Promoting Sustainable Forest Management

PEFC Ireland Certification Scheme
for
Sustainable Forest Management

December 2010

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INTRODUCTION

The PEFC Ireland Certification Scheme for Sustainable Forest Management (December 2010)

The PEFC Ireland Certification Scheme for Sustainable Forest Management (the Scheme) was completed and adopted by PEFC (Ireland) Ltd in December 2010 and is hereby submitted to the PEFC Council for endorsement.

The Scheme has been drafted to meet the PEFC Council's current requirements, as detailed in PEFC International Standard ST 1003:2010, which defines the minimum requirements a scheme shall meet and rules for its implementation. This standard was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council in November 2010, cancelling and replacing Annex 3 of the PEFC Council Technical Document.

The Scheme is based on two documents – the Irish National Forest Standard, published by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which sets out the Government's approach to sustainable forestry; and the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard which is also hereby submitted for endorsement.

The Scheme is based on the subsidiary principle of the PEFC Council regarding the establishment of national certification schemes and will permit forest owners in Ireland to comply with minimum requirements ensuring sustainable forest management.

Its aim is to provide consumers with guarantees that products with PEFC certificates are derived from forests managed consistently in accordance with the principles of sustainability founded on the three basic pillars of social, environmental and economic understanding.

Within this setting, the Scheme has been constructed on the basis of the "Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management" and the "Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management" adopted as Resolution L2 at the 3rd Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe.

Confirmation of PEFC documentation:

The Board of PEFC Ireland agrees, as part of the PEFC Ireland Certification Scheme, that it will be referenced by and adopt all required implementation dates of PEFC Council documentation including Technical, Annexes and supporting Appendices and Guidelines, as currently approved and including all updates endorsed by the PEFC General Assembly on the 12th November 2010.

In particular the PEFC Ireland Scheme will recognise:

- Appendix 1 to Annex 4 (27 October 2006): PEFC Council specification for the origin for the purposes of PEFC label and declarations
- Appendix 6 to Annex 4 (27 October 2006): Specification of the origin for the purposes of PEFC label and declarations covering recycled raw material and this will be effective from 1st May 2007.
- Appendix 7 to Annex 4 (27 October 2006): Implementation of requirements for the avoidance of the procurement of raw material from controversial sources
- Appendix 8 to Annex 4 (27 October 2006): PEFC Council specification for the origin for the purposes of PEFC label and declarations for non wood forest products.
- PEFC Council International Standard ST 2002:2010 *Chain of Custody of Forest based Products – Requirements*, adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council on 26 November 2010, and which replaces Annex 4 with a one year transition period.

Standard Setting Procedures of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard

The PEFC Irish Standard Setting Forum was formally convened at its inaugural meeting on 14th January 2009. The Forum was established in accordance with the Rules for Standard Setting contained in Annex 2 to the PEFC Council Technical Document (adopted by the General Assembly 22 November 2002, and amended 29 October 2004, 28 October 2005 and 27 October 2006).

[**NB** it is recognised that Annex 2 was replaced by PEFC International Standard ST 1001:2010 *Standard Setting – Requirements* at the General Assembly of the PEFC Council in November 2010, **after** the PEFC Irish Standard Setting Forum finalised and approved the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard. Accordingly the Board of PEFC Ireland asks the Board of the PEFC Council to recognise this and to accept that any corrective measures necessary to comply with the new requirements will be taken.]

The Forum membership was structured on a chamber basis, with one chamber each representing social, environmental and economic interests. The social chamber was made up of representatives of forest user and wider countryside organisations and trade union representatives. The environmental chamber was made up of representatives of environmental non-governmental organisations and other organisations and bodies whose primary interest is environmental. The economic chamber was made up of representatives of Coillte Teoranta, private forest owners, forest management companies and processors and retailers of Irish forest products.

The Forum formally adopted its Written Procedures on 25th November 2009 and a copy (Paper F 3/01) is included at Appendix 6.

A full list of the organisations represented on the Standard Setting Forum is included at Section 6.2.

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December 2010

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THE LAYOUT OF THE SCHEME DOCUMENTATION

The Scheme documentation has been set out the following order:

The SCHEME

Section 1:   **Key reference documentation**

Section 2:   **The PEFC Ireland Certification Scheme for Sustainable Forest Management (The Scheme)**

Section 3:   **History and Background to Forestry in the Republic of Ireland**

Section 4:   **Forest Policy and Regulation in Ireland**

Section 5:   **The Code of Best Forest Practice and Environmental Guidelines**

Section 6:   **PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard October 2010**

Section 7:   **Scheme Governance**

Section 8:   **Appendices**

APPENDIX 1:   **Pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management**
APPENDIX 2:   **Forest Service Referral and Notification System**
APPENDIX 3:   **Irish Laws, International Agreements and Protocols**
APPENDIX 4:   **Certification Bodies operating in Ireland**
APPENDIX 5:   **PEFC Irish Standard Setting Process**

ANNEX DOCUMENTATION

Annex 1:   **The Irish National Forest Standard 2000**

Annex 2:   **The Irish Code of Best Forest Practice**

Annex 3:   **Suite of Environmental Guidelines**

Annex 4:   **The PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard**

Annex 5:   **PEFC Council Annex 4**
                Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products: Requirements (27 October 2006)

Annex 6:   **PEFC International Standard ST 2002:2010**
                Chain of Custody of Forest based Products – Requirements (26 November 2010)

Annex 7:   **PEFC Council Annex 6: Certification and Accreditation Procedures**

Annex 8:   **PEFCC Guidelines**

SECTION 1: KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

Supporting Annex Documentation, included as part of the Scheme Submission

1.1   Annex 1:   The Irish National Forest Standard

The Irish National Forest Standard, published by the Forest Service, sets out the Irish Government's approach to Sustainable Forest Management. It outlines the basic criteria and indicators relating to the implementation of SFM in Ireland. It lists a series of qualitative and quantitative measures by which progress towards the practice of SFM can be monitored under forest conditions.

1.2   Annex 2:   The Code of Best Forest Practice

The Code of Best Forest Practice, also published by the Forest Service, is a listing of all forestry operations and the manner in which the should be carried out to ensure the implementation of SFM in Ireland, as agreed at the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Lisbon, 1998.

1.3   Annex 3:   Environmental Guidelines

The suite of six guidelines are the mechanisms by which the Forest Service will ensure that the environmental aspects of SFM are implemented. Adherence to the guidelines is a condition of grant aid and the issuing of a felling licence. The penalty for non-compliance is the withholding of approvals for grants and felling licences.

1.4   Annex 4:   The   PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard

The PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard sets out the requirements which woodland owners and managers must meet and the means of verification certification authorities must use to certify woodland management in the Republic of Ireland. The standard is the product of an inclusive and transparent process which has involved a balanced representation from the Irish forestry and environmental community. It has been designed to ensure that it reflects the requirements of the Government's Irish National Forest Standard and supporting documentation, and through this the guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki in 1993 and Lisbon in 1998.

1.5   Annex 5:   PEFC Council Annex 4
Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products: Requirements

The text of this standard was developed by the Chain of Custody and Labelling Working Group of the PEFC Council and was officially adopted by the PEFC Council General Assembly on 29 October 2004 and amended on 17 June 2005. This standard can be endorsed and utilised by any forest certification or labelling scheme which includes chain of custody rules for the purposes of using declarations and/or labels referring to the origin of the raw material included in the forest based products. The objectives of the chain of custody are to create an information link between the raw material included in a forest based product and the origin of that raw material.

The following Appendices to Annex 4 have been adopted by PEFC Ireland:

On 27 October 2006, Appendix 1 and Appendix 6 were amended and new Appendix 7 and Appendix 8 added to Annex 4

- Appendix 1 to Annex 4 (27 October 2006): PEFC Council specification for the origin for the purposes of PEFC label and declarations

- Appendix 6 to Annex 4 (27 October 2006): Specification of the origin for the purposes of PEFC label and declarations covering recycled raw material and this will be effective from 1st May 2007.

- Appendix 7 to Annex 4 (27 October 2006): Implementation of requirements for the avoidance of the procurement of raw material from controversial sources

- Appendix 8 to Annex 4 (27 October 2006): PEFC Council specification for the origin for the purposes of PEFC label and declarations for non wood forest products.

1.5   Annex 6:   PEFC International Standard ST 2002:2010
Chain of Custody of Forest based Products – Requirements

PEFC ST 2002:2010 replaced Annex 4 which was withdrawn on 26 November 2010 and was developed in an open, transparent, consultative and consensus based process covering a broad range of stakeholders.   A transition period of one year applies, accordingly Annex 4 still applies under this Scheme for **existing** chain of custody certificate holders. From 26 November 2011 PEFC ST 2002:2010 only will apply.

1.6   Annex 7:   PEFC Council Annex 6: Certification and Accreditation Procedures

PEFC Council recognises that 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 Objectives 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 does not set any requirements regarding the auditing and decision making in certification or accreditation. However, it may issue PEFC-trademark licenses only against specified types of certifications.

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

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

1.7   Annex 8:   PEFCC Guidelines
- GL 5/2006: Interpretation of the PEFC Council Requirements for Consensus in the Standard Setting Process (cancelled by PEFC ST 1001:2010 on 26 November 2010 – see comment under "Standard Setting Procedures of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard" in the Introduction).

- GL 6/2006 PEFC Notification of Certification Bodies. 26 October 2006 and PEFC will adopt as from effective date of 1st June 2007.

1.8   PEFC Council Guideline: GL 2/2006
PEFC Council Minimum Requirements Checklist

The objectives of these guidelines are aimed to assist bodies, to develop or revise their forest certification schemes firstly by advising on the preparation of an application for PEFC Council endorsement and, secondly by facilitating the assessment of the compliance of a national or sub-national forest certification scheme against the PEFC Council requirements carried out by the PEFC Council as a part of its endorsement and mutual recognition process.

These guidelines cover the PEFC Council minimum requirements, which shall be met by national and sub-national schemes and standards applying for PEFC Council endorsement and mutual recognition, and are a part of the application for the PEFC Council endorsement and mutual recognition.

These guidelines were adopted by the PEFC Council Board of Directors in April 2003 and revised in January 2005, April 2005, January 2006 and 27 October 2006.

Supporting Reference Documentation

1.9   PEFC Council Statutes
PEFC Statutes is the highest document of the PEFC Council defining objectives, structure and basic procedures of the PEFC Council.

1.10   PEFC Council Annexes

1.10.1   PEFCC Annex 1: Terms and Definitions
This Annex was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council in November 2002 and amended in October 2004 and 27 October 2006.

1.10.2   PEFCC Annex 2: Rules for Standard Setting
The document provides the rules for the standard setting process that a certification scheme applying for PEFC endorsement and mutual recognition shall fulfill. The rules guide standard setting and scheme development at national or sub-national levels. The document was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council on 22 November 2002 and amended in October 2004, October 2005 and 27 October 2006. The document covers standard setting procedures for certification of sustainable forest management and chain of custody certification.

1.10.3   PEFC International Standard ST 1001:2010 Standard Setting – Requirements
The document cancels and replaces Annex 2 and GL 5/2006 (Interpretation of PEFC Council Requirements for Consensus in the Standard Setting Process) and was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council on 26 November 2010.

1.10.4   PEFC International Standard ST 1003:2010 Sustainable Forest Management - Requirements
The document cancels and replaces Annex 3 (basis for certification Schemes and their implementation) and was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council on 26 November 2010. This document covers requirements for forest management standards applicable to all types of forests. The interpretation of the requirements for various types of forests or geographical zones is included as an appendix   to this document. The interpretation for forest plantations is included in Appendix 1 to this document.

The requirements laid out in this document must be reflected in the forest management standards submitted for PEFC endorsement. They constitute requirements for owners or managers applying for forest certification, as well as contractors and other operators operating in certified forests.

1.10.5   PEFC International Standard ST 2001:2008 PEFC Logo Usage Rules – Requirements (Second Edition)
This document cancels and replaces Annex 5 of the PEFC Council Technical Document (PEFC Logo usage rules).

The second edition incorporates Amendment No. 1, adopted by the PEFC General Assembly on 12th November 2010. The changes required by the amendment are indicated in the text by a marginal bar and amendment number against the clause, note, figure or part thereof affected.

1.10.6   PEFCC Annex 6: Certification and Accreditation Procedures
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 Standardisation 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 does not set any requirements regarding the auditing and decision making in certification or accreditation. However, it may issue PEFC-trademark licenses only against specified types of certifications.

This document was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council in November 2002 and amended in October 2003, April 2005, October 2005 and 27 October 2006.

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

1.10.7 PEFCC Annex 7: Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their Revision

Rules for the endorsement and mutual recognition of national or sub-national forest certification and chain of custody standards and schemes, to guide assessment and decision-making in the endorsement and mutual recognition process. The rules harmonize the documentation on the scheme and applications as well as the assessment processes carried out by the independent consultants or by the panel of experts. They also set the framework for the decision making process in the PEFC Council for the endorsement and mutual recognition of standards and schemes and thus provide fair and equal procedures for all applicants.

This document was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council in November 2002 and amended in October 2004, October 2005 and 27 October 2006. This document describes the endorsement and mutual recognition process and refers to the minimum requirements for standard setting and scheme documentation. Procedures for the endorsement and mutual recognition of reviewed, revised and amended schemes are also described.

The endorsement of a scheme means that the members of the PEFC Council have determined that the scheme meets the requirements of the PEFC Council. The election procedure ensures that each scheme votes on each other. Therefore the schemes mutually recognise each other under the PEFC Council mutual recognition umbrella.

1.11 Criteria for Sustainable Forest Management

1.11.1 Pan European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management

The forest management performance standards of national forest certification schemes, which apply for the endorsement and mutual recognition within the PEFC framework, shall be based on Pan-European Criteria and Indicators adopted as Annex 2 to the Resolution L2 of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) held in Lisbon in 1998

1.11.2 PEOLG: Pan European Operational Level Guidelines for SFM

The forest management performance standards of national forest certification schemes, which apply for endorsement and mutual recognition within the PEFC framework, shall be in full compliance with the requirements of the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines (PEOLG) adopted as Annex 1 to the Resolution L2 of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) held in Lisbon in 1998.

1.12 ISO Documentation

1.13.1 ISO 19011:2002: Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing.

1.13.2 ISO/IEC Guide 61:1996 (EN 45 010:1998): General requirements for assessment and accreditation of certification/registration bodies.

1.13.3 ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 (EN 45 012:1998): General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification/registration of quality systems.

1.13.4 ISO/IEC Guide 65 (EN 45 011:1998): General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems.

1.13.5 ISO/IEC Guide 66:1999: General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification / registration of environmental management systems (EMS).

1.13.6 ISO/PAS 17001 Conformity assessment Impartiality Principles and requirements

Abbreviations and Acronyms

C and I	Criteria and Indicators
C o C	Chain of Custody
COFORD	The Programme of Competitive Forest Research for Development
EA	European Co-operation for Accreditation
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EN	European Norm
ENGO	Environmental non-government organisation
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
FMU	Forest Management Unit
FS	Forest Service
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IFA	Irish Farmers Association
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INAB	Irish national Accreditation Board
ISEAL	International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance
ISO	International Standardisation Organisation
ITGA	Irish Timber Growers Association
MCPFE	Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
NGO	Non-government organisation
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
PEC	Pan European Criteria
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
PEFCC	Council for the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
PEFC Ireland	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification: Republic of Ireland
PEOLG	Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SAC	Special Area of Conservation

SECTION 2:   INTRODUCTION:

**The PEFC Ireland Certification Scheme for Sustainable Forest Management
(THE SCHEME)**

2.1   PEFC (Ireland) Ltd

PEFC (Ireland) Ltd was established in August 2008. The Company is registered in Ireland, number 461250, and the Registered Office is located at 27 Wellington Road, Cork. The Company's administrative office is located at the same address.

The Articles of Association were adopted on 28 July 2008 and were subscribed by the Irish Timber Growers Association as a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital.

The first board meeting was held in Kilkenny on 23rd April 2010 and one further board meeting has been held since then. Henceforth the Company intends to hold a minimum of two meetings of the Directors each year, including an Annual General Meeting. The audited company accounts for the first full period of trading ending 31st December 2009 have been lodged with the Companies Registration Office within the time scale required.

As of 2010 there are 2 directors, including the National Secretary and the Company Secretary.

The Company Secretary, who is a director, is James O'Brien, FCA, of 27 Wellington Road, Cork, and Percival Street, Kanturk, Co. Cork.

PEFC Council has recognised PEFC Ireland as a member country of the PEFC Council, and PEFC Ireland was formally admitted to membership of the PEFC Council at the General Assembly held in Canberra, Australia, in November 2008.

2.2   Scheme Governance and Structure

The Scheme is owned, governed and administered by a National Governing Body, PEFC (Ireland) Ltd, which is responsible for:

- Managing the Scheme to meet the endorsement requirements of PEFC Council.

- Developing and reviewing the design of the Scheme with a view to continuous improvement.

- Developing, implementing and reviewing the rules and requirements for participation in the Scheme by certification applicants, with particular reference to the requirements and conditions set out by PEFC Council in the published Annex documentation.

- Promoting the use and credibility of the Scheme and ensuring its accessibility to the forest industry and all interested stakeholders.

- Helping to promote the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard, as the PEFC certification standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Ireland.

- Participating in the development, monitoring and review of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard.

- Issuing and updating of all documentation relating to administration and implementation of the Scheme.

- Setting and reviewing the eligibility criteria for certification bodies wishing to carry out third party audits under the Scheme.

- Maintaining a register of Accredited and Notified Certification Bodies and monitoring these bodies to ensure continued compliance with eligibility criteria.

- Establishing and maintaining records of all forest areas / organisations / enterprises certified under the Scheme and certified for Chain of Custody.

- Resolving appeals, complaints and disputes arising out of the operation of the Scheme that

- (a) cannot otherwise be resolved between the Certification Body and the auditee, or that

   (b) arise out of the issue, suspension or withdrawal of a license to use a product label issued by a third party.

- Setting, collection and review of all legitimate costs / fees associated with participation in the Scheme by certification applicants.

- Licensing and control of the use of any logos, claims and labels used in association with the Scheme.

The document describes PEFC Ireland. Together with its annexes, it establishes the technical terms of reference that permit the certification of sustainable forest management and of the chain of custody. This document includes the description of the three levels of application of certification of sustainable forest management at individual forest unit and group level.

It also establishes the requirements for their recognition by PEFC Ireland, defining the various procedures and responsibilities of each of the parties involved.

2.3 Guiding Principles of the Scheme: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

This is defined in the context of this Scheme as:

"the stewardship and use of forests and forest land in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions at local, national and global levels and does not cause damage to other ecosystems."

Governance and delivery of the Scheme is underpinned by the commitment of PEFC Ireland to the following guiding principles:

- **Quality** - through the stringency of criteria for technical and professional competencies with which to operate the Scheme.

- **Continuous Improvement** - through response to new knowledge and changes in demands.

- **Consistency -** with internationally recognised indicators and performance criteria of credible forest certification standards, schemes, and of the certification process itself.

- **Exclusive use and promotion of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard -** as the criteria and indicators for verification of sustainable forest management in Ireland.

- **Credibility** - through third party, independent auditing carried out by certification bodies accredited by the national accreditation service or other accreditation bodies operating to internationally accepted ISO standards and guidelines.

- **Transparency** - of all stages of both the certification Standard and the certification Scheme

- **Accountability to, and participation with** - Irish and wider forestry and timber using communities and stakeholders.

- **Cost effectiveness -** through minimising the administrative and financial burden to the Scheme's customers.

- **Accessibility** - via the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard and the PEFC Council Chain of Custody Standard - to a range of certification options to all forest and wood using types, ownerships and structures.

2.4   Scope of the Scheme

- Certification of the sustainable management of all forest and woodland types and ownerships within Ireland to the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard.
- Certification of Chain of Custody in accordance with PEFC Council Annex 4: Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products: Requirements, as revised by PEFC ST 2002:200x
- Management and control within Ireland of the PEFC logo licensing requirements as set out in PEFC International Standard ST 2001:2008 - PEFC Logo Usage Rules - Requirements
- Notification of Certification awards

2.5   The Role of the Secretariat

The co-ordination and everyday management of the Scheme is ensured by the Secretariat, whose functions are described in the statutes of the company. Additionally, within the scope of the certification system, the PEFC Ireland Secretariat is responsible for:

- Maintaining an up-to-date register and control of all entities using the PEFC logo and ensuring its correct use;

- Verifying the rules for logo use and their conformity with PEFC International Standard ST 2001:2008 – PEFC Logo Use Rules - Requirements and, whenever necessary, implementing corrective or preventive actions.

- Maintaining up to date relevant information about the PEFC process, making available and disseminating all the technical knowledge and providing support for the accreditation and standardisation activities.

- Managing the register of certifying bodies and of qualified auditors.

- Accompanying and reviewing the terms of reference of PEFC Ireland, whenever justified by relevant alterations in the scope of the PEFC Council or by results of the implementation of the system.

- Managing the PEFC requirement for the Notification of accredited Certification Bodies within the Ireland.

- Promoting actions for the dissemination and promotion of PEFC Ireland, being equally responsible for institutional relations.

- Accompanying the process of recognition of entities in the scope of the certification system.

- Promoting and supporting the definition of programmes for training courses for auditors.

As such, the responsibilities of PEFC Ireland are to:

- Define the accepted indicators of sustainable forest management, according to the specific characteristics of Irish forests;

- Define the levels of application of forest management certification

- Establish procedures for certifying the flows of raw material originating from certified forests (chain of custody);

- Establish and / or recognise guides to good forest practices, and

- Issue other technical documents to support the application of sustainable forest management.

2.6 Review of the Standard

The Standard Setting Process of the PEFC Irish Standard Setting Forum states:

"The certification standard and implementation arrangements shall be reviewed in the light of new scientific information and practical experience at least every 5 years. PEFC Ireland shall initiate the review process, making the timetable and arrangements for the review publicly available. The review will take into account revisions required by PEFC Council."

PEFC Ireland shall monitor and ensure that the necessary timescales are achieved to meet this requirement. Revision of the Standard will be in accordance with the revised standard setting requirements contained in PEFC International Standard ST 1001:2010.

The review process should include as a minimum the following elements:

a) An Interpretation Review – a consideration of any advice developed by the Interpretation Panel.

b) A Technical Review – a consideration of any new scientific or technical knowledge.

c) An International Benchmarking Review – a comparison with any equivalent accredited standards of a similar geographical or ecological scope of application, and an evaluation of whether there are any substantial differences in the overall cost / benefit balance of compliance for similar types of enterprise with similar forest conditions. (To be provided by the certification schemes.)

d) A Standard Users' Feedback Review - a consideration of feedback from certificate holders and accredited certification authorities. (To be provided by the certification schemes.)

e) A Review of the Initial Stakeholders' Consultation – a consideration of consultees' comments and responses.

f)   A Small and Low Intensity Managed Woodlands Review – a consideration of the impact and applicability of the standard for small and low intensity operations.

g)   A Certification Schemes' Requirements Review – a consideration of advice (to be provided by the certification schemes) on any new or revised policies, procedures or guidance that is relevant to the revision. National certification schemes should seek advice and guidance from their international body when compiling their advice.

SECTION 3: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF FORESTRY IN IRELAND

3.1 Forest History

The woodlands of Ireland reflect changes in land-use over several thousand years. During this period the land, which was once largely covered with woodland, was cleared of trees and used to satisfy the demands of an increasing population for timber, fuel and agriculture. By the beginning of the 20th century woodland cover was around 1%. Today this figure has risen to approximately 10% (730,000 hectares), as the result of commitment to a steady programme of planting by successive governments, and a grant scheme designed to encourage farmers and landowners to afforest marginal agricultural land. As a result of these measures, forest cover in Ireland has increased by over 600,000 hectares over the last century, however it is still only 10 per cent, compared to the European average of 33 per cent.

The Forest Service, in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, serves as the regulatory authority and is responsible for forest legislation and policy, and the administration of the various planting and other grant schemes. The Forestry Act of 1946 is the principle statute governing forestry practice, in addition to which the Forest Service has published the Irish National Forest Standard, the Code of Best Practice and a suite of environmental guidelines, which are mandatory for grant-aided projects. At present there is no internationally endorsed national forest certification standard.

For much of the last century the greater proportion of new planting was with exotic conifers, primarily Sitka Spruce and Lodgepole Pine. Since the early 1990s onwards there has been a greater emphasis on diversification with broadleaved species comprising up to 30% of annual afforestation during the last number of years.

In addition to the Afforestation Scheme, the objective of which is primarily commercial timber production, the Forest Service administers and promotes other schemes with objectives geared towards enhancing the environment.   These include the Native Woodland Scheme, the Neighbourwood Scheme, the Forest Environment Protection Scheme and the Woodland Improvement Scheme, further details of which are available on the Forest Service website www.agriculture.gov.ie/forestservice

3.2 Ownership and Management

Approximately 55% of the total forest estate (c. 400,000 hectares) is publicly owned, most of this being divested in a semi-state company – Coillte Teoranta – which was established under the Forestry Act 1988. The greater proportion of Coillte forest comprises coniferous plantations established since the foundation of the State, and in the early years much of this was planted on poor upland and otherwise unproductive peatlands.

Other than Coillte forest, there are also some small areas of state-owned forest, mostly within the six National Parks. Some of these contain important areas of semi-natural woodland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the state agency responsible, is implementing a number of measures to ensure their conservation.

The private forest estate comprises about 330,000 hectares, of which 230,000 hectares (70%) have been planted since 1986. There are now approximately 16,000 private woodland owners in the country, most of them with limited experience of forest management. There are a number of forest management companies as well as private consultants offering management services and advice to farm-forest owners, and recent years have seen the emergence of a number of producer group initiatives around the country. The average size of private forest holding is 8 hectares.

Supply from the private sector of first and second thinnings is set to grow rapidly in the short to medium term, resulting in a corresponding development of a bio-energy sector which is starting to provide an alternative market to the panel board mills.

3.3   Semi-natural Woodland

Ireland has no natural forest, but it is estimated there are about 100,000 hectares remaining of semi-natural woodland. Much of this has been over-exploited over the years and has suffered at the hands of agriculture and commercial forestry. Today, semi-natural woodland is still a neglected and diminishing resource, about which there is little information on location, ownership, composition and classification. While a proportion of our semi-natural woodlands are protected under current legislation, and as already mentioned some areas are owned and managed by the State, a large proportion of privately owned semi-natural woodlands lies outside this protected sphere and requires protection and specialised management.

Provision for the retention of areas of semi-natural woodland is contained in the Forest Biodiversity Guidelines (referred to in section 5.3); and the Forest Service operates the Native Woodland Grant Scheme, which, while being a voluntary scheme, is designed to offer financial assistance towards the management of existing and the establishment of new native woodland.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) commissioned a national survey of native woodlands that was carried out from 2003-2008 by Botanical, Environmental and Conservation Consultants Ltd. This work included a survey of 1,217 sites across all 26 counties and the results are available from the NPWS.

3.4   Planted Woodlands

Broadleaved tree species are a traditional part of the largely man-made landscape of the Ireland, though the area of broadleaved woodland was very low as a proportion of the total for most of the last century. The area is now increasing again as a result of government incentives to increase the proportion of broadleaf planting and the number of owners now planting better quality land. Naturalised species such as Beech (*Fagus sylvatica),* Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) have been included in many broadleaf planting schemes in addition to the common native species.

The commercial base of the forest industry relies heavily on introduced tree species, particularly Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) from North America. More recent years have seen an increasing emphasis on diversification, with a greater variety of commercial conifer species included in planting schemes.

3.5   Wood Supply and Wood Processing

The annual supply of roundwood from existing Irish forests is in the region 2 to 2.3 million hectares per annum. In 2008, the supply of roundwood available for processing was 2.272 million m³, of which Coillte supplied 2.05 million m³ (90%). As previously noted, the bulk of the private forest estate was established during the last 20 years and roundwood supplies from the private sector are predicted to rise to approximately 2.95 million m³ by 2028. Currently eight companies form the core of the Irish sawmilling industry. Most of the construction timber produced is consumed domestically, while pallet wood and fencing products make up the bulk of sawn timber exports. In addition there are four wood based panel (WBP) board mills, manufacturing chipboard, medium density fibre board (MDF), oriented strand board (OSB), and moulded panel products. More than 75% of all WBP products are exported.

The WBP mills are operating effectively at capacity and the increasing supply of small roundwood from mostly private woodlands is surplus to demand from the WBP sector. Consequently investment in a wood energy industry, with both large and small installations, is ongoing and demand for wood biomass is predicted to increase to 4 million green tonnes per annum by 2020 if biomass targets are to be met. It is unlikely that the forest sector alone will be able to supply more

than half this volume, thus highlighting the need to maintain a high rate of afforestation, an expansion in the area of short rotation coppice systems, and an increase in the utilisation of harvesting residues.

3.6   Employment

The forestry and primary wood processing industries provide employment for about 16,000 people, many of these jobs being provided in sometimes depressed rural areas. The total output from the industry is about €1.9 billion per annum, or about 1% of GDP.

3.7   Forest Recreation

Forests and woodlands provide an ideal environment for many recreational pursuits and, with appropriate planning, are able to absorb the pressures of large numbers of visitors. Most Coillte forests are open to the public and they include ten forest parks and more than 150 recreation areas.

3.8   Irish Forest Policy for Sustainable Forest Management

Irish forest policy on Sustainable Forest Management has evolved over the last decade in response to the commitments undertaken at the 1992 UNCED conference in Rio (the Earth Summit) and subsequently developed through the processes of the Ministerial Conferences on Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE).

For example, in 1998 a set of Pan-European Criteria for Sustainable Forest Management were adopted. These criteria are:

- Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles
- Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality
- Maintenance and encouragement of the productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood)
- Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems
- Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)
- Maintenance of other socio-economic and cultural functions and conditions.

In Ireland, the criteria and standards for Sustainable Forest Management are codified in the Irish National Forest Standard. This document was published in 2000 and, in conjunction with the Code of Best Forest Practice and suite of environmental guidelines, summarises the Irish Government's approach to sustainable forest management.

SECTION 4:   FOREST POLICY AND REGULATION IN IRELAND

4.1   Introduction

A consultative process was initiated in 1999 that involved the key interest groups in Irish forestry and culminated in the publication of the Irish National Forest Standard in 2000. The process involved the establishment of a steering committee chaired by the Forest Service and including representatives from timber groups, timber users, government departments and statutory bodies, farming organizations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Working parties were set up to consider environmental, economic, social and legal aspects of forestry and sustainable forest management. The groups were charged with developing indicators relating to the six criteria for sustainable forest management announced at Lisbon.

The Irish National Forest Standard applies to all forests in Ireland and is the framework within which the development and evaluation of sustainable forest management will take place and its underlying principles and key processes are outlined.

4.2   The National Strategic Framework:

"Growing for the Future: A Strategic Plan for the Development of the Forestry Sector in Ireland "

In 1996 the Irish Government published *Growing for the Future: A Strategic Plan for the Development of the Irish Forestry Sector.* The Plan was launched with the overall aim of developing forestry to a scale and in a manner which maximizes its contribution to national economic and social well-being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the environment.

4.3   Background

With the rapid development and expansion of the forest industry and enlargement of the forest estate, the Irish Government has placed an increasing emphasis on developing codes of good environmental practice in forestry. Neither the Strategic Plan nor the Irish National Forest Standard are stand-alone documents but are to be read and used in conjunction with the Code of Best Forest Practice and the suite of environmental guidelines, all published by the Forest Service.

Growing for the Future: A Strategic Plan for the Development of the Irish Forestry Sector, published as it was in 1996, pre-dates the Pan-European Criteria for Sustainable Forest Management which were adopted at the MCPFE in Lisbon in 1998. While the aim of the Strategic Plan was to ensure development that was also compatible with the environment, it was clear that with the adoption of the PEC there was a need to produce a document that, while catering for the needs of the developing industry, included the PEC as well. Accordingly, the consultative process that resulted in the Irish National Forest Standard began in 1999, with publication of the Standard following in 2000.

4.4   The Irish National Forest Standard

The Irish National Forest Standard has been developed specifically for forestry in the Republic of Ireland. The history of Irish forestry and the nature of its woodlands differ fundamentally from those of the rest of Europe including Scandinavia. However, care has been taken to integrate the Standard with European and global protocols for sustainable development.

The purpose of the Irish National Forest Standard is to set out standards for the sustainable management of all forests and woodlands in the State. As previously stated, it is not a stand-alone document, but together with the Code of Best Forest Practice and the environmental guidelines, it

forms the centrepiece of a system to guide and monitor forestry. The Standard is linked to the developing international protocols for sustainable forestry. It is used in Ireland as the basis for the development of forest monitoring and is also the basis from which the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard was developed.

Guidelines agreed at Helsinki in 1993 and the subsequent Pan-European Criteria for sustainable forestry adopted at the third Ministerial Conference of the MCPFE in Lisbon in 1998 must be interpreted to put them into an Irish context. International criteria and guidelines are expressed in broad terms which have limited practical value for managers. In developing the Irish Forestry Standard, full account has been taken of existing guidelines and other publications which advise forest managers on recommended practice. The Standard takes into account the prime aspects of sustainable forest management: soils, water, air, production, biological diversity, workforce, communities, heritage and landscapes.

4.5 Policies

Throughout the period of forest expansion since the foundation of the State, successive Irish governments have had a commitment to the creation and management of forests as a renewable natural resource. There has been continuous monitoring and re-assessment of forestry policy to reflect changing public attitudes and the increased knowledge gained through research and forestry practice, and the impact of socio-economic changes such as those associated with the Common Agricultural Policy. After the commitments made at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, and at the second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) in Helsinki (1993), the Government formally adopted the Pan-European Criteria and Indicators in the Irish National Forest Standard, with measures described for each indicator.

Over the years a range of regulatory instruments and incentives have been developed to assist implementation of forestry policy. Some draw on legislation which is specific to forestry; others are based on legislation which has wider application. Forest management in Ireland is subject to most of the legislation that regulates other commercial enterprises but, like agriculture, is outside the scope of planning law.

4.6 Powers

Regulatory mechanisms for forestry in Ireland are operated by the Forest Service, a division of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The Forest Service no longer has the responsibility of the management of the State's forests, which were mostly vested in Coillte Teoranta, a commercial semi-State company, by the Forestry Act 1988. Tree felling and reforestation are controlled by the Forest Service under the Forestry Act 1946, and the Forest Service also implements the various forest grant and premium schemes and downstream support measures. It is responsible for relations with the European Commission and implements international agreements relating to forestry.

4.7 Procedures for Consultation

The Forest Service operates a referral and notification system for all applications received for grant aid (e.g. afforestation or forest roads) and for felling licences. This involves a consultation process which is summarized in Appendix 2 (also included as Appendix E to the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard).

4.8 Linkage to the Helsinki Guidelines and Pan-European Criteria (PEC)

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) was originally developed to provide a framework for national forest certification schemes adopting the concept of

sustainable forest management as defined in the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). Consequently, the national schemes applying for PEFC endorsement were assessed against reference documents developed for European forestry. In the PEFC programme, the Pan European Criteria and Indicators and Pan European Operational Level Guidelines (PEOLG) establish the framework for the compatibility assessment.

PEOLG were endorsed by the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) in 1998 as a framework of recommendations for SFM for practical use on a voluntary basis in European forests. They were to be adapted to local economic, ecological, social and cultural conditions with participation of stakeholders (based on Resolution L2).

According to the Resolution L2, the guidelines serve as a tool to improve communication and awareness building related to sustainable forest management. In addition, although certification and other quality assurance systems would remain independent from the Pan-European Process and are voluntary to the interested parties, the guidelines could provide an indicative reference for the establishment of standards for those systems.

PEOLG are based on the European social and cultural structures and forest management traditions. They also address specifically the issues of SFM relevant in the European context. European forests have been under heavy use for centuries, therefore e.g. presence of decaying wood, regulation on grazing of wild and domestic animals and maintenance of habitats created by traditional management systems are examples of important elements of biodiversity protection. The forests are mostly in boreal or temperate zones, often managed at a forest level, and it is accepted that there is a need to encourage, where appropriate, un-even aged stand management. The social and labour legislation in European countries is well developed and implemented with the result that these basic issues are not emphasised in PEOLG.

The Irish National Forest Standard is compatible with both the Helsinki Guidelines and the Pan European Criteria (PEC). These guidelines and criteria necessarily give weight to some issues (such as soil erosion and fire) that are globally important but not usually critical in Ireland. The use of native species is also an area of different emphasis: only one native conifer species (*Pinus sylvestris*) is commercially utilisable for timber, and as a consequence, non-native trees play a major part in Irish forestry. Hence, the Irish National Forest Standard and supporting documentation has less to say about fire and forests for soil protection, and more about non-native species, than might be expected in other European countries.

(See Appendix 1)

Environmental guidelines for forestry were published by the Forest Service at the same time as the Irish National Forest Standard and the Code of Best Forest Practice in 2000. The guidelines directly address practical management issues relating to major components of the forest ecosystem or human resource. While entitled "guidelines" their provisions are mandatory where they apply to all grant-aided projects and to all activities requiring a Felling Licence.

SECTION 5:   THE CODE OF BEST FOREST PRACTICE AND SUITE OF ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES

5.1   Introduction

The Code of Best Forest Practice was published in 2000 and is a companion document to, and an instrument of, the Irish National Forest Standard. It aims to ensure that forest operations in Ireland are carried out in a way which meet high environmental, social and economic standards.

Certain features distinguish Irish forestry from forestry practiced elsewhere in the world and these features are reflected in the Code.   The lack of native conifer species with any significant commercial potential has meant that introduced species from Continental Europe, North America and Japan predominate.   These species have been grown in Ireland for a considerable period amounting to several rotations, frequently undergo natural regeneration and have not succumbed to major pests and diseases.

The range of native broadleaf species with commercial potential is also somewhat limited, with oak, ash and, to a lesser extent, birch, alder, cherry and aspen, being capable of commercial development.   Introduced species such as beech and sycamore can now be considered semi-natural.

Conifers suit a wide range of soils, from brown earths to peaty gleys and podsols.   Broadleaves demand more fertile sites.

Ireland is a wet country traversed by streams and rivers, and this water resource is of major significance.   In addition, Ireland has had an open landscape for centuries, and this factor has shaped cultural and social attitudes which must be respected in a period of change.

In Ireland, the establishment, management and harvesting of plantation forests for timber production dominate the forestry sector. The Code therefore focuses on the achievement of viable forests which conform to the principles of sustainable production and which are managed in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner respectful of society's expectations.

Forest products cover a range far wider than wood alone, e.g. carbon sequestration, biodiversity, water quality, and recreation.   Material products should be produced to high quality standards. Other products should also attain high objective quality.

Implicit in the Code is the assumption that these practices will be observed. An evaluation process is therefore necessary and this should be unambiguous and easy to implement.

5.2   The Code of Best Forest Practice

The Code covers such general items as its development in the context of national and international criteria and principles of sustainable forest management, with reference to other national codes of forest practice, especially those from countries where environmental conditions or the type of forestry show some similarities with Ireland; the legal and regulatory framework; and impact appraisal. And it includes specific sections relating to forest management practice. These are:

5.2.1 Forest Reproductive Material

The use of good quality forest reproductive material derived from a suitable and traceable provenance is the key to the establishment of healthy and productive forests.

5.2.2 Nursery Practice
Good nursery practice is critical for the production of suitable planting stock under safe and environmentally controlled conditions.

5.2.3 New Planting Sites
Careful assessment of new planting sites is necessary to ensure that establishment can proceed and that environmental and other constraints can be properly incorporated. Both factors are essential to ensure the establishment of a viable forest.

5.2.4 Species Selection
Matching species with the site is crucial for successful forest establishment and facilitates enhanced diversity.

5.2.5 Site Preparation for Afforestation
Site preparation operations can take place on the basis that the necessary planning, identification of constraints and consultation have all been carried out.

5.2.6 Planting
Good quality trees suited to the site and planted at an adequate stocking density and in the appropriate mixtures, will ensure a viable and diverse crop which is in harmony with the landscape.

5.2.7 Vegetation Management
Natural vegetation presents a challenge to young developing trees. Competition from weeds and grasses is a serious cause of plant loss and reduced growth.

5.2.8 Forest Pests and Diseases
Trees can suffer from pest and disease attack at different stages of their development. Apart from endemic problems, there is a significant threat from exotic forest pests and diseases. Mammals can also cause considerable damage.

5.2.9 Forest Maintenance
Forests continue to require attention throughout their early development, from establishment through to the stage where a satisfactory crop begins to form.

5.2.10 Tending
Tending encompasses a number of forest operations which take place between establishment and first thinning with the aim of improving final crop quality in terms of tree form and wood quality. Brashing, intended to render the crop accessible, is also included.

5.2.11 Silviculture and Thinning
Thinnings are undertaken to concentrate growth onto the best quality and most vigorous trees as the crop matures. Thinnings also provide a source of intermediate production and income from the forest. As the operation is now largely mechanized, a high level of control is needed to ensure benefits to the forest and to avoid site damage.

5.2.12 Final Harvesting

Harvesting the mature trees is the final operation of the forest rotation. While many of the operational elements are similar to those for thinning, the environmental impacts are far greater. Due to the large number of even aged stands and Ireland's windy climate which constrains uneven aged management, the usual practice in this country is to clearfell or remove all trees from the site. Sites permitting, 'standards' are occasionally left to bridge the gap between felling and the establishment of the subsequent crop, usually for amenity, regeneration or conservation purposes. As the proportion of broadleaf woodlands and forest diversity increases, a trend towards more continuous cover forestry is likely.

5.2.13 Transport

The most common form of log transport from the forest to the processing facility is by articulated truck or truck and trailer. There may be intermediate stages where severe weight restrictions limit the size of the vehicle or, in the case of pulpwood, where logs are brought to a depot for further transport by rail.

5.2.14 Forest Roads

Forest roads feature in many operations and are referred to in other sections of the Code. This section focuses on particular issues which arise during their construction, maintenance and use.

Larger forests usually require a minimum road network for access and development. Forests over 10 ha in area normally require harvest roads for timber extraction. In most cases, harvesting tracks adequately cater for areas less than 10 ha.

5.2.15 Reforestation and Woodland Improvement

Although site conditions may be difficult when a crop has been removed, many features, such as roads, bridges and drains, are already in place for the next rotation. Reforestation represents an opportunity to improve the forest in terms of species diversity, production and cultivation. Reforestation also provides a unique opportunity to enhance the forest's biodiversity and landscape functions and to establish aquatic buffer and archaeological exclusion zones which may have been absent in the previous rotation.

The initial appearance of a reforested area is likely to be untidy, but this negative impact can be minimized by care in handling brash and by diversifying species in strategic locations. Entrances can also be redesigned at this time.

The improvement of other woodlands, particularly degraded broadleaf areas, will also increase productivity and enhance appearance.

5.2.16 Biodiversity and Specialised Woodlands

Numerous measures can be implemented to enhance the biodiversity function of Ireland's production forests. Protective measures are also needed for forests located in nationally designated conservation areas.

Specific activities are required for the management of forests for non-wood products, and also for specialised forests such as riparian and urban woodlands and short rotation crops.

5.2.17 Forest Planning

Managing a forest is a long term process and is subject to a range of influences. All forestry enterprises – from small woodlands to substantial forest areas – require some level of planning in order to anticipate and manage operational, production and environmental policies and objectives.

5.2.18 Training, Competence and Information
In a changing forestry environment, forest owners, managers and operators need access to professional services, advice, assessment, training and information to ensure that forest practice conforms to quality standards and adapts to continuous improvement.

5.3 Environmental Guidelines
The Forest Service has published further documentation in support of the Irish National Forest Standard and the Code of Best Forest Practice in the form of a suite of environmental guidelines. They were developed through extensive consultation with a wide range of relevant parties and they set out sound and practical measures based on the principles of sustainable forest management, and are firmly rooted in the best available scientific information.

The guidelines apply to all grant-aided projects and to all activities associated with a Felling Licence, and any breach may result in the forfeit of grant aid and premium payment, or the withdrawal of a Felling Licence. It follows that it is essential that all forest workers and machine operators, in addition to forest owners and managers, are made aware of and understand the guidelines as they apply to specific site conditions.

There are six guidelines in operation. These are:

- Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines
- Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines
- Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines
- Forest Biodiversity Guidelines
- Forest Harvesting and the Environment Guidelines
- Forest Protection Guidelines

The guidelines will be kept under review to facilitate amendment in the light of new research findings.

SECTION 6: PEFC IRISH FOREST CERTIFICATION STANDARD

6.1 Introduction

The PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard was developed over a two year period in accordance with the PEFC Council's Rules for Standard Setting as set out in Annex 2 to the PEFC Council Technical Document and adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council in November 2002 and amended in October 2004, October 2005 and October 2006.

The process was initiated by the Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA), which also sponsored the formation of PEFC Ireland. In 2008 ITGA commenced communications with a number of representative organisations active in the environmental, social and economic sectors and with an interest in the forest industry to seek their participation in a standard setting process.

A steering group was formed and a three chamber system adopted with the intention of there being 5 seats on each chamber. The final meeting of the steering group was held on 14th January 2009 at which the PEFC Irish Standard Setting Forum was formally convened. An independent Chairman was appointed, and the National Secretary of PEFC Ireland was appointed as Secretary to the Forum.

6.2 Current Membership Base

The past and current membership of the Forum is as follows:

Economic:
    Coillte Teo
    Irish Timber Growers Association
    Forestry Management Companies
    Board Mills (resigned December 2009)
    Irish BioEnergy Association (joined August 2010)

Environmental:
    Inland Fisheries Ireland (formerly the Central Fisheries Board)
    Crann
    Tree Council of Ireland
    Irish Natural Forestry Foundation (resigned September 2009)

Social:
    Irish Congress of Trades Unions
    Irish Farmers Association
    Irish Sports Council
    Society of Irish Foresters
    Leader

A wide range of organizations which would be considered to have an interest in forestry in Ireland was invited to participate in the standard setting process and no organization seeking membership was refused, however many of those contacted declined to accept the invitation. Vacancies remain on both the economic (1) and environmental (2) chambers. The criteria for membership of the Forum are set out in section 2.4 of the PEFC Irish Forestry Standard: Rules for Standard Setting (see Appendix 6).

6.3 Conduct of Business

The Standard Setting Forum's Written Procedures are included at Appendix 6

Each chamber appointed two of its members to a Technical Working Group (TWG) charged with the task of meeting more frequently than the full Forum in order to draft the standard. Following each meeting of the TWG the work in progress was circulated to all the Forum members for comment/approval and further discussion at Forum meetings.

The Chairman and Secretary of the Forum were appointed as Chairman and Secretary of the TWG.

A firm of independent consultants was appointed to provide technical expertise and assistance to the Forum and the TWG.

On occasion, observers from Forest Service/COFORD and ITGA attended meetings, again to provide technical and expert assistance.

6.4   Forum and TWG Meetings

Six Forum meetings were held in total, in January, September, and November 2009, and February, July and October 2010.

Eight meetings of the TWG were held in total, in May, June, July, September, October and November 2009 (2), and August 2010.

6.5   Records

Minutes of all meetings are kept by PEFC Ireland on behalf of the Standard Setting Forum.

6.6   Public Consultation and Pilot Testing

In March 2010 the Forum agreed that the draft Standard was ready to go out to public consultation. The consultation period commenced on 25th March 2010 with an original deadline for receipt of submissions set at 28th May 2010, subsequently extended to 11th June, resulting in a 79 day period. Consultation was web-based, after being initially advertised in the Press and by notice sent direct to key stakeholders.

An independent consultant was engaged to analyse and collate the public submissions and report to the Forum. The report formed a key part to the Forum's and TWG's deliberations at their meetings in July, August and October 2010.

Pilot testing of the draft Standard was conducted by an accredited certification body in June 2010. Pilot testing was carried out on one private and two State (Coillte) forests, one of the latter comprising in part an Old Woodland Site. The report on the pilot testing also formed a key part to the Forum's and TWG's meetings in July, August and October 2010.

The reports on the analysis of the consultation responses and the pilot testing are available to view on the PEFC Ireland website.

6.7   Approval

The Standard was finalised and approved by the Forum at a meeting held on 13th October 2010. A copy of the approved version with the revisions resulting from the public consultation and pilot testing highlighted was posted on the PEFC Ireland website and all respondents to the public consultation process notified.

6.8   The Standard

The PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard sets out the requirements which woodland owners and managers and certification authorities can use to certify woodland management in the

Republic of Ireland. The standard is the product of an inclusive and transparent process which has involved a balanced representation from the Irish forestry and environmental community. It has been designed to ensure that it reflects the requirements of the Government's Irish National Forest Standard and supporting documentation, and through this the guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki in 1993 and Lisbon in 1998.

This certification standard has been designed primarily for use in the certification of Irish woodlands by independent certification authorities. It may also be used in conjunction with an ISO 14001 environmental management system to provide performance targets.

Conformance with the certification standard is voluntary. However, an independent third-party evaluation by an accredited certification authority (sometimes referred to as a 'certification body' or 'certifier') is necessary to confirm conformance, in order to obtain a forest management certificate from the certifying body. No woodland owner or manager is required by law or regulation to undergo such an audit. However, it should be noted that some requirements of the certification standard are also required by law, and so must be complied with by all woodland owners/managers. Other requirements are a condition of the Forest Service grant schemes and conditions attaching to felling licences and must be complied with by all relevant licensees and grant beneficiaries.

The structure of the certification standard relates to the way in which management is implemented in the woodland, addressing specific aspects of management or types of operation in turn.

6.9   The eight sections of the Standard are as follows:

1   **Compliance with the law and conformance with the requirements of the certification standard**
2   **Management planning**
3   **Woodland design: creation, felling and replanting**
4   **Operations**
5   **Protection and maintenance**
6   **Conservation and enhancement of biodiversity**
7   **The community**
8   **Forestry workforce**

6.10   Structure of the Certification Standard
The standard is set out as follows:

- **Requirements**
  A requirement is a compulsory element of the standard. Woodland management must meet all relevant requirements and auditors will check that requirements are being met. Requirements are stated as "shall" implying that they are compulsory elements of the standard.

- **Means of verification**
  These suggest the type of objective evidence, in the form of documents, actions, site conditions or discussions, that certification bodies may consider in order to verify that the requirement is being met. The verifiers suggested are not exclusive or exhaustive – certification bodies will not always use all the verifiers suggested, and may seek verification in other ways.

- **Guidance notes**
  Guidance is provided to assist both the woodland owner / manager and the certification body to understand how requirements should be applied in practice. Guidance may also

suggest other sources of information which will help both parties understand a particular issue in more detail. Guidance may also elaborate on some requirements and explain the meaning of certain terms or phrases used in the requirements.

Note: Certification authorities shall take full account of the 'guidance notes' given for each 'requirement' when assessing conformance with the standard.

6.11   Procedures for Use of the Standard

The standard is used equally by both woodland owners / managers seeking certification and independent accredited auditors or certification bodies when assessing compliance. The following sections seek to provide clarity for all parties with regard to how the standard should be used and interpreted.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the process used to ensure that those who undertake the certification audit are truly independent and professionally competent. Certification bodies conducting audits against the standard must be accredited to undertake woodland management certification by a national or international accreditation body. Accreditation bodies must be members 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 and other documents recognised by the above organisations.

Area Specificity

The areas to be certified under the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard shall be individually identified and delineated Woodland Management Units (WMUs). A WMU is a forest property or properties covered under a single forest management plan and within a landscape unit[1]. A WMU may be owned by an individual, a group of individuals (sharing the one property), a company, a charity or any other legal entity. WMUs may contain smaller units e.g. compartments and sub-compartments but they should not be split for certification purposes. If the owner of a WMU owns other WMUs in different landscape units they need not necessarily be obliged to submit these for certification. The owner / manager of each WMU shall have made a formal commitment to meet the requirements of this standard[2].

Scale of Application of the Requirements

All requirements of this standard must be satisfied at Woodland Management Unit (WMU) level. This means that where, for example, there is a requirement for a percentage of the woodland area to be managed with biodiversity as a priority, this must be the case within each individual WMU. A WMU may be made up of a series of fragmented woodlands (e.g. on a farm or an estate) and in such cases requirements must be satisfied at WMU level and not necessarily within each fragmented parcel of woodland. However, in such cases:

- Plans for implementing a requirement unevenly in different parcels are based on good practice which aims to meet the purpose of the requirement.
- Wherever appropriate, management is based on a design plan

Application to Different Scales of Woodland

All woodlands seeking to obtain certification, regardless of size, must comply with the requirements of this standard. However, in some instances, specific thresholds for specific requirements are stated (e.g. Requirements 2.3.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4, and 5.1.2).

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[1] A Landscape Unit is an area of broadly homogenous landscape character.
[2] This is detailed in requirement 1.1.4 of the standard.

Flexibility in Meeting Requirements

It is recognised that a woodland owner or manager may feel that certain requirements of this standard are either inappropriate for or irrelevant to a particular woodland. In such circumstances, the professional judgement of the independent certification body will be called upon to assess whether flexibility should be shown in this regard. In making this assessment, the independent certification body may seek the opinion of an appropriate specialist and in all cases shall ensure that there is compliance with the spirit of the standard.

Timing for Full Implementation of the Requirements Relating to Woodland Structure & Layout

A special feature of woodland management is its long term nature. Decisions made in the past have a strong influence on the woodlands of today. Therefore, when assessing conformance with the certification standard, independent certification bodies will not evaluate woodlands solely on the present structure and layout, but will consider the plans for management in the short, medium and long term.

Where present structure and layout fail to meet the requirements, due to historic reasons, woodland owners / managers will need to demonstrate through management planning documentation, design plans and on-going activities in the woodland that they are taking active measures to achieve conformance with the requirements. They will also need to demonstrate that there is a time frame for achieving full conformance based on sound management principles.

Stakeholder Consultation

Certification to the PEFC Irish Standard shall provide an opportunity for, and take account of, inputs from stakeholders. Responsibility for undertaking consultation lies with the applicant in accordance with the requirements of this standard[3]. The applicant shall invite consultees, through direct communication and public notification, to copy their responses direct to the certification body. Where this is undertaken as an integral part of a wider consultation, such as by a government department, there should be no requirement to present a copy to the certification authority, provided that the information is available to the public. As part of the evaluation process, each time a certificate is issued or renewed, it shall be the responsibility of certification bodies to assess and verify stakeholder comments using appropriate sampling, independent of the applicant's own procedure. Feedback shall be provided by the certification body, on request, to respondents on how their comments have been addressed.

Peer Review

The certification body carrying out forest certification shall have technical competence in forest management, on its economic, environmental and social impacts, and on the forest certification criteria. Audit reports shall be subject to a separate independent review by competent experts. Peer reviewers shall have access to all comments from the stakeholder consultations, the applicant and the certification body, together with an assessment of how they have been addressed.

Transparency

The process of certification to the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard is transparent and includes the production of an informative, publicly available summary for each certificate. The summary shall provide information on how and why the certification decision was made, to allow stakeholders to see for themselves what happened. This should include an explanation of how any areas of non-conformity with the requirements of the standard have been addressed to the satisfaction of the certification body, and a clear statement of any outstanding conditions which need to be addressed.

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[3] Requirements with regard consultation are detailed in Section 7.1 of the standard.

Dispute Procedures

Certification bodies must have formal procedures for dealing with disputes. This must be open to all parties at any time to deal with non-conformance and challenges (ISO/IEC Guide 62:2.1.4; Guide 65:4.5 and the specific rules of the accreditation authority). This procedure shall be implemented when it has not been possible to resolve challenges regarding a decision made by the certification body in an assessment against this standard. Information on how a decision was made must be made available by the certification body on request in a way which does not breach commercial confidentiality,

PEFC Ireland has documented procedures for the establishment of an independent body for the settlement of disputes that may arise over the interpretation or implementation of the standard and that cannot be addressed in the dispute settlement procedures of the certification body, or the accreditation authority. If PEFC Ireland is concerned with the way in which a certification body is using the standard it shall raise a dispute through the certification body's own procedures. If this fails to resolve the matter then PEFC Ireland shall pursue it through the disputes procedure of the accreditation authority. If this fails to resolve the matter it shall be taken up through the disputes procedure of the International Accreditation Forum.

Any grievance relating to the standard setting process should be addressed to the Secretary of the Standard Setting Forum in accordance with Clause 2.8 of the Forum's Rules for Standard Setting and included at Appendix 5 below, and shall be considered and determined in accordance with the provisions contained therein.

As the Forum operates on the basis of consensus and represents all stakeholders, the decisions regarding dispute resolution in relation to any aspect of the Standard Setting Process are considered to meet the requirements of PEFC Council.

Periodic Monitoring

The standard and its implementation shall be periodically monitored and reviewed in the light of new scientific knowledge and practical experience. A full review of the standard will be undertaken at least every five years and the revision procedures shall be in accordance with the PEFC Council *Rules for Standard Setting.* Certification is normally valid for up to 5 years and is subject to periodic surveillance to ensure continued conformance with the standard. Surveillance shall be undertaken at a frequency and sampling intensity appropriate to the scale and intensity of management of the site. The expectation should be of an annual review (ISO/IEC Guide 65), but an annual site visit may not be mandatory in all cases. Re-assessment shall be carried out at least every 5 years.

Interpretation and Revision of the Standard

As the National Governing Body, PEFC Ireland coordinated the development of this standard. PEFC Ireland is a company limited by guarantee (Company Registration Number 461250) and is managed by a Board of Directors appointed by its members. Its objectives are "*to establish mechanisms for the recognition of schemes in Ireland for forest certification*, *for the certification of wood processing, manufacturing and associated activities, and for the certification of custody of materials used in the wood chain, which meet the criteria laid down by the Council of the PEFC*"

For the purposes of interpretation and revision of the standard, the members of PEFC Ireland will appoint a broadly based steering group which will have responsibility for interpreting the standard and ensuring its periodic revision, taking account of experience from its application and new information that arises. The steering group will provide advice to users of the standard on its interpretation.

Periodic revisions of the standard will be communicated by PEFC Ireland to the PEFC Council and the revisions will be dealt with by the PEFC Council in accordance with the rules relating to the *Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their Revision"* (Annex 7 to the PEFC Council Technical Document).

Supporting Templates

Over time, PEFC Ireland may provide, by way of the website www.pefc.ie, sample templates of documentation that may assist forest owners / managers in preparing for certification. Such templates may include management plans, site monitoring forms, hazard identification and risk assessment forms, and any other relevant documents. It may also assist other stakeholders in understanding the nature of information required and procedures followed by forest owners / managers in preparing for certification.

6.12 IRISH LAWS AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND PROTOCOLS PERTINENT TO FOREST MANAGEMENT IN IRELAND

(See Appendix 3)

6.13 PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard: Rules for Standard Setting

(See Appendix 5)

SECTION 7: SCHEME GOVERNANCE

7.1   Accreditation & Certification Requirements

7.1.1 Chain of Custody

PEFC Ireland has adopted PEFC Council Annex 6: Certification and Accreditation Procedures.

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

In particular it recognises: 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:

- 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 Guide 62 (EN 45 012) (1) if the certification is carried out as quality system certification,

  b) ISO Guide 66 (2) if the certification is carried out as environmental management system certification,

  c) ISO Guide 65 (EN 45 011) (3) if the certification is carried out as product certification (the term "product" is used in its widest sense and includes also processes and services)

  d) Other requirements for certification bodies defined by the national accreditation body.

- 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) (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.

- 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.

7.1.2 Forest Management Certification

The PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard will be considered as the audit protocol for the Scheme. All new applicants to Forest Management Certification will adhere to the Standard.

7.1.3 Accreditation Bodies

Under the Scheme, it is an implicit requirement that all external forest management and chain of custody certification audits will be carried out by third party, independent certification bodies. These bodies will in turn be required to have been accredited by accreditation bodies operating to internationally accepted standards (ISO Guides 61, 62 & 65) and are members of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) or substantively equivalent bodies, as set out in PEFC Council Annex 6: Certification and Accreditation Procedures. An example will be the Irish national Accreditation Board (INAB), the national accreditation body for the Ireland.

7.1.4 Accreditation Criteria

The scope of accreditation of Certification bodies will be required to explicitly include:

- Certification of forests and woodland to the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard

  and / or

- Chain of custody certification to the PEFC Council requirements: Annex 4: Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products / PEFC ST 2002:2010, as applicable;

As an integral part of such accreditation, certification bodies will be required to demonstrate the following:

- independence and objectivity;

- ability to carry out audits that are consistent and repeatable through the use of clear and precise procedures, and methods of recording and reporting;

- proven technical and professional competence and appropriate level of experience in forestry to hold the confidence of certification customers and the wider forest industry;

- proven professional competence and experience in certification procedures and auditing;

- thorough understanding of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard and the PEFC Chain of Custody Standards and the general requirements of Scheme;

- the maintenance of documented procedures for the competence, admission and training of auditors.

7.1.5 Roles of the Certification Body

Certification bodies operating under the Scheme will have the following key roles:

- carrying out independent, third party audits;

- awarding, suspending and withdrawing forest management and / or chain of custody certificates issued through the Scheme;

- controlling the use of certificates, through regular surveillance of the certificate holder;

- Notifying PEFC Ireland of the award, renewal and withdrawal of all certificates, within one month of all actions;

- Monitoring the use of PEFC logo licence use by their clients as set out by PEFC Ireland;

- To issue accredited Certificates which shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant Accreditation Body.

7.1.6 Competence Criteria for Auditors

Certification Bodies registered to operate under the Scheme are required to ensure that technical supervisors and auditors appointed by the Certification Body to carry out assessments against the requirements of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard and the PEFC Chain of Custody Standards meet the competence criteria for auditors developed by the appropriate Accreditation Body.

7.1.7 Register of Certification Bodies

As Governing Body of the Scheme, PEFC Ireland will establish and maintain a register of Certification Bodies, approved by the Governing Body, as meeting the criteria to operate under the Scheme, which register would be made publicly available on request.

Accredited Certification Bodies will be required to establish and maintain a register of auditors appointed by them to carry out certification assessments on their behalf, which register would be made available to the Scheme Governing Body, if requested.

7.1.8 PEFC Notification of Certification Bodies

PEFC Ireland adopts Section 6 of PEFC Council Annex 6 which states:

"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.

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.

7.2 Core Elements of the Scheme

7.2.1 Introduction

The following are the core elements of the certification process that will be required to be implemented by certification bodies carrying out audits under the Scheme. These elements will be common to both **forest management** and **chain of custody** certification:

7.2.2 Initial enquiry and application for certification

Whereby, the certification applicant or ("auditee") requesting information about the certification process would be provided with documented information about the Scheme by the Scheme Governing Body and/or the Certification Body. This would be then followed by a formal application to the Certification Body from the auditee accompanied by all relevant documentation requested by the Certification Body.

7.2.3 Certification Quotation

Provided to the auditee by the Certification Body on the basis of the information provided in auditee's application for certification. The quotation will indicate all costs chargeable by the Certification Body and will include a plan setting out the proposed scope and timetable for the certification assessment.

7.2.4 Voluntary "Pre-Assessment" or "Gap Analysis"

A voluntary process that may be requested by the auditee and/or recommended to the auditee by the Certification Body. Its purpose is to help ensure that the certification applicant fully understands the scope and requirements of the certification process. The pre-assessment should also serve to identify any significant shortfalls or "gaps" between the auditee's current management systems and documentation and the requirements of the certification standard(s), giving the opportunity to the auditee to rectify these prior to the main assessment.

7.2.5 Main certification assessment (audit)

This will be carried out by an appropriately qualified team of assessors (auditors) appointed and formally contracted by the Certification Body.

The aim of the main assessment will be to assess the auditee's forest management and/or chain of custody operations and documentation for compliance with the relevant standard(s). All relevant data and information sources, including internal audits and other documentation, will be used by the assessor team to help inform the audit process. (In the case of forest management certification, an appropriate sample of the auditee's forest operations should be evaluated by the assessor team in the field.)

7.2.6 Certification Report and Assessment (Auditor) Team recommendation.

Following the main assessment, the assessor (auditor) team will issue the auditee with a draft written certification report providing a summary of the key findings of the audit, including all non-compliances against the requirements of the standard(s).The auditee will then be given an opportunity to review the interim report. Thereafter, the auditee will be required to agree with the assessor team the corrective actions to be taken, or planned to be taken, against each of the non-compliances raised. These corrective actions will then be agreed with the Certification Body together with a defined time-scale for implementation.

Once the schedule of corrective actions is agreed and verified as having been carried out effectively, the assessor team submits the Report to the Certification Body with a recommendation as to whether or not a certificate should be awarded, together with any conditions.

A non-conformance will be raised when a requirement of the stated standard is not met. Non-conformances can be either major or minor. Major non-conformances mean that a certificate cannot be issued.

Certificates can be issued in the case of a minor non-conformance on the condition that the proposed corrective actions will be fully met within a stated time period.

7.2.7 Independent Review of the Certification Report
An appropriately qualified expert (or team of experts) is required to review the audit report for all forest certification assessments, in order to check the assessor team's methods and conclusions against the requirements of the certification standard(s), and to endorse or otherwise their certification recommendation. Such expert(s) will be appointed by, but operate independently from, the Certification Body.

7.2.8 Certification decision
The outcome of the certification will be based on the recommendation(s) made in the Certification Report and any subsequent comments made by the independent reviewer(s) (see above). The final decision whether or not to issue a certificate to the auditee will be taken by the independent review panel appointed by and acting on behalf of the Certification Body, but acting independently of the audit process.

The certification decision may be one of the following:

- approval with no conditions;
- approval but conditional upon specified corrective actions being implemented prior to award of the certificate
- deferred
- not approved

7.2.9 Award of Certificate
Issued to the auditee by the Certification Body in accordance with the procedures set out by the Certification body.

The Certificate awarded by the Certification body shall bear the symbol of the National Accreditation Body which has awarded the accreditation.

7.2.10 Period of certificate validity
Certificates can only remain valid for a maximum period of five years from the date of issue.

7.2.11 Surveillance audits
On-going surveillance (alternatively referred to as "monitoring" or "re-auditing") during the period covered by the Certificate.

Regular monitoring of the certificate holder will be carried out by the Certification Body at regular intervals (at least annually) following the main assessment in order to ensure continued compliance with the requirements of the certification standard(s). The Certification Body will identify any further non-compliance that may have arisen since the main assessment and check that appropriate corrective actions are implemented.

7.2.12 Stakeholder consultation

As part of the Scheme's commitment to accountability to, and participation by, the Irish forestry community and other legitimate stakeholders, an integral component of the Scheme's forest management certification process will be **stakeholder consultation**.

In Irish forestry, public "stakeholder" consultation is a process already widely engaged in by forest owners and managers as a condition of entry into Irish government forestry incentive Schemes. In the context of forest management certification under the Scheme, stakeholder consultation is thus a natural extension of the type of consultation already embarked on by many woodland owners /managers as an integral part of normal forest management practice.

A requirement for stakeholder consultation is explicitly stated within the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard and is thus the direct responsibility of the certification applicant. Under the Scheme, it would thus be the responsibility of the Certification Body, as part of the main certification assessment, to verify that an appropriate level of stakeholder consultation had been carried out by the auditee in accordance with the certification standard. The assessment will include verification that the auditee had provided an opportunity for, and where appropriate, taken account of, inputs from stakeholders with regard to the applicant's forest management. The Certification Body might initiate and take account of additional input from stakeholders during the course of the assessment, where it deems such action as being appropriate.

It shall be the responsibility of certification authorities to assess and verify stakeholder comments as part of the evaluation process using appropriate sampling independent of the applicant's own procedure each time a certificate is issued or renewed. Feedback shall be provided by the certification authority, on request, to respondents on how their comments have been addressed.

7.2.13 Public Summary Report

A guiding principle of the Scheme is to provide transparency of both the Scheme and the certification process to help underpin consumer confidence in certification as a whole. Accordingly, PEFC Ireland will require those Certification Bodies registered to partake in the Scheme to produce a "Public Summary Report". This will take the form of an executive summary of the Certification Report containing key information and results of the main assessment **except for material that is either commercial in confidence or considered of a confidential nature**. The Public Summary Report will be made publicly available by both PEFC Ireland and the relevant Certification Body.

Certification Bodies will be required to advise certification applicants of the Scheme requirement for the public summary report **at the outset of the certification process**. Applicants must give their **explicit written consent** to the publication of the public summary report. Such consent should be included as an element of the certification contract between the applicant and the Certification Body.

Certification "Register"

Certification Bodies operating under the Scheme will be required by PEFC Ireland to maintain and update documented records of all forest areas and chain of custody units certified by them under the Scheme, which register would include the following information, as a minimum:

For forest management certificates:
- Name of certificate holder.
- Date of issue of certificate and certification body reference number.
- Type of certificate issued i.e. forest management.
- Date of expiry of certificate.
- Area (in hectares) of forest certified.
- Location(s) of certified forest area(s).
- Annual timber production from certified forest area.

- Date of renewal of certificate.
- Date of suspension of certificate (if applicable). Date of withdrawal of certificate (if applicable).

For chain of custody certificates:
- Name of certificate holder.
- Date of issue of certificate.
- Type of certificate issued i.e. chain of custody and business grouping as specified by PEFC.
- Date of expiry of certificate.
- Location(s) of certified unit(s).
- Date of renewal of certificate.
- Date of suspension of certificate (if applicable).
- Date of withdrawal of certificate (if applicable).

Certification Bodies are required to provide the above information to PEFC Ireland no later than a calendar month following the award, renewal, suspension or withdrawal of every certificate issued by them.

PEFC Ireland shall maintain and update a central register of information of all forest management and chain of custody certificates issued under the Scheme, which register will be made publicly available on the Internet, via the PEFC Council website.

7.3 Forest Management: Certification Levels

7.3.1 Introduction
There are two main levels at which a woodland owner(s) or forest enterprise(s) might wish to apply for forest management certification under the Scheme:

- **Individual Certification**

- **Group Certification**

7.3.2 Individual Certification
Individual Certification is where forests belonging to a single forest owner (whether an individual, company or other entity) are assessed under a single process with a single certificate issuing to successful forest owners. This method is available for any size and type of forest, however, an individually owned certificate may be particularly appropriate or the preferred option for larger management units.

Certification Bodies operating under the Scheme will be required to have clearly documented procedures for the assessment of individual certification applicants including all the key elements and components.

7.3.3 Group Certification
Group Certification is where a number of (usually small) forest owners group their forests together and make a single Forest Certification application. The group is co-ordinated by a single person (a group manager) who ensures that all members of the group are compliant with the relevant forest management standard. Forest Certification auditors then evaluate a sample of woodland properties. All woodland properties are evaluated over time / subsequent audits.

Rationale: The rationale for group certification is to spread the costs of certification across a

number of owners, for whom the costs of being certified individually as small or medium sized owners might otherwise have been disproportionate to the benefits. The premise for this potential cost reduction is that only a sample of the forest areas within the group usually needs to be audited each year, however, this system of certification does require a degree of consistency of management systems and standards between the different forest holdings that make up the group. Where there is considerable variation and complexity in forest types within and between Group Members' forest areas, it may be necessary to significantly increase the intensity of sampling.

Certification costs will vary markedly depending on size and complexity of the forest areas involved. Ideally therefore, a group certificate is issued to an umbrella organisation or **"group entity"** that has the resources to carry out an adequate level of internal monitoring of the forest areas within the group to ensure full compliance with the certification standard and thus achieve certification.

7.3.4 Basis of Group Certification
The basis of Group Certification is in accordance with PEFC International Standard ST 1002:2010 *Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements* which was adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council on 12 November 2010. This document cancels and replaces the requirements for group and regional certification as defined in Annex 3 of PEFC Council Technical Document.

The fundamental basis of group certification under the Scheme is that **all members of the group** must formally commit to complying with **all the requirements** of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard in respect of **all forests areas** included within the scope of the particular group Scheme concerned.

Responsibility for ensuring that all the participants in a group scheme are conforming to the terms of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard is centrally administered and is subject to central review and that all participants are subjected to an internal monitoring programme. Requirements of the PEFC Irish Forest certification Standard that are implemented at the local forest level (e.g. species choice, felling design, management of biodiversity etc) must be satisfied by each individual group member. Responsibilities for meeting elements of the Standard may not be "traded" between different group members or forest areas – e.g. with one group member meeting all biodiversity criteria whilst another member does not meet any.

7.3.5 Group Manager
The actual division of responsibilities may differ between different group certification Schemes. In some Schemes, the Group Entity may do little more than administer the group certification Scheme, with the individual members or their individual forest managers taking responsibility for all forest management activities. In these cases, the Group Entity is usually administered by a **"Group Manager".** The kind of Scheme that is most appropriate for the Group Members concerned will depend on local circumstances.

7.3.6 Categories of Groups for Group Certification
There are various categories of "groups" for which group certification under the Scheme might be suitable, including for example:

- a formal or informal co-operative of neighbouring or other forest owners;
- a forest owners association or sub-set of the association;
- a forest manager/private practitioner or forest management company or other management practice managing woodlands on behalf of different owners;
- a timber marketing co-operative.

Applications for group certification will be made to the Certification Body by the Group Manager appointed to act on behalf of the Group Members.

7.3.7 Responsibilities of the Group Manager / Group Entity
In order to be eligible to apply for group certification, the Group Entity must:

- represent the group organisation in the certification process, including in communications and relationships with the certification body, submission of an application for certification, and contractual relationship with the certification body;

- provide a commitment on behalf of the whole group organisation to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme;

- establish written procedures for the management of the group organisation;

- keep records of:

    o the group entity and participants' conformity with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard, and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme,

    o all participants, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/their size(s),

    o the certified area,

    o the implementation of an internal monitoring programme, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken;

- establish connections with all participants based on a written agreement which shall include the participants' commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standard. The group entity shall have a written contract or other written agreement with all participants covering the right of the group entity to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any participant from the scope of certification in the event of non-conformity with the sustainable forest management standard;

Note: The requirements for "participant' commitment" and "written contract or other written agreement with all participants" can also be satisfied by the commitment of and written agreement of the forest owners/managers' association, where the association can demonstrate that it has a legal mandate to represent the participants and where its commitment and the terms and conditions of the contract are enforceable.

- provide participants with a document confirming participation in the group forest certification;

- provide all participants with information and guidance required for the effective implementation of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme;

- operate an annual internal monitoring programme that provides for the evaluation of the participants' conformity with the certification requirements, and;

- operate a review of conformity with the sustainable forest management standard, that includes reviewing the results of the internal monitoring programme and the certification body's evaluations and surveillance; corrective and preventive measures if required; and the evaluation of the effectiveness of corrective actions taken.

7.3.8 Certification Body Requirements for Group Certification

Certification Bodies registered to operate under the Scheme will be required to have developed documented requirements and procedures specifically for the assessment of Group Certification Scheme applications.

These procedures and requirements would include, *inter alia:*

- definition of the divisions of responsibility between Group Members and the Group Entity;
- requirements and responsibilities of the Group Entity;
- requirements and responsibilities of the Group Members;
- documentation and on-going administration of the group certification Scheme by the Group Entity, including criteria for eligibility for, and terms and conditions of, membership of the Group, suspension or expulsion of existing members and introduction of new Group Members;
- methodology for evaluation and on-going surveillance of the Group Entity's systems, documentation and control of the group Scheme;
- methodology for the sampling and auditing of the Group Members' forest areas at main assessment and at subsequent surveillance;
- internal monitoring by the Group Entity of Group Members and their forest activities;
- maintenance of Group Member records by the Group Entity;
- responsibilities of the Group Entity for on-going communication with the Certification Body regarding Group membership, new and expelled group members and reasons for expulsion;
- payment of group certification costs.

7.3.9 Group Certificate

Under the Scheme, the systems and documentation of the Group Entity will be assessed against the Certification Body's requirements, whilst the Group Members' forest management practices will be assessed against the requirements of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard. If successful, the **Group Entity** will be issued with a group forest management certificate, not the individual Group Members.

The Group Member will receive a Certificate of attestation from the Group manager to affirm the membership of the Group.

7.4 Chain of Custody

The Scheme adopts the PEFC Council Annex 4 and Appendices: Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products: Requirements; and PEFC International Standard ST 2002:2010 Chain of Custody of Forest based products - Requirements

NB: Annex 4 to the PEFC Council Technical Document was withdrawn and replaced by PEFC International Standard ST 2002:2010 (*Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*) on 26 November 2010. A one year transition period applies, accordingly Annex 4 will continue to apply to renewals of existing certificates during the transition period, but all new assessments for certification purposes will be carried against PEFC ST 2002:2010. At the end of the transition period, Annex 4 will cease to apply.

The text of Annex 4 was developed by the Chain of Custody and Labelling Working Group of the PEFC Council. It was officially adopted by the PEFC Council General Assembly on 29 October 2004 and amended on 17 June 2005. This standard can be endorsed and utilised by any forest certification or labeling scheme which includes chain of custody rules for the purposes of using declarations and/or labels referring to the origin of the raw material included in the forest based products.

PEFC ST 2002:2010 was developed in an open, transparent, consultative and consensus based process covering a broad range of stakeholders.   The overall goal of the PEFC chain of custody is to provide customers of forest based products with accurate and verifiable information on the content of material originating in PEFC certified, sustainably managed forests or recycled material. Consumers in growing numbers are seeking evidence of environmentally sound business practices and demand reassurance and proof from forest-based industries that the wood they use comes from sustainably managed sources. Businesses therefore need a reliable and credible mechanism to provide their customers with information about the origin of the raw material. This chain of custody standard implemented together with forest certification and / or labelling schemes provides such a mechanism.

Under the Scheme, chain of custody certification will normally be carried out at the individual organisation / enterprise level.

Certification Bodies registered to operate under the Scheme will be required to have full knowledge of both Annex 4 and PEFC ST 2002:2010, and developed documented procedures for assessment of chain of certification applications. Such procedures would include, *inter alia,* methodologies for assessing that the applicant operates effective systems for:

- verifying that the origin of the wood raw material used in manufacturing and also procured products is from forests certified under PEFC endorsed Schemes;
- verifying the origin of certified raw materials before and after transport, handling and processing by appropriate documentation;
- ensuring that certified raw materials are clearly marked, physically separated or otherwise identified as certified when received;
- documentation and control;
- maintaining appropriate records of the suppliers of all wood based raw materials and products procured, processed and sold.
- Monitoring the correct use by certified bodies of PEFC logo contracts, if awarded

7.4.1   Multi-site or Group Chain of Custody Schemes
The requirements of PEFC Council Annex 4, Appendix 4: *Implementation of the chain of custody standard in multi-site organisations* and / or PEFC ST 2002:2010 Appendix 3: *Implementation of the chain of custody standard by multi-site organisations* shall be followed.

The aim of these appendices is to establish guidance for the implementation of the chain of custody requirements in an organisation with a network of sites, thus ensuring on the one hand, that the certification / registration of the chain of custody is practical and feasible in economic and operative terms and on the other, that the assessment provides adequate confidence in the conformity of the chain of custody. Certification of multi-site organisations also allows implementation and certification of the chain of custody in a group of typically small independent companies.

These appendices only include requirements applicable for the multisite organisation to implement the chain of custody requirements of this standard. Requirements and guidance for the certification / registration bodies for the assessment and certification of a multisite organisation are described in the IAF Guidance on the Application of ISO / IEC Guide 62:1996 and IAF Guidance on the Application of ISO / IEC Guide 66:1996.

Definitions
A multisite organisation is defined as an organisation having an identified central function (normally, and hereafter referred to as a "central office") at which certain activities are planned, controlled and managed and a network of local offices or branches (sites) at which such activities are fully or partially carried out.

Such an organisation does not need to be a unique entity, but all sites shall have a legal or contractual link with the central office of the organisation and be subject to a common chain of custody which is subject to continuous surveillance by the central office. This means that the central office has the right to implement corrective actions when needed at any site. Where applicable this should be laid down in the contract between the central office and the sites.

Examples of possible multisite organisations are:

- organisations operating with franchises or companies with multiple branches where the sites are linked through a common ownership, management or other organisational link, and
- groups of independent legal enterprises established and functioning for the purposes of the chain of custody certification (producer group).

The producer group means a network of typically small independent enterprises associated together for the purpose of obtaining and maintaining chain of custody certification. The central office may be an appropriate trade association, or any other properly experienced legal entity that is either nominated for the purpose by a group of intending members or offers a group service managed for the purposes of and consistently with this standard. The central office can also be administered by one member of the group.

The Group Member will receive a Certificate of attestation from the Group manager to affirm the membership of the Group.

7.5   Award, Suspension & Withdrawal of Certificates

7.5.1 Responsibility
The award, suspension & withdrawal of forest management and chain of custody certificates under the Scheme will be the responsibility of the Certification Body concerned, as distinct from the licensing and control of use of any on-product and off-product labels which will be the explicit responsibility of the label licensing body. (see: PEFC ST 2001:2008 *Logo Usage Rules - Requirements*)

7.5.2 Procedures
All Certification Bodies registered by the Scheme Governing Body to operate under the Scheme will be required to have documented procedures which:

- describe the methodology for awarding certificates;
- describe the method by which legitimate certificates issued by the Certification Body are readily identifiable as such, and provide all the relevant information to facilitate use by the legitimate certificate holder;
- describe the conditions under which a certificate may be suspended or withdrawn;
- enable the Certification Body to exercise the right to suspend or withdraw a forest management or chain of custody Certificate if the terms and conditions of its issue are not met by the Certificate Holder;
- ensure that the relevant label or logo licensing body is informed within a specified time-scale about suspension or withdrawal of a certificate.

7.5.3 Information on Certificates
All certificates issued under the Scheme would include the following information:

- Certificate Number & Registration Code;

- name and address of the Certification Body;
- name and address of the Certificate Holder;
- scope of the certification;
- date of issue of the Certificate;
- statement to the effect that the named forest area(s) / Group Entity / Wood Processing Unit etc., meets the requirements of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard and/or Chain of Custody Code of Practice, independently audited by the relevant Certification Body;
- date of expiry of the certificate;
- signature of the issuing officer;
- the Certification Body mark and any other appropriate logo(s) which may be legitimately applied to the certificate.
- The Certificate awarded by the Certification body shall bear the symbol of the National Accreditation Body which has awarded the accreditation.

7.5.4 Renewal of Certificates

Certificates issued under the Scheme will be valid for a maximum of 5 years from date of issue, although continuation of certification during this period will be dependent on completion of a programme of satisfactory surveillance visits conducted by the Certification Body.

7.6 Use of Logos & Marks

7.6.1 Relating to Certification Bodies

Holders of certificates issued under the Scheme may use logos, marks or claims relating to the relevant Certification Body operating under the Scheme, provided that such usage is carried out in strict accordance with the rules and procedures issued by the Certification Body.

7.6.2 Relating to other Labels licensed by other Bodies

All usage of logo, trademarks and any associated claims made in connection with forest management certification and / or wood product chain of custody verification under the Scheme, will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate third party licensing authority.

Such third party licensing bodies will be required to have documented procedures for the licensing, controlling and levying of fees for their respective logo usage under the Scheme.

The third party licensing bodies will be required to keep an up-to-date register of all on- and off-product logo users licensed in conjunction with the Scheme.

7.6.3 PEFC Logo Usage

The rules and guidance set out in PEFC International Standard ST 2001:2008 *Logo Usage Rules – Requirements* will be followed by all certificate holders)

7.7 Appeals, Complaints & Disputes

7.7.1 Certification Process

All Certification Bodies registered to operate under the Scheme will be required to have documented procedures for dealing with all appeals, complaints and disputes relating to the

certification process - up to and including the point of award, suspension or withdrawal of forest management and/or chain of custody certificates.

Such procedures will include the following:
- establishing and maintaining documented records of all appeals, complaints and disputes raised against the Certification Body and resultant actions;
- methodology, allocation of responsibilities and time-scales for responding to and addressing appeals, complaints and disputes and implementing and appropriate corrective actions;
- provision for periodic monitoring and review of procedures and case histories with a view to developing preventative action and continuous improvement in the certification process.

7.7.2 Interpretation of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard

For the purposes of interpretation and revision of the standard, the members of PEFC Ireland will appoint a broadly based steering group which will have responsibility for interpreting the standard and ensuring its periodic revision, taking account of experience from its application and new information that arises. The steering group will provide advice to users of the standard on its interpretation.

In the event of a dispute relating specifically to interpretation of the PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard which cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the Certification Body's independent review panel as part of the certification process, such a matter will be referred to the steering group for a ruling.

7.7.3 Referral to Irish Accreditation Service

In the event of an appeal, complaint or dispute concerning the certification process or conduct of the Certification Body not being resolved to the satisfaction of the auditee, Certification Body or other third party, the matter will be referred to the relevant Accreditation Body, which in Ireland will normally be the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB). Failing resolution by the Accreditation Body the matter will then be referred to PEFC Ireland for a final decision.

7.7.4 Role of PEFC Ireland

The PEFC Ireland Board will function as the final arbiter of appeal in the case of disputes related to certification decisions, use of the PEFC logo and label and/or loss of the certificate. The entity that wishes to resort to this authority should contact, in writing, the National Secretary of PEFC Ireland normally, within one month of the grievance informing PEFC Ireland of the background and detail of the appeal.

The Board, or its nominated representatives, which may include non members who have specific expertise, will submit a report to the PEFC Ireland Board, who will issue a decision within a term of not more than two months. According to this decision, PEFC Ireland shall take the recommended actions and communicate these to the entities involved.

APPENDIX 1: PAN-EUROPEAN INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Since the first set of Pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) were laid down in the early 1990s there has been a process of gradual improvement in knowledge and data collection systems, as well as understanding of information needs, that have lead to refinements that were incorporated into an improved set of quantitative and qualitative Pan-European Indicators at the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) in 2003.

The details are of the PEC are as follows. A section in [ ] is included under each criterion showing the interpretation of the PEC in relation to the delivery of forestry in Ireland

Criterion 1: Maintenance and Appropriate Enhancement of Forest Resources and their Contribution to Global Carbon Cycles

[The forest estate in Ireland has increased steadily over the past 50 years. This has been due to the afforestation of agricultural land. Government policy, as set out in *Growing for the Future*, is that the forest estate should continue to expand at a rate of 20,000 ha per annum to the year 2030.

Given that Irish forests are generally young and fast growing and that new land is planted each year, the potential of Ireland's forest estate to sequester carbon is quite high.]

1.1 Forest area

Area of forest and other wooded land, classified by forest type and by availability for wood supply, and share of forest and other wooded land in total land area

1.2 Growing stock

Growing stock on forest and other wooded land, classified by forest type and by availability for wood supply

1.3 Age structure and/or diameter distribution

Age structure and/or diameter distribution of forest and other wooded land, classified by forest type and by availability for wood supply

1.4 Carbon stock

Carbon stock of woody biomass and of soils on forest and other wooded land

Criterion 2: Maintenance of Forest Ecosystem Health and Vitality

[In a forest, the health and vitality of the dominant vegetation – the tree cover – reflect the condition of the ecosystem as a whole and its ability to sustain production into the future. While it ,may arise for diverse reasons, deterioration in forest health provides a warning signal which merits investigation. If deterioration is the result of some transitory influence, then it may give no cause for concern. However, if it is a response to deterioration in soil conditions or to some biotic or abiotic external influence, then it may indicate a long-term threat to the sustainability of the ecosystem.]

2.1 Deposition of air pollutants

Deposition of air pollutants on forest and other wooded land, classified by N, S and base locations

2.2 Soil condition

Chemical soil properties (pH, CEC, C/N, organic C, base saturation) on forest and other wooded land related to soil acidity and eutrophication, classified by main soil types

2.3 Defoliation

Defoliation of one or more main tree species on forest and other wooded land in each of the defoliation classes "moderate", "severe" and "dead"

2.4 Forest damage

Forest and other wooded land with damage, classified by primary damaging agent (abiotic, biotic and human induced) and by forest type.

Criterion 3: Maintenance and Encouragement of Productive Functions of Forests (Wood and Non-Wood)

[The sustainable concept links the environmental, the social and the productive functions of forests. To ensure that reserves are conserved while still maintaining a satisfactory flow of products, harvesting must not exceed long-term productive capacity. At the same time, a competitive climate must be maintained to ensure the flow of investment to forestry and to forest industries. The latter is an essential component of sustainable employment and income creation.]

3.1 Increment and fellings

Balance between net annual increment and annual fellings of wood on forest available for wood supply

3.2 Roundwood

Value and quantity of marketed roundwood

3.3 Non-wood goods

Value and quantity of marketed non-wood goods from forest and other wooded land

3.4 Services

Value of marketed services on forest and other wooded land

3.5 Forests under management plans

Proportion of forest and other wooded land under a management plan or equivalent

Criterion 4: Maintenance, Conservation and Appropriate Enhancement of Biological Diversity in Forest Ecosystems

[Biodiversity describes the variability among living organisms and the ecosystems of which they are part. Three conceptual levels of biodiversity are recognized – ecosystem, species and genetic. Forests are complex ecosystems and important sources of biodiversity. Production forests are undisturbed for phases during their rotation and are hosts to a wide range of plants and animals. Enhancing biodiversity through improved operational practices, planning guidelines, recommendations and training is a central component of sustainable forest management. Certain species and habitats are protected under EU Directives and national legislation, but there are numerous natural and semi-natural habitats within and associated with forests which will benefit from sustainable management practices. This in turn contributes to the quality and diversity of Irish forests. Forest ecosystems are poorly understood. Continued research will be required to evaluate the processes involved so that the best management practices can be developed. A National Biodiversity Plan, which accommodates forestry, is being drafted.]

4.1 Tree species composition

Area of forest and other wooded land, classified by number of tree species occurring and by forest type

4.2 Regeneration

Area of regeneration within even-aged stands and unevenaged stands, classified by regeneration type

4.3 Naturalness

Area of forest and other wooded land, classified by "undisturbed by man", by "semi-natural" or by "plantations", each by forest type

4.4 Introduced tree species

Area of forest and other wooded land dominated by introduced tree species

4.5 Deadwood

Volume of standing deadwood and of lying dead-wood on forest and other wooded land classified by forest type

4.6 Genetic resources

Area managed for conservation and utilisation of forest tree genetic resources (in situ and ex situ gene conservation) and area managed for seed production

4.7 Landscape pattern

Landscape-level spatial pattern of forest cover

4.8 Threatened forest species

Number of threatened forest species, classified according to IUCN Red List categories in relation to total number of forest species

4.9 Protected forests

Area of forest and other wooded land protected to conserve biodiversity, landscapes and specific natural elements, according to MCPFE Assessment Guidelines

Criterion 5: Maintenance and Appropriate Enhancement of Protective Functions in Forest Management (notably Soil and Water)

[The importance of forests in protecting soil and water has been recognized for a long time. In Ireland, concern has often focused on the negative impacts of forests and forest operations on soil and water. This particularly applies to compaction, erosion and acidification of soils and to eutrophication, acidification and sedimentation of surface waters. In order to ensure that terrestrial and aquatic systems are maintained, it is important that the appropriate soil and water quality indicators are carefully monitored.]

5.1 Protective forests – soil, water and other ecosystem functions

Area of forest and other wooded land designated to prevent soil erosion, to preserve water resources, or to maintain other forest ecosystem functions, part of MCPFE Class "Protective Functions"

5.2 Protective forests – infrastructure and managed natural resources

Area of forest and other wooded land designated to protect infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards, part of MCPFE Class "Protective Functions"

Criterion 6: Maintenance of Other Socio-Economic and Cultural Functions and Conditions

[The concept of sustainable forest management transcends ecological and production criteria. It also relates to society values, the quality of life and the best interests of current and future generations. Thus, this criterion concerns the ability of forestry and forestry institutions to meet social goals and to deal with special or unique needs.]

6.1 Forest holdings

Number of forest holdings, classified by ownership categories and size classes

6.2 Contribution of forest sector to GDP

Contribution of forestry and manufacturing of wood and paper products to gross domestic product

6.3 Net revenue

Net revenue of forest enterprises

6.4 Expenditures for services

Total expenditures for long-term sustainable services from forests

6.5 Forest sector workforce

Number of persons employed and labour input in the forest sector, classified by gender and age group, education and job characteristics

6.6 Occupational safety and health

Frequency of occupational accidents and occupational diseases in forestry

6.7 Wood consumption

Consumption per head of wood and products derived from wood

6.8 Trade in wood

Imports and exports of wood and products derived from wood

6.9 Energy from wood resources

Share of wood energy in total energy consumption, classified by origin of wood

6.10 Accessibility for recreation

Area of forest and other wooded land where public has a right of access for recreational purposes and indication of intensity of use

6.11 Cultural and spiritual values

Number of sites within forest and other wooded land designated as having cultural or spiritual values

(35 indicators)

APPENDIX 2: FOREST SERVICE REFERRAL AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

The Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food operates a referral and notification system for all applications received for grant aid (e.g. afforestation or forest roads) and for felling licences. This involves a consultation process which is summarized as follows:

Areas	Consultation Type	Consultation Period
Areas of all Sizes	If proposed afforestation is within 60m of a dwelling or associated building the applicant must consult with the owner occupier.	N/A
Areas >2.5 ha.	The Forest Service supplies details to the public through an appropriate provincial paper of County, District Electoral Division, Townland and area for all proposals > 2.5 hectares.	1 month from date advertisement appears in the paper.
Areas > 5 ha.	Areas > 5 ha. Where there is a fisheries consideration designated sensitive for water quality considerations are referred to the relevant Regional Fisheries Board.	Normally 1 month
Areas > 25 ha.	All sites > 25 ha. Are sent to the relevant local authority for their observations.	Normally 1 month
Areas > 40 ha.	Areas > 40 ha. Where there is a fisheries consideration designated non sensitive for water quality are referred to the relevant Regional Fisheries Board.	Normally 1 month
Areas > 50 ha.[4]	An EIA and planning permission is required for these areas.	Varies
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) & Special Protection Areas (SPA) & Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)	Applications for operations in these areas received by the Forest Service are referred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service.	Normally 2 months
Outstanding Landscapes	The Forest Service refer these to the Local Authority.	Normally 1 month
Airport	The Forest Service refer these to the Aviation Authority.	Normally 1 month

More details of the types of situations where referral, notification and consultation is required by the Forest Service are provided in their Forestry Schemes Manual in the chapter entitled "Environmental Protection and Controls Consultation Process" That chapter sets out the environmental standards governing forestry and the consultative process undertaken when an application for approval is made to the Forest Service.

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[4] In accordance with SI No. 538 of 2001, all applications for afforestation are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process undertaken by the Minister. The screening determines whether an application requires an EIA. An Environmental Impact Assessment must accompany applications for the afforestation of areas of under 50 hectares where a proposed development is deemed by the Minister to have a significant environmental impact.

APPENDIX 3:

IRISH LAWS AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND PROTOCOLS PERTINENT TO FOREST MANAGEMENT IN IRELAND

The following is a list of Irish national laws pertinent to forest management.

Legislation	Potential Impact
Wildlife Acts, 1976 and 1999 *Wildlife Amendment Act (2000)*	*Flora, fauna, environment and forest management*
Forestry Acts, 1946, 1956 and 1988	*Forest management*
Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, 1963 to 1999	*Control of development and forest management*
Planning and Development Act, 2000 Commencement (No. 3) Order, (2001) S.I. No. 599 of 2001. *Planning and Development Regulations (2001) S.I. No. 600 of 2001.*	*Control of development and forest management*
National Monuments Acts, 1930 to 2004 (Including Approval of Consent (1) Order, 1995)	*Forest management in relation to archaeology*
National Cultural Institutions Act 1997	*Forest management in relation to archaeology*
Occupiers Liability Act, 1995	*Forest management*
Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. *Safety Health and Welfare at Work - General Application Regulations (2007) and Construction Regulations (2001)*	*Forest management both in forest and in office*
Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992	*Forest management and environment*
Heritage Act, 1995	*Heritage protection*
Environmental Impact Assessment – S.I. No. 100 of 1996	
European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 1996. S.I. No. 101 of 1996.	
Fisheries Consolidation Act 1959 and all amendments, Fisheries Act 1980 and all subsequent amendments. *S.I. regulation for the Water Framework Directive: S.I. No. 722 of 2003*	*Forest management in relation to water and fisheries*
Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts, 1977 to 1990	*Forest management and environment*
European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 2001. S.I. No. 538 of 2001.	
Waste Management Act, 1996	*Forest management and environment*
Local Government (Special Amenity and Conservation Orders) Act, 1976	
Litter pollution Act, 1997	*Forest management and environment*
Occupiers Liability Act 1995	*Forest Management*
Roads Act, 1993	*Haulage*
Road Transport Acts, 1932 to 1999	*Haulage*

The following is a list of European (EU) laws pertinent to forest management in Ireland.

Legislation	Potential Impact
Council Directive (92/43/EEC) and amending directives on the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora	*Flora and fauna and forest management*

Council Directive (79/409/EEC) and amending directives on the conservation of wild birds	*Wild birds and forest management*
EU (Conservation of Wild Birds) (Amendment) Regulations 1999	
European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997	
European Communities (Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998	
Council Directive (2000/60/EC) establishing a framework for community action in the field of water policy	*Forest management and the environment*
Council Directive (2000/29/EC) on protective measures against the introduction into the Member States of harmful organisms of plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community	*Forest protection*
Council Directive (1999/105/EC) on the marketing of forest reproductive material	*Tree improvement and forest protection*
Council Directive (85/337/EEC) and amending directives on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment	*Control of development*
Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC).	*Preventing and Remedying Environmental Damage*
EU Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC)	*Water*
Council Regulation (EEC3528/86) on the protection of forests against atmospheric pollution	*Environment*
EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC)	*Environment*

Information in the above tables was resourced from the following two publications which contain a more detailed analysis of these laws:

- Maguire, B. 2001. A Review of Legislation that Impacts on Irish Forestry. COFORD, Dublin.
- McHugh, D and G. Gallagher. 2004. Trees, Forests and the Law in Ireland. COFORD, Dublin.

The following is a list of international agreements and protocols pertinent to forest management in Ireland:

a. *International Labour Organisation - Conventions*

- Freedom of Organization
  Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948
  Convention 98 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, 1949

- Abolition of Forced Labour
  Convention 29 on Forced Labour, 1930
  Convention 105 on Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957

- Equal Rights / No Discrimination
  Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration, 1951
  Convention 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958

- Child Labour
  Convention 138 on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, 1973

b. *International Agreements*

Ireland has signed the following international agreements, among others:

- the *Bern Convention* of 1979 for the preservation of Europe's wild animals and native plants and their natural habitats;

- the *Convention on Biological Diversity* of Rio de Janeiro of June 5, 1992, concerning biological diversity;

- the *Bonn Convention* of June 23, 1979, for the preservation of migrating wild animal species;

- the Washington *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species* (CITES) of March 3, 1973, concerning the international trade in endangered species of wild animals and plants.

- the *Ransar Convention on Wetlands*, 1971 - an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are 45 Ramsar sites in Ireland.
- the *Kyoto Protocol*, negotiated by more than 160 nations in December 1997, aims to reduce net emissions of certain greenhouse gases (primarily carbon dioxide (CO_2)).
- the *International Tropical Timber Agreement* of 1994 which seeks to improve the international market conditions for sustainably grown tropical timber.
- the *Helsinki Protocols* resulting from the Ministerial Conference for Protection of Forests in Europe, 1994.
- the *Lisbon Protocols* resulting from the Ministerial Conference for Protection of Forests in Europe, 1998.
- The Vienna Protocols resulting from the Ministerial Conference for Protection of Forests in Europe, 2002.
- The United Nations *Framework Convention on Climate Change* in 1992.
- *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, 1972
- *the Aarhus Convention*
- *The European Landscape Convention, 2000.*
- *The European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage*

APPENDIX 4:
Certification bodies operating in Ireland

BM TRADA Certification Ltd
Alasdair McGregor
Products & Timber Business Manager
BM TRADA Certification Ltd
The e Centre
Cooperage Way Business Village
Alloa
Clackmannanshire
FK10 3LP
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1259 272142
Fax: +44 (0) 1259 272144
Email: amcgregor@bmtrada.com
Website: www.bmtrada.com
Information from BM Trada click here for MS word document

CATG LTD
Glenn Sharples
CATG LTD (Certificate and Timber Grading Ltd)
Riversway House
Room 304
Morecambe Road
Lancaster LA1 2RX
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 (0) 1524 400 632
Fax: +44 (0) 1524 400 632
Email: sales@catg.co.uk
Website: www.catg.co.uk

Control Union Certifications (UK)
Rafal Andruszkiewicz
Control Union UK Ltd.
8-9 King Charles Terrace Sovereign Court
Wapping,
LONDON
E1W 3HL
United Kingdom

Email: rafal@controlunion.co.uk
Website: www.controlunion.com

SGS Ireland Ltd
Noel McKeon
SGS Ireland Ltd
Ground Floor
Hazel House
Millennium Park
Naas
Co. Kildare

Tel: +353 (0)1 2950654

Email: noel.mckeon@sgs.com
Website: http://www.ie.sgs.com/

Scientific Certification Systems Inc
Sarah McKay
Senior Associate, Quality and Compliance
2200 Powell St., Suite 725
Emeryville,
CA 94608 USA

Tel: +1 510.452.8012 | Fax: +1 510.452.8001
Email: smckay@scscertified.com
Website: www.SCScertified.com

Soil Association Certification Ltd (Woodmark)
Gus Hellier
South Plaza
Marlborough Street
Bristol BS1 3NX
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 117 9142435
Email: ghellier@soilassociation.org
Website: www.soilassociation.org

APPENDIX 5: PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard: Rules for Standard Setting

Version 3: Ratified by the Standard Setting Forum on the 25th November 2009

Rules for Standard Setting

1. Objectives and Scope
This document defines the procedures and process for the development, maintenance and revision of the forest management certification standard for Irish forestry, in conformance with the requirements of the PEFC technical documents in force.

2. Standard Setting Process for Forest Certification

2.1 Framework for Forest Certification
Forest certification shall be carried out against an Irish Forest Certification Standard endorsed by the PEFC Council.

2.2 Independence
The development, maintenance and revision of the Standard shall be independent from the certification or accreditation process.

2.3 Level for Standard Setting
A single national Standard shall be developed by a national standard setting Forum.

2.4 Standard Setting Forum
2.4.1 The Forum shall represent the different aspects of sustainable forest management in Ireland. Relevant interested parties will be invited to participate in the standard setting process, including forest owners, forest industry, environmental and social non-governmental organisations, trade unions and retailers. The overall aim is that the Forum should provide a balanced representation of the various interest groups and organisations.

2.4.2 The Forum shall be organised into 3 chambers – social, environmental and economic – and the aim will be to have 5 nominees for each chamber. The social chamber shall be made up of representatives of forest user and wider countryside organisations and trade union representatives. The environmental chamber shall be made up of representatives of environmental non-governmental organisations and other organisations and bodies whose primary interest is environmental. The economic chamber shall be made up of representatives of Coillte Teoranta, private forest owners, forest management companies and processors and retailers of Irish forest products.

Note: in this clause "representative" denotes an organisation, not an individual.

2.4.3 If and when vacancies arise in any of the chambers through the withdrawal of an organisation, the Forum shall discuss and agree which organisations should be invited to fill the vacancies. Where a choice has to be made between 2 or more organisations or groups to fill a vacancy, all of which have an appropriate interest, preference shall be given to the organisation or group with the largest membership.

2.4.4 The Forum may agree to invite other individuals to attend Forum meetings as non-voting members.

2.4.5 The Forum shall elect an independent chairman and approve the appointment of a secretary.

2.4.6 The aim shall be to make decisions by consensus, defined as a lack of sustained objection. Where there is sustained objection the chairman shall ensure that there is full discussion of the issue before putting the matter to a vote. If a consensus cannot be reached, then a decision will be taken by votes cast by the chambers with each chamber having one vote. Within each chamber decisions will be taken by a simple majority vote: if a majority is not obtained the chamber will abstain. When a decision is required to be put to a vote, the vote shall be deferred until the next meeting of the Forum.

2.4.7 When a nominated representative of the Forum is unable to attend a Forum meeting he/she shall seek an alternate from his/her organisation. An alternate shall have the right to vote.

2.4.8 A meeting of the Forum shall be considered quorate when a minimum of 2 chambers are represented by at least one representative from each.

2.5 Conduct of Forum Meetings

2.5.1 Forum members will be notified of meeting dates at least 30 days in advance of meetings, and the agenda will be circulated at least 10 days before the meetings. Where possible papers for the meeting will be circulated with the agenda.

2.5.2 The secretary will produce a draft minute of the meetings and circulate this to members within 10 working days of the meeting. Any comments by the members regarding errors of fact must be communicated to the secretary within 10 working days of receipt of the draft minute. The minutes will be approved at the subsequent Forum meeting. Forum decisions will be recorded in the minutes. Decisions on substantial issues raised under AOB shall not be made until the subsequent meeting.

2.5.3 Members of the Forum shall act in a manner that is respectful of other members, refrain from unproductive argument and generally support the purpose of the Forum.

2.6 Technical Working Group

A Technical Working Group (TWG) will be appointed by the Forum, under an independent chairman. The TWG will consist of 2 representatives from each of the chambers, those representatives to be appointed by their respective chambers. The purpose of the TWG will be to discuss and agree a draft forest certification standard to be put to the Forum for their approval. Members of the TWG shall seek to ascertain the views of other Forum members within their chamber and represent these views at TWG meetings.

2.7 Transparency and Consultation

2.7.1 The start of the standard setting process shall be communicated to the public. Information on the standard development process and the minutes of the Forum meetings shall be made available to all interested parties on request. The draft certification standard, when agreed by the Forum, shall be posted on a website and information on the consultative process for the draft standard shall be communicated to the public.

2.7.2 There shall be a formal consultation process on the draft certification standard, with a minimum consultation period of 60 days. A report, providing an analysis of the responses to the consultation, shall be prepared and made available to the Forum. The Forum will agree changes to be made to the draft standard. General information on the changes made as a result of the consultation process will be made publicly available.

2.7 Complaints, Appeals and Disputes

Any party who wishes to lodge a complaint regarding any aspect of the conduct of the Standard Setting Forum must do so in writing to the Secretary of the Standard Setting Forum. If the nature of the complaint is unclear the Secretary may seek further information from the complainant. The Secretary will maintain a documented record of all appeals, complaints and disputes raised against the Forum and the resultant actions.

The Forum will consider any complaint at its next full meeting and decide at that meeting how best to address the issues raised by the complainant. The complainant will be notified of the decision of the Forum in writing within 10 days of that decision.

In the event of the complainant not being satisfied with the decision of the Forum, the Board of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd will function as the final arbiter of appeal. An appellant should contact in writing the National Secretary of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd within 28 days of receiving notice of the Forum's decision informing PEFC (Ireland) Ltd of the background and details of the appeal.

The Board of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd may establish an Appeals Board to consider an appeal, the members of which must not be members of the Forum. The Appeals Board will report to the board of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd with its recommendations. The recommendations will be taken into consideration by the Board of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd in formulating its decision which it will issue within a period not exceeding three months from the date of receipt of the appeal. According to this decision, PEFC (Ireland) Ltd will take the recommended actions and communicate these to the appellant and other affected parties.

3. Pilot Testing

3.1 The final draft of the forest certification standard shall be assessed by means of a pilot study prior to submission to PEFC Ireland. This pilot study will be conducted on at least one private and one Coillte owned property.

3.2 Recommendations for improving the draft standard, resulting from the pilot testing, shall be discussed at a Forum meeting prior to final submission.

4. Review of the Forest Certification Standard

The certification standard and implementation arrangements shall be reviewed in the light of new scientific information and practical experience at least every 5 years. PEFC Ireland shall initiate the review process, making the timetable and arrangements for the review publicly available. The review will take into account revisions required by PEFC Council.