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STANDARD SETTING AND REVISION PROCEDURES

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Introduction

The sustainable forest management has an encompassing approach which takes into consideration the fulfillment of ecological, social and economic criteria. The development of the certification scheme and the definition of sustainable forest management are based on wide participation of all stakeholders and ensuring the principle of openness and transparency of the process by reaching decisions based on consensus.

The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republic of Macedonia – Council for SFM is a national management body in Macedonia which includes representatives from forestry, wood industry and other groups of stakeholders. The Council for SFM is a standardization body responsible for the development and maintenance of Macedonian forest certification system documents in accordance with the PEFC requirements.

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1. Scope

This document describes the requirements for development and revision of the documentation of the Council for SFM which is part of MK forest certification system in accordance with the PEFC requirements.

2. Normative references

The documents listed below are essential for the application of this document. The latest versions of referenced documents which are in force are applied in this document.

- PEFC ST 1001:2010 Standard Setting - Requirements
- ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994, Code of good practice and standardisation
- ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, Standardisation and related activities - General vocabulary

3. Concepts and definitions

For the purpose of this document, the concepts and definitions described in ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996 are used for the definitions listed in this section.

3.1 Consensus

General agreement characterized by absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests or by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and the need to reconcile any conflicting arguments.

Note: The need to reach a consensus needs not imply unanimity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)

3.2 Marginalized interested party

Interested party which may be financially or in any other way prevented from participation in the process of setting standards.

3.3 Enquiry draft

Proposed document open to public consultation.

3.4 Final version

Proposed document ready for formal approval.

3.5 Key interested party

Interested party whose participation is of crucial importance for the results in the process of setting standards.

3.6 Normative document

Document which describes rules, guidelines and characteristics of certain activities or the results of those activities.

Note 1: The concept normative document includes standards, specifications of technical nature, regulative documents.

Note 2: The word document refers to any kind of medium which contains information.

3.7 Revision

Process of presenting all necessary changes to their essence and presentation of the normative document.

Note: the results of the revision are presented by issuing a new edition of a certain normative document (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.8 Review

Activity which refers to the check of a normative document to determine if it needs to be reaffirmed, changed or withdrawn from use.

3.9 Stakeholder

Person, group or organization concerned by the subject of standardization.

Note: the nine major groups defined by Agenda 21 at the UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro 1992 is an example of stakeholders who are part of or are concerned by sustainable forest management (SFM): (a) business and industry, (b) children and youths, (c) forest owners, (d) indigenous communities, (e) local government, (f) NGO, (g) scientific and technological community, (h) women and (i) workers and unions.

3.10 Standard

Document brought by consensus and approved by an authorized body which provides rules, guidelines and characteristics of activities or their results for everyday use in order to achieve optimal level or consistency in a given context.

Note: Standards should be based on the most recent results in science, technology and practice and should aim at promoting optimal benefit (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.11 Standardization body

Body which is authorized for activities in standardization (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.12 Working draft

Proposed document generally available for comments or voting in the working group.

4. Responsibilities in the process of establishing standards and their approval

4.1 Assembly of the Council for SFM

The Assembly of the Council for SFM is a standardization body responsible for formal acceptance (approval) of documents. The composition and decisions brought by the Council for SFM Assembly are in compliance with the Statute.

4.2. Responsibilities of Assembly

The responsibilities of Assembly in the process of creating and revising SFM standards are:

- a) to revise documents
- b) to vote for the acceptance of the certification scheme in accordance with the PEFC procedures, prior to the submission of the certification scheme for approval to PEFC
- c) to nominate members for the commission for development and analysis of sustainable forest management measures and indicators (working group, WG)

- d) to nominate members for the disputes resolution body
- e) to nominate members for other temporary commissions and working bodies
- f) to authentically interpret the contents of the certification scheme

4.3 Implementing the procedures for development and revision of SFM standards

The Assembly is also responsible for implementing the procedures described in the document or other rules which refer to standard development. To this aim, the Assembly arranges the relationships with the working group for creating the draft document. The Assembly is particularly responsible for:

- a) preparing the proposal for development or revision of standard,
- b) identifying relevant stakeholders,
- c) identifying marginalized and key stakeholders,
- d) publicly announcing the start of a process for document development and an invitation to the stakeholders,
- e) ensuring public access to the standard development procedures,
- f) keeping records for the nominated members of the WG,
- g) publishing the decisions of the Assembly for the accepted members of the WG and publishing their contact details,
- h) administering the WG activities, except in cases when they organize it themselves,
- i) administering public consultations,
- j) pilot testing,
- k) publishing approved documentation,
- l) providing contact details for questions, complaints and appeals referring to the activities related to setting standards and administering complaints and appeals,
- m) keeping records related to the process of standards setting.

4.4 Commission for development and analysis of SFM measures and indicators (Working group, WG)

The working group is formed by Assembly of the Council for SFM based on the received nominations.

The composition of the WG shall be balanced in order to reflect the categories of stakeholders with reference to the contents and scope of the standard, with no individual interest dominating in the process.

The working group shall include representatives of stakeholders who have an expertise relevant to the standard's content, stakeholders who are materially affected by the standard and those who can influence the application of the standard. The working group should include representatives nominated by:

- a) The Council for SFM,
- b) Other stakeholders.

Stakeholder representation is divided in several interest groups:

- a) The first interested group is of economy interest compiled by the forest managers, forest owners and forest industry.
- b) The second interest group is of environment sector compiled by the managers of areas of nature protection, NGOs working on environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports etc.
- c) The third sector is of organizations / institutions from the social sector as labor, youth and women.

d) The fourth sector is of organizations / institutions representing interests of policy makers and education.

Representation of the interests of all interests of all parties in the WG is based on the principles of equity and nobody's individual interest can prevail in the process. Procedures to secure the principle of equity are as follow:

- a) For stakeholders from every interest group identified above there are at least three seats guaranteed for participation in the working group.
- b) During consensus building process every voice is equal.

Materially affected parties should constitute a significant part of all participants. They are the key stakeholder representatives. All other identified stakeholders are relevant for the process including marginalized stakeholders. Marginalized stakeholders are those who might be financially or otherwise disadvantaged in participating in the standard-setting work. The Council for SFM shall analyze constraints about participation of the key and marginalized stakeholders and shall develop actions to minimize the risk of non-participation.

The WG members are available to the materially and directly concerned parties through publically announced contact on the web site of the Council for SFM.

The WG members elect their chairperson who leads the discussions and approves of the corrections and wholeness of the accepted decisions in the documents. The WG is administered by the Assembly or other person authorized by the Assembly.
A WG is formed for a limited period of time when a standard is being developed or revised.

4.5 Appeal resolution body

The appeal resolution body is defined in the Statute. It deals with each individual and procedural complaint and appeal which refers to the standardization activities and employs the procedures for complaints and appeals listed in the Statute of the Council for SFM and Dispute Settlement procedures.

5. Procedures for standards setting

The process of documents development and revision is organized in stages in which the responsibilities and the versions of the standard to which they refer are listed.

The Council for SFM Assembly shall provide a contact where questions, complaints and appeals regarding the standard setting activities can be sent. The contact will be available on the Council for SFM website.

5.1 Proposals stage

The Council for SFM Assembly shall review the standards and decide if they are to be reaffirmed, changed or withdrawn.

The proposals stage includes formulation and approval of a proposed standard or its revision. The proposal is prepared by the Working group upon initiative from the Council for SFM Assembly or President.

The proposal should offer information on the following issues:

- a) the scope and clear identification of the reason (new standard development, existing standard revision, etc.),
- b) identification of relevant stakeholders, including marginalized and key stakeholders and identification of the threats to their participation,
- c) members and interested stakeholders' request for participation in the WG and their balanced representation,
- d) proposal for an authorized person
- e) description of development stages and timeframe,
- f) resources needed for completion of activities and their sources.

The identification of relevant stakeholders, including marginalized and key parties, should be done on basis of prior analysis and their recognition, which includes:

- a) relevant sectors,
- b) key issues for each relevant sector,
- c) key stakeholders for each sector,
- d) marginalized stakeholders and the threats to their participation.

5.2 Preparatory stage

5.2.1 Public announcement

The initiation of the documentation development process or its revision shall be announced on the Council for SFM website and other appropriate media in order to enable the stakeholders to actively contribute to the process. The announcement shall contain:

- a) information on the goals, scope and steps in the standards setting process and framework,
- b) information on the opportunity for participation of the stakeholders in the process,
- c) invitation to the stakeholders to nominate their representative in the WG,
- d) invitation for submitting comments on the scope and process of setting standards and
- e) link to the publicly available procedures for the standards setting process on the Council for SFM website.

The WG shall ensure that the format of the invitation to the marginalized and key stakeholders is understandable and delivered in a way which guarantees they have received it, for instance, registered post, a confirmation for received electronic mail, etc.

The Assembly shall publish the standards setting process on the website as well and the standard setting procedures document and shall review them according to the comments received.

5.2.2 Establishing the Commission for development and analysis of sustainable forest management measures and indicators – Working Group

The invitation to the stakeholders to nominate their representative in the WG ends with the publication of the initiation of the process. The period for receiving nominations for participation in the work group last for period of 4 weeks after the public announcement. The nominations are gathered by the Assembly which is responsible for accepting or refusing the nominations of members in the WG. The acceptance or refusal of a nomination shall be justified and match the balanced representation in the WG requirement as well as the available resources for the standards setting process. The Assembly shall inform the WG members for their acceptance.

5.2.3 Elaboration on the documents working draft version

The Assembly or the group of experts nominated by the Assembly shall prepare a working draft version of the document which will serve as a basis for further development and discussion within the Working Group.

5.3 Development stage

5.3.1 Submitting comments and their review

All WG members shall have an opportunity to actively contribute to the development or revision of a standard and to submit comments and proposals for the working draft version. Working drafts during development or revision of a standard shall be available to all WG members.

All views and comments by the WC members shall be submitted using the template presented in Annex 1.

The comments and views of any member of the WG along with the initial proposal shall be reviewed in an open and transparent manner. All proposed solutions and changes which refer to the working draft version shall to be kept.

5.3.2 Building consensus

The WG decision to suggest publishing the working draft version for public consultation or publishing the final version for formal approval shall be brought with a consensus.

In order to reach consensus, the WG can employ the following:

- a) face to face meetings with voting by stating yes or no, raising hand;
- b) formal secret voting, etc.,
- c) voting by electronic mail when the members are asked to vote for or against in writing.

In case of a negative vote which represents permanent and sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests and to substantial issues, the following mechanisms shall be used:

- a) discussions and talks for the issue for which there is no agreement in the WG in order to reach a compromise,
- b) direct negotiations between concerned parties which objected and those who hold an opposing view in order to reach a compromise,
- c) process of disagreement resolution by mediation.

5.4 Research stage

5.4.1 Consultations in the Council for SFM Assembly

The working draft version shall be submitted to the Assembly for review within period not longer than 4 weeks. All comments by the Assembly to the WG shall be submitted using the template presented in Annex 1.

The received comments and views as well as the preliminary proposals shall be reviewed in an open and transparent manner. The comments and changes resulting from the consultation in the Assembly shall be distributed by electronic mail or any other appropriate way.

5.4.2 Public consultation

The Assembly shall conduct the public consultation of the working draft version. The initiation and end of the public consultation shall be published in an appropriate time period on the Council for SFM website and in other suitable medium. The invitation to the marginalized and key stakeholders shall be prepared in an understandable format and it shall be ensured that it is delivered to them, for instance, registered post or a confirmation for received e-mail. The public

consultation shall last for at least 60 days, and the working draft version shall be publicly accessible on the Council for SFM website. All comments should be submitted in the template presented in Annex 1.

The public consultation can be in a form of seminars, public or presentations by stakeholders or conferences which aim to encourage submission of comments on the working draft version. The received comments along with the initial proposals shall be reviewed in an open and transparent manner as described in part 5.3.2. All proposed solutions and changes which refer to the working draft version need to be kept. The records of received comments which are material in nature, along with the results of their resolution, shall be publicly available on the Council for SFM website.

5.4.3 Pilot testing

The Assembly shall organize pilot testing of the new standards application and the results of it shall be reviewed by WG.

In case the standard is reviewed, the experiences from its application are a replacement of the pilot testing.

5.5 Approval stage

5.5.1 Development report

The final version shall be presented for formal approval, along with the report for standards development which provides evidence for compliance of the process with documented procedures:

- a) the scope and clear identification of the needs,
- b) development process timeframe,
- c) information for identification of marginalized and key stakeholders and the threats to their participation in the process,
- d) information for announcing the initiation of the process and an invitation to the stakeholders with a list of all invited stakeholders,
- e) establishing a WG with a list of nominated stakeholders,
- f) information for the received comments on the standards establishment scope and process,
- g) proof for reached consensus, including a list of received and reviewed comments and their resolution,
- h) information for the results of the public consultation and consultation in the Council for SFM Assembly as well as a list of received and reviewed comments and their resolution,
- i) pilot testing results
- j) link to publicly accessible documents and procedures,
- k) proposal for a transitional period.

The development report shall be publicly accessible on the Council for SFM website.

5.5.2 Formal approval

The final draft version shall be submitted for approval to the Assembly. The approval shall be conducted according to the Statute of The Council for SFM.

In case the final draft version does not receive enough votes for formal approval, the Assembly shall decide to:

- a) return the documents in preparatory or development stage or
- b) cancel the procedure

5.6 Publication stage

Within 4 weeks from the formal approval of a developed standard, the WG shall correct possible mistakes and disseminate the document to all members of the Council for SFM and ensure that it is publicly accessible on its website.

6. Standards Revision

Standards shall be revised in time periods not longer than 5 years. The standards revision procedures are explained in section 5.

Standards revision shall define application date and transition date for revised standards. This is required for accepting the revised standards, presenting changes, information exchange and training. The application and transition date shall not exceed a period of one year except under certain exceptional circumstances when a longer period is needed for conducting the revision.

7. Appeals and complaints

Every significant or procedural appeal or complaint shall be resolved by following the Dispute Settlement Procedures brought by the Council for SFM and published on the web page of the Council for SFM.

8. Records for the standards setting process and their keeping

The following records (data) from the standards setting process shall be kept:

- a) Proposal for standards setting, identifying stakeholders, list of invited stakeholders,
- b) Written documentation for establishing a WG,
- c) Notes from the Assembly meetings,
- d) Notes from WG meetings, including notes and proposals from WG members and public consultations as well as the changes made in the documentation,
- e) Results from reaching consensus and resolving disputes,
- f) Notes from meetings with stakeholders,
- g) Comments received from public consultation,
- h) Pilot testing results,
- i) Received appeals and complaints,
- j) Decision brought by the Disputes resolution body,
- k) Results from the Assembly voting,
- l) Development report,
- m) All versions of the standard along with the changes made to it elaborated in each of the development stages.

The records shall be kept for a time period of minimum 5 years and be accessible upon request from interested parties.

Annex 1: Views, comments, proposals

Date: _____

Document: _____

Name / organization / technical committee member	Heading / subheading	Original text	View / comment /proposal for change	Justification for the proposed activity / change