the full assessment report, is publicly available on our website.

Endorsements are valid for five years. We require revisions of national forest certification systems before they are eligible to apply for re-endorsement. With this, we ensure that national standards continuously improve and evolve, and engage all interested stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

PEFC endorsement confirms that all fellow PEFC members are satisfied – and mutually recognize – that a national forest certification system meets PEFC's Sustainability Benchmarks. In practical terms, it means that wood- or forest-based products certified to a national forest certification system are considered "PEFC-certified" anywhere in the world, are eligible to carry our label, and benefit from PEFC's global market recognition.

PEFC is the only global forest certification system that provides an independent, transparent and participatory process to demonstrate compliance of national forest certification systems with international requirements.

PEFC endorsement process

ASSESSMENT

Independent assessment
Global public consultation

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel of Experts review
Board of Directors approval

ENDORSEMENT

General Assembly vote



Revision

More information:

treee.es/endorsementPEFC

ENSURING COMPLIANCE AND CONSISTENCY - GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY - Continued

What are the PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks?

The PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks are a set of standards and guides outlining rigorous requirements and criteria that national forest certification systems must meet. This includes documents referring to:

- Standard setting
- Forest management
- Group forest management certification
- Chain of Custody
- Certification and accreditation
- Complaints and appeals
- Logo and label usage
- Administrative procedures

Complaints: What if something is going wrong?

We are aware that, as with any program or activity, there may be issues of non-conformity or noncompliance from time to time. For this reason, PEFC has put in place a series of complaints and appeals mechanisms to enable stakeholders to raise awareness if something goes wrong.

We encourage everybody to forward information on any suspected activities to the respective complaints and appeals mechanism. In addition to correcting any such issues on the ground, complaints and appeals also provide an opportunity to implement corrective and preventive measures and help us to improve our services.

Certified entities

Complaints against certified entities are dealt with by the respective complaints and appeals procedures put in place by certification bodies. Issues that remain unresolved at this level should be raised with the respective complaints and appeals mechanisms of national accreditation bodies and thereafter - as a third level of appeal - with the IAF. If the certification body, or indeed an accreditation body is judged to not have dealt with the complaint appropriately, it risks losing its license to operate.



National forest certification systems

National forest certification systems must have in place complaints and appeals procedures to deal with issues related to their performance and compliance with PEFC's Sustainability Benchmarks. If issues cannot be solved at national level, stakeholders can call upon PEFC International's complaints and appeals mechanism. Complaints against national PEFC members, if upheld, can have serious consequences, including the suspension or termination of PEFC endorsement.

Standard setting working groups

Standard setting working groups must have mechanisms in place to deal with complaints and appeals concerning the standards development process.



GETTING INVOLVED

For forest certification to deliver maximum benefits for the world's forests, it requires engagement and active participation from a wide range of stakeholders. This is especially true for PEFC as an alliance of national forest certification systems. For us, partnership and collaboration are key to our success.

There are many opportunities to engage with PEFC, in either a personal or professional capacity. These range from giving preference to products bearing the distinctive PEFC label when shopping to contributing your professional expertise during a forest management standard setting process.

BECOME A PEFC MEMBER

- National Members**
 National forest certification systems and organizations striving to establish national standards. *More information:* treee.es/nationalPEFCmembers
- International Stakeholder Members**
 Organizations, companies and associations with operations in two or more countries. *More information:* treee.es/int-members
- Member of National Organizations**
 Institutional stakeholders and/or individuals can become members of national PEFC member organizations. *Contact national organizations:* treee.es/nationalPEFCmembers

GET INVOLVED IN PEFC PROJECTS

- Partnership**
 Engage with PEFC through joint activities, projects and other collaborative actions. *Contact:* development@pefc.org
- PEFC Collaboration Fund**
 Apply for co-funding from the PEFC Collaboration Fund. *More information:* treee.es/collab-fund
- Financial Support**
 Support PEFC and our activities through financial support, expertise and knowledge, secondments and other means of support. *Contact:* development@pefc.org

PARTICIPATE IN STANDARD & SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

- Sustainability Benchmarks**
 Become involved in standard setting working groups and task forces. *Contact:* technical@pefc.org
- National Standard Setting**
 Contribute to processes at local level and to national standard setting and revision work. *Contact national organizations:* treee.es/nationalPEFCmembers
- System Development**
 In countries without a national forest certification system, take the lead in establishing a national organization to facilitate the development of a PEFC-compliant national system. *Contact:* development@pefc.org

PRODUCE, SELL AND BUY PEFC-CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

- Certify your forest**
More information: treee.es/certify-forest
- Certify your company**
More information: treee.es/certify-CoC
- Label your products**
More information: treee.es/PEFC-logo
- Procure and buy responsibly**
More information: treee.es/procure-certified



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