

<i>Normative Document</i>		
Certification and Accreditation procedures	5 October 2007	Annex 6

Certification and Accreditation Procedures

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1. OBJECTIVES

PEFC Council recognised certifications for forest management and chain of custody, rely on international certification and accreditation procedures as defined in the documentation of the International Standardization Organisation (ISO) and European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) as well as in the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

This document defines the certification and accreditation procedures for forest and chain of custody certifications adopted and considered credible and reliable by the PEFC Council. The PEFC Council is not involved in the certification process. Rather, it defines the requirements for certification bodies and certification processes for the purposes of PEFC endorsement of national and sub national schemes and recognition of certificates.

2. SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT

This document was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council on 22 November 2002, amended on 31 October 2003, 11 April 2005, 28 October 2005, 27 October 2006 and 5 October 2007.

This document specifies the general competence requirements and tasks of certification bodies when applied to forest and chain of custody certification.

3. CERTIFICATION BODIES

3.1 Competence of Certification Bodies

PEFC certifications shall be carried out by impartial, independent third parties that cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making bodies, or in the forest management and are independent of the certified entity. Certification bodies considered competent by the PEFC Council to carry out forest and/or chain of custody verification, shall fulfil the following qualifications:

- 1) The certification body carrying out forest management certification or chain of custody certification against a scheme specific chain of custody standard, shall fulfil requirements defined in:
 - a) ISO 17021⁽¹⁾ if the certification is carried out as management system certification,
 - b) ISO Guide 65 (EN 45 011)⁽²⁾ if the certification is carried out as product certification (the term “product” is used in its widest sense and includes also processes and services)⁽²⁾,
 - c) Other requirements for certification bodies defined by the national accreditation body.
- 2) The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against Annex 4 (*Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*) shall fulfil requirements defined in ISO Guide 65 (EN 45011)⁽²⁾
- 3) The certification body carrying out forest certification shall have the technical competence in forest management, on its economic, social and environmental impacts, and on the forest certification criteria.

The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification shall have the technical competence in forest based product procurement and processing, material flows in different stages of processing and trading.

- 4) The certification body shall have a good understanding of the national PEFC system against which it carries out forest or chain of custody certification.

Compliance of the certification body with the above requirements shall be verified by an accreditation as described in chapter 5.

3.2 Auditors

Certification bodies have the responsibility to use competent auditors that have adequate technical know-how on the certification process and issues related to forest management or chain of custody certification respectively.

The auditors shall fulfil general criteria for quality and environmental management systems auditors as defined in ISO 19 011⁽³⁾.

Additional qualification requirements for auditors carrying out forest management or chain of custody audits against a scheme specific standard should be defined by the respective national forest certification scheme.

The certification body can fulfil the technical competence defined for auditors by the presence of a technical expert(s) in a group of auditors carrying out forest management or chain of custody audits.

The compliance of auditors with the above requirements is verified by an accreditation as described in chapter 5.

4. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

The certification body shall have established internal procedures for forest management certification against a national forest certification scheme and for chain of custody certification against Annex 4 (*Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*) or against a scheme specific chain of custody standard.

The applied certification procedures for forest management certification or chain of custody certification against a scheme specific chain of custody standard shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements defined in any of the following documents:

- a) ISO 17021⁽¹⁾ if the certification is carried out as management system certification,
- b) ISO Guide 65 (EN 45 011)⁽²⁾ if the certification is carried out as product certification (the term “product” is used in its widest sense and includes also processes and services)⁽²⁾,

The applied certification procedures for chain of custody certification against Annex 4 (*Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*) shall fulfill requirements defined in ISO Guide 65 (EN 45 011)⁽²⁾.

The applied auditing procedures shall fulfill or be compatible with the requirements of ISO 19011⁽³⁾.

In addition to above requirements the certification body:

- a) informs the relevant PEFC National Governing Bodies about all issued forest management and chain of custody certificates and changes concerning validity and scope of these certificates,

In the case of a multi-site chain of custody certification the certification body shall provide the relevant PEFC National Governing Body with a list of all sites covered by the multi-site organisation.

In the case of a multi-site chain of custody certification covering sites located in more than one country, the relevant PEFC National Governing Body is the PEFC National Governing Body in the country where the head-office of the multi-site organisation is registered. Information about the sites located in countries other than where the head office is registered shall also be provided to the PEFC National Governing Body of that country.

If the chain of custody certification has been carried out in a country without a PEFC National Governing Body, the information shall be provided directly to the PEFC Council.

- b) carries out control of PEFC logo usage if the certified entity is a PEFC logo user.

The maximum period for surveillance audits is one year and maximum period for re-assessment audit is five years for both forest management and chain of custody certifications.

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

A summary of the certification report, including a summary of findings on the auditee's conformity with the forest management standard, written by the certification body, shall be made available to the public by the auditee or in accordance with any applicable requirements defined by the respective forest certification scheme.

Additional specific requirements for certification procedures over and above the ones listed above might be defined by the respective forest certification scheme (i.e. forest management certification and chain of custody certification).

Compliance of the certification body's procedures with the above requirements shall be verified by accreditation according to chapter 5.

5. ACCREDITATION

Certification bodies carrying out forest management or chain of custody certification, shall be accredited by a national accreditation body so as to ensure the credibility of the certification work and to facilitate mutual recognition. An accredited certificate shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body.

Accreditation bodies shall be a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) or a member of IAF's special recognition regional groups and implement procedures described in ISO/IEC 17011:2004⁽⁴⁾ and other documents recognised by the above organisations.

The certification body shall undertake forest management or/and chain of custody certification as "accredited certifications".

The certification body carrying out forest management certification or chain of custody certification against a scheme specific chain of custody standard shall be accredited based on 17021⁽¹⁾ or ISO Guide 65⁽²⁾ and the relevant forest management or chain of custody standard(s) / scheme shall be covered by the accreditation scope.

The certification body carrying out chain of custody certification against Annex 4 (Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements) shall be accredited based on ISO Guide 65 (EN 45 011)⁽²⁾.

Non-conformance with the accreditation requirements, results in the certification bodies not being regarded as having met PEFC Council requirements and their certifications not be considered as certified for PEFC purposes.

In exceptional circumstances, the PEFC Council General Assembly can approve a time limited exemption from the above requirements based on a written application from the PEFC National Governing Body. The application shall state (i) reasons for requesting the exemption, (ii) description of how the credibility of the certification process will be assured including a list of measures currently undertaken to ensure the credibility.

6. PEFC NOTIFICATION OF CERTIFICATION BODIES

Certification bodies operating forest management and / or chain of custody certification against the PEFC endorsed national schemes / standards or the PEFC international chain of custody standard (*Annex 4 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*) shall be notified by the PEFC National Governing Body of the relevant country.

Certification bodies operating chain of custody certification against the PEFC international chain of custody standard (*Annex 4 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*) in countries without a PEFC National Governing Body shall be notified by the PEFC Council. The PEFC Council can also decide to notify certification body operating chain of custody certification against the PEFC international chain of custody standard (*Annex 4 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*) in countries with a PEFC National Governing Body if the notification cannot be issued by the relevant PEFC National Governing Body.

In order to ensure the independence of certification bodies the PEFC notification conditions decided by the PEFC National Governing Bodies or by the PEFC Council shall only cover:

- (a) administrative conditions (e.g. communication of the certification body with the PEFC National Governing Bodies or the PEFC Council, transfer of information, etc.),
- (b) financial conditions (fees imposed on certified entities),
- (c) compliance with requirements for certification bodies verified through accreditation as described in chapter 5.

The PEFC notification conditions shall not discriminate against certification bodies or create trade obstacles.

7. TEMPORARY PROVISION

The PEFC Council recognises a transition period until 18 September 2008 for the transition from ISO Guide 62 and 66 to ISO 17021⁽¹⁾, which has been jointly agreed and communicated by IAF and ISO.

⁽¹⁾ **ISO/IEC 17021:2006** Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

⁽²⁾ **ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996** (EN 45 011:1998) General Requirements for bodies operating product certification systems

⁽³⁾ **ISO 19011:2002** Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing

⁽⁴⁾ **ISO/IEC 17011:2004** Conformity assessment -- General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies