



# DEVELOPING A NATIONAL FOREST CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

# YOUR TOOLKIT

A step-by-step guide to establishing your national forest certification system aligned with PEFC's globally recognized sustainability benchmark requirements

**2019 version**

## ABOUT PEFC

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management. Founded in 1999 by family forest owner associations, we have grown into the world's largest forest certification system accounting around 300 million hectares of certified forests in more than 40 countries.

Forest certification is a voluntary, market-focused mechanism, which links products derived from sustainable forest management through to the marketplace.

PEFC is an umbrella organization that works by endorsing national forest certification systems. Each national forest certification system undergoes rigorous third-party assessment against PEFC's unique sustainability benchmarks to ensure consistency with international requirements. PEFC endorsement provides international recognition for your national forest management standard and the sustainable management practices in your forests.

## WHY IS SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Forests provide food, heat, energy, medicine and wood; they promote biodiversity by giving habitats and shelter; they are an integral part of the water and carbon cycles, and have a fundamental role in climate regulation. More than one in five people worldwide – an estimated two billion people - are believed to depend on forests and the services they provide for their livelihoods, yet forests are among the most vulnerable ecosystems. If forests are to continue to deliver the full range of benefits that people and nature are dependent on, they need to be conserved and managed sustainably. One assurance and enabler of sustainability rests in forest certification.

Forest management is a long-term process. The results of good practice often only become apparent after decades. PEFC sustainable forest management certification provides forest owners and managers with independent recognition of their responsible management practices. With options to communicate sustainability credentials on products derived from certified forests, environmentally and socially conscious consumers, and responsible businesses and governments can use their purchasing power to support the sustainable management of the world's forests.

# What your PEFC Toolkit covers:

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# INTRODUCTION

## In brief

This toolkit has been produced for those interested in PEFC's guidance as they embark on developing their national forest certification system. It gives hands-on advice for practitioners and captures recommendations from PEFC and its existing members who have completed the same process.

## Key questions answered

In this introductory section, you will find answers to the following questions:

- What is a certification system?
- Why should I seek PEFC endorsement for my national forest certification system?
- How does forest certification link to intergovernmental forest initiatives?
- What standards and procedures need to be developed?
- How much time and resources will it take to develop my national forest certification system?
- What income sources can support my national forest certification system?
- Where do I start?

# What is a certification system?

A certification system outlines the rules, procedures and management for carrying out certification. It establishes specific requirements for a product, process, system or body, and uses a third-party to ensure that the fulfillment of specified requirements has been demonstrated.

A credible certification system relies upon three separate functions: standard setting, certification and accreditation.

**Standard setting** is the process of defining certification requirements in collaboration with stakeholders and is coordinated by a standardising body.

**Certification** is the process of checking whether an organization fulfills the certification requirements and is carried out by a Certification Body.

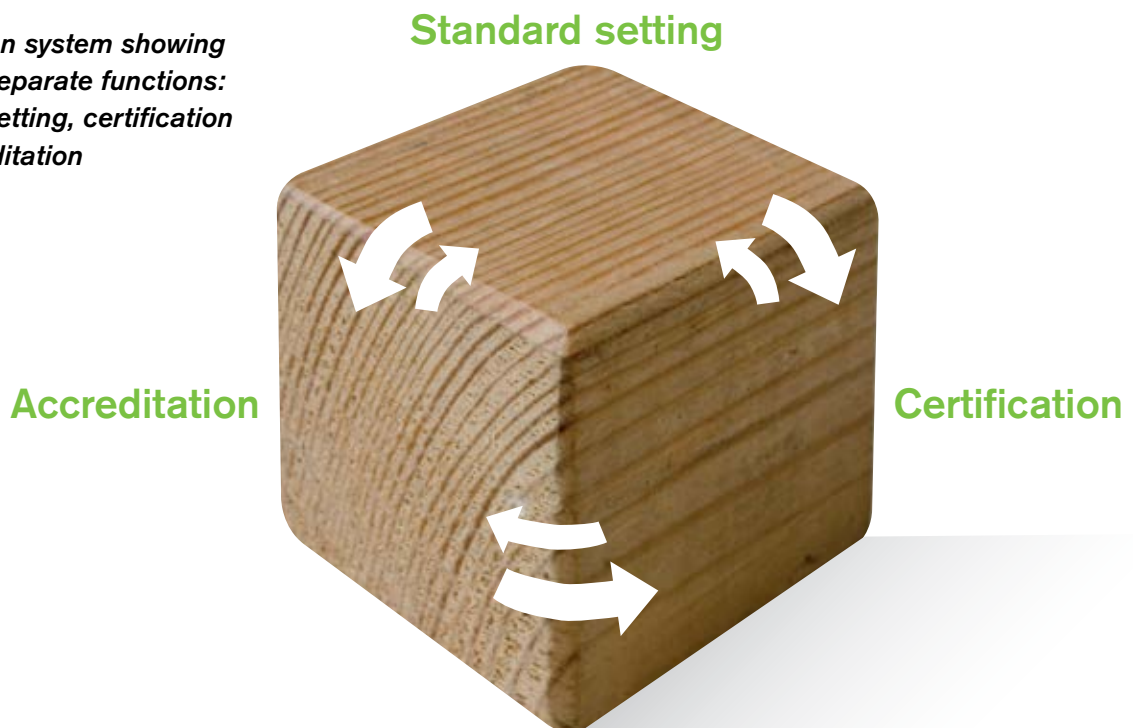
**Accreditation** is the process of assessing the competence of the Certification Body and is carried out by an Accreditation Body.

For PEFC, it is important that these three functions are all present and operate independently within a national forest certification system, hereafter referred to as "System". For example, PEFC certification is not possible if a Certification Body independently develops a forest management standard and subsequently uses it as the basis for a field audit. PEFC is currently the only global forest certification system that has implemented internationally recognized mechanisms to ensure unambiguous separation of these activities.

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## Diagram 1

**Certification system showing the three separate functions: standard setting, certification and accreditation**



# Why should I seek PEFC endorsement for my national forest certification system?

## **A PEFC-endorsed System provides important benefits to your country's forests and wood products industry and includes:**

- Recognition that your nationally agreed forest management standards and certified forest producers meet internationally recognized sustainability benchmark requirements;
- Access to markets, which increasingly demand assurances for wood products' legality and sustainability;
- Mutual recognition of certified fiber from your country's forests with other PEFC-certified sources and throughout PEFC's International Chain of Custody;
- Access to an alliance of like-minded organizations and people through the PEFC membership as well as support from PEFC;
- Opportunities for revenue generation from your forest certification and PEFC's Chain of Custody certification;
- Promotions of your PEFC-certified products on international markets and through PEFC's market outreach activities;
- Support for PEFC's ongoing actions of advocating to and informing market participants – public and private sectors alike – as they establish unique requirements for forest sustainability.

PEFC's unique approach provides independence for your country's System and allows for the development of standards tailored to your political, economic, social, environmental and cultural realities. Yet, through the endorsement process, PEFC ensures that Systems are in compliance with rigorous international requirements.

## **Nationally developed forest certification standards allow for:**

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

**What does PEFC recognition bring to your System?**



**The endorsement by PEFC was a significant milestone for Malaysia.** It propelled

the Malaysia Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS), our national certification system, to be internationally recognized and accepted. The journey with PEFC has been worthwhile and rewarding, and has culminated in the MTCS becoming the first endorsed tropical scheme in the Asia Pacific region. Being a part of the PEFC family has further enhanced the promotion and implementation of SFM in Malaysia."



**Yong Teng Koon,**  
Malaysian Timber Certification Council



**PEFC's endorsement opens business opportunities in international markets**

to companies certified under our national system – CERTFOR – by providing a global recognition of their sustainable forest management practices and Chain of Custody. For CERTFOR, it means being part of a worldwide network that allows us to share, discuss and receive feedback on our experiences in forest product certification."



**Andre Laroze,**  
Chile Forest Certification Corporation (CERTFOR)



**Worldwide recognition."**



**Vanessa Biebel,**  
PEFC Belgium



**International scope and credibility.**

A substantial proportion of the wood and paper products produced and sold in Australia are exported and imported, and therefore an international context to our national certification system is vital. With PEFC being the world's largest forest certification system, we achieve access to the widest markets."



**Feu Richard Stanton,**  
Responsible Wood

## How does forest certification link to intergovernmental forest initiatives?

Good forest governance is vital for the successful implementation of SFM. Programs such as the EU's FLEGT and REDD+ are especially focused on building a strong footing of good forest governance in countries with high tropical forest cover. For instance, a central element of FLEGT is Voluntary Partnership Agreements, which seeks to strengthen forest governance and enable legal timber trade between EU and tropical producing countries.

PEFC's system goes beyond the scope of governance and legality by providing a voluntary system with independent third-party certification that delivers SFM. While each initiative is slightly different in scope, there are many positive interactions between the initiatives. PEFC-endorsed national forest management standards incorporate the legality frameworks developed in connection with FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements thereby re-enforcing governmental processes. Forest certification also provides environmental and social safeguards and a monitoring and verification framework, which can support REDD+ implementation within forest areas. As forest certification is a voluntary process, it is designed to respond quickly to stakeholder demand and can often provide a useful solution when the timeline of governmental processes like FLEGT or REDD+ can be lengthy.





## What standards and procedures need to be developed?

When leading the development of your System, it is important to have an overview of what documents you will need to develop and incorporate. Forest certification is commonly misperceived as requiring only a forest management standard. However, the forest management standard is just one document within the critical documentation that includes:

- Standard setting procedures;
- Forest management standard(s);
- Group forest management certification requirements (optional);
- Chain of Custody standard;
- Certification and accreditation procedures;
- Administrative procedures:
  - Notification of Certification Bodies
  - Logo licence issuance
  - Handling of complaints and appeals;
- Logo usage rules.

In Phase 2, entitled Developing your System, you will find out how to develop the documentation.



## How much time and resources will it take to develop my national forest certification system?

The development of a System in line with PEFC's recommendations, and then achieving PEFC-endorsement, will take a different amount of time for each country. The time required depends on whether there are appropriate institutions already in place, motivated partners and stakeholders, and relevant standards or references already available.

In general, developing a System requires a few years. For those starting from the beginning, two to three years is a realistic time frame if consistent efforts are maintained and supported by stakeholders. Within this time frame, the PEFC endorsement process, which follows the completion of your System, requires an estimated seven to twelve months to complete.

### Costs associated with developing and maintaining a PEFC System are explained below.

- **Staff costs and organizational overheads** will vary depending on factors such as the division of roles between organizations and your national conditions.
- **Standard setting process costs** may include meetings costs, public consultations, pilot testing and potential consultant fees.
- **PEFC membership fee** becomes obligatory when you become a PEFC member and is payable annually. Membership is a prerequisite to submitting your System for PEFC endorsement. In Phase 3, you will find how your PEFC membership fee is calculated.
- **System assessment fee** is payable when you submit your System for PEFC endorsement. The assessment fee typically varies from € 15,000 to € 30,000.

How many staff members do you recommend?

**“ I would say minimum one full-time person whose salary could initially be shared by the supportive organizations and/or end-users who have an interest in certified forest products. Consider submitting a proposal to your government or other potential donors, ie EC/FAO/UN, to solicit additional sources of revenue to support the process. Make the link between your efforts to develop a national System thereby promoting SFM, to their priority topics such as REDD+, EUTR and/or FLEGT obligations, biodiversity conservation, Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, etc.”**



**Marten de Groot,**  
PEFC Netherlands

# What income sources can support my national forest certification system?

There are initial costs associated with developing your System and yet its income-generating capabilities may only become active once your System development is complete.

Within your national context, it is important to consider means to cover the development costs as well as forecast the long-term running costs of your System. With these elements in mind, you are better placed to make informed decisions, which will help to structure your organization and enable an adequate flow of resources.

## For your income sources, you may consider:

- **Financial contributions** from organizations wishing to support the process;
- **Membership payments**, if your organization is structured as a membership association and institutionalizes a fee structure;
- **In-kind contributions** from partner organizations, for example, office space, seconded staff, provision of meeting rooms;
- **Grants** from government agencies, foundations or private sector associations;
- A grant from **PEFC's Collaboration Fund** competition;
- **Income generation from notification fees** - forest management and Chain of Custody certification;
- **Revenue from training events** or other activities.

What do you advise regarding the time and resources needed?



**Based on the Argentine experience,** it was critical to develop a plan showing deadlines, responsibilities, a detailed budget and funding sources."

**Florencia Chavat,**  
Sistema Argentino de  
Certificación Forestal  
(CERFOAR)





## Where do I start?

In PEFC's view, local demand, interest and commitment are the starting point for developing your System. The process must be initiated by or have the support of the national forest owner(s) or their organizations in your country before your national forest management standards can be developed. This is to ensure that those who are ultimately responsible for implementing forest management requirements and pursuing certification are committed to, supportive of and involved in the national process. It is also to encourage all stakeholders to work together in developing your System rather than having multiple systems within your country.

Meaningful participation of stakeholders, balanced representation, achieving consensus, continuous improvement and transparency are fundamental principles that PEFC applies to the development of national-level certification standards.

## Diagram 2

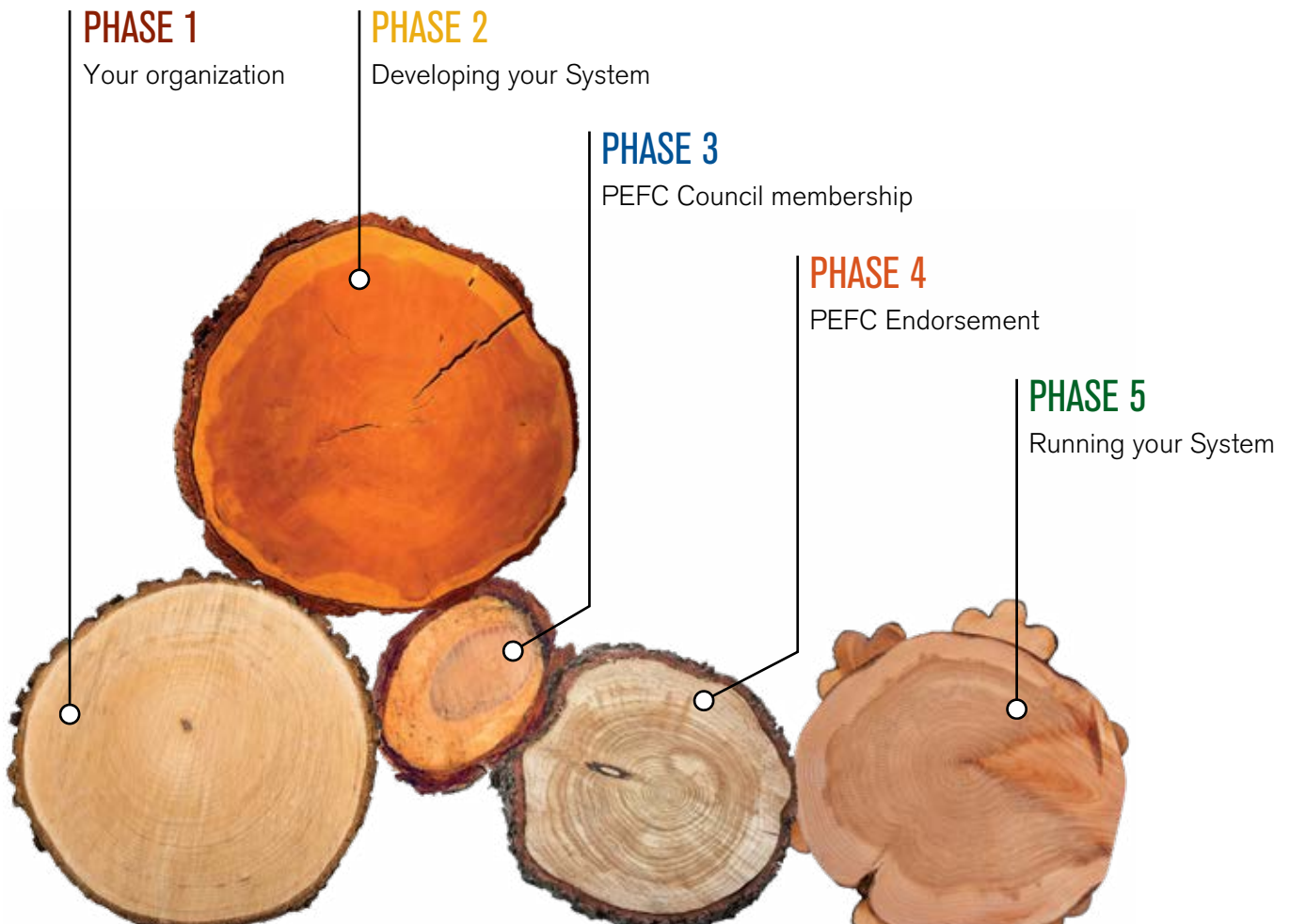
Diagram 2 outlines the different phases in developing a System and is further explained in the chapters of this toolkit. The ordering of the phases and their relative size reflects PEFC's perspective of a typical process and highlights the varying levels of time and effort required. However, flexibility exists and you may have justified reasons for proceeding in a different way. For example, you may find that a suitable organization is already in place, some elements of your System partially or fully developed, or you may choose to apply for your PEFC membership earlier to benefit sooner from our mentoring and the help of the existing members.

If at any stage you would appreciate help with developing your System, please contact us.

### PEFC International

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**Diagram 2:** Phases in developing a PEFC-endorsed national forest certification system



MTK

## In brief

When building the foundations of your System, it is important to consider all the options and how to maximize the potential for your country. This toolkit and PEFC will help you to make your unique decisions.

We will discuss how to choose the optimal institutional home for your System and how to consider the issues and benefits across a range of scenarios. To inform your decision-making, we explain the various roles that will need to be fulfilled and the organization(s) required.

## Key questions answered

- Who takes the lead?
- What roles need to be fulfilled?
- Which organization fulfills these roles?
- What about existing organizations in my country?
- What if I need to establish a new organization?
- What should I consider when naming my organization?

# PHASE 1

## YOUR ORGANIZATION

### Useful PEFC documents

Throughout this toolkit, you will find references to the PEFC standards and guidelines related to each phase of your System development. It is essential to reference these documents during your work as they contain the PEFC requirements, which should eventually be reflected in your System.

In addition, where other documents or publications provide relevant information, we have also listed them. The documents can be found on the accompanying USB memory card and most can also be found at [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org).

### References

#### STANDARD

- PEFC ST 2001, PEFC Logo Usage rules-requirements

#### GUIDELINES

- PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme
- PEFC GD 1002, Acceptance of PEFC members
- PEFC GD 1005, Issuance of PEFC Logo Use Licenses by the PEFC Council

#### SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- PEFC Council Statutes



## Who takes the lead?

When starting the process of standards development in your country, one of the first questions is who should take the lead. While the process will involve many stakeholders, it is helpful if a specific organization leads the process and/or becomes the institutional home for your System. Making sure the lead organization is appropriate will have lasting impacts on your System's legitimacy and acceptance within your country and internationally. The lead organization will eventually undertake the ongoing administration function for your System in the longer term, so it is important that they are suitable for these day-to-day functions.

PEFC's experience through endorsing Systems in over 35 countries shows that there is a wide variety of possible arrangements for fulfilling the various roles. In many cases, the organization identified or established to facilitate the standard setting process will also eventually be the one to apply for PEFC membership and act as the PEFC National Governing Body.

There are a number of elements that need to be considered when making these important decisions.

## What roles need to be fulfilled?

**Standard setting:** managing the process of standards development.

**Governance:** providing a credible structure for decision-making and an institutional home for your System.

**Administration:** implementing the day-to-day operational functions of managing your System.

**PEFC membership:** participating within the PEFC Council and representing PEFC in your country.



## Which organizations fulfill these roles?

The standardising body has recognized activities in standard setting and is responsible for managing the process of standards development. One important task is to establish a standard setting working group/committee of balanced stakeholders that will develop your forest management standard.

The National Governing Body will become the PEFC national member in your country and is responsible for the System governance and administration. This includes notifying Certification Bodies, registering certificates and logo usages, handling complaints, undertaking promotions, and/or training activities (see [PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme](#)). The National Governing Body also ensures that requirements for Certification Bodies and for accreditation are developed.

Keep in mind that the standardising body and the National Governing Body can be, and in many cases are, the same organization.

### Example scenarios

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**Scenario 1:** **Standardising body and National Governing Body are one organization**

**Opportunity:** The standardising body, as part of the National Governing Body, can have a clear commitment in seeking PEFC endorsement and implementing PEFC requirements. There is direct control over the schedule for standard setting and revision, without needing to liaise with an external standardising body.

**Challenge:** Need to ensure adequate expertise in the standard setting process.

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**Scenario 2:** **Standardising body and National Governing Body are separate organizations**

**Opportunity:** Utilizing an existing standardising body can enable you to harness their experience and institutional reputation.

**Challenge:** When the standardising body is separate from the National Governing Body, it can create added complexity in responding to changes in PEFC's requirements. It is important to have a clear written agreement, such as a memorandum of understanding, to ensure the standardising body is committed to seeking PEFC endorsement, implementing PEFC requirements, and cooperating with the National Governing Body.

## What about utilizing existing organizations in my country?

When making these initial decisions, remember that suitable organizations capable of fulfilling these roles may already exist. For example, do you have a national standardising body within your country? Perhaps they are interested in leading the standard setting process and offering their expertise to support your initiative. Deciding whether to utilize existing organizations or to establish new ones to fulfill these roles requires careful consideration as there are associated benefits and challenges with both.

### Consideration should be given to the following points if utilizing an existing organization:

#### ***New Organization:***

- Can be designed, structured and registered in the most suitable way to fulfill a core mandate focused on developing and administering your System.
- Requires an initial investment of time and money.

#### ***Existing Organization:***

- May require internal reforms or restructuring to meet PEFC requirements and to adopt a suitable governance structure and administration for approving and managing your standards and System.
- Can bring potential efficiency gains and cost-savings.
- Will need to be evaluated for its institutional reputation.

Consult with stakeholders and make the necessary arrangements, bearing in mind that this process can run in parallel with other developments.

## What if I need to establish a new organization?

For many, establishing a new organization to fulfill the roles of the standardising body and the National Governing Body, and the eventual role of the PEFC member, is the most efficient and practical way forward. Starting from the beginning ensures, for example, that the institution's registration, governing statutes and decision-making structure can all be designed to suit the core function and aspiration of developing and administering a System.

**What would you recommend when choosing an organization to take the lead?**

“

**Consider using an existing standards development body.**

*It worked for us. In Canada, we engaged the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) which has been developing standards since 1919.”*

**Paul Wooding,**  
PEFC Canada



“

**In Brazil/CERFLOR, the standard setting process was carried out at the national level by the Brazilian Association for Standardization (ABNT).**

*Besides the standardization basis given by the ABNT, an institution with great experience on carrying conformity assessment schemes (CASs) is fundamental. INMETRO took the lead in CERTFLOR scheme development, creating in addition a link with the Brazilian government.”*

**Cristiane S. Sampaio,**  
Brazilian Forest  
Certification Programme,  
(CERFLOR)



“

**The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) Inc is an independent North**

*American organization which manages the SFI standards development process. SFI Inc also serves as the National Governing Body representative for PEFC in the United States which administers and promotes PEFC.*

**Combining these functions has enabled us to be an integrated and responsive organization.** *We've been able to grow considerably over the years, with an increase of nearly 50 million hectares since 2006.”*

**Kathy Abusow,**  
Sustainable Forestry  
Initiative Inc.



“

**As far as possible, build on existing structures or organizations** and suit them to PEFC or create a new one from them.”

**Marta Salvador,**  
PEFC Spain



Whatever way you choose to configure your organization, if you intend to apply for PEFC endorsement, keep in mind PEFC's requirements (see [PEFC GD 1002, Acceptance of PEFC Members](#)).

**In PEFC's view, a National Governing Body has to:**

- a) Be a legal entity;
- b) Have its own statutes which do not conflict with the PEFC Council statutes;
- c) Include amongst its objectives the implementation of the PEFC System within its country;
- d) Have made a commitment to follow the PEFC Council rules and requirements;
- e) Have support of national forest owners or a national forestry organization;
- f) Provide participating interested parties with a fair, ongoing and appropriate possibility to influence the organization's decision making.

We recommend you choose the appropriate organizational structure to support your future goals. Being a "legal entity" requires that your National Governing Body be formally registered within your country. For example, an ad hoc committee or working group would not be eligible. We do not prescribe the type of entity your organization should be registered as. Our membership includes National Governing Bodies registered as: non-profit, for-profit, company limited by guarantee, membership association, and national institute or agency. You must select an entity conducive to fulfilling PEFC's requirements and subsequent National Governing Body functions.

## What should I consider when naming my organization?

Many organizations that were involved during the early establishment of PEFC have registered their organization as "PEFC [Country Name]". However, more recent additions or organizations with more independent Systems or brands usually omit "PEFC™", as this offers them more autonomy and independence.

PEFC currently recommends formally registering your organization without using the PEFC Trademark in your organization name. Rather, we suggest mentioning your intentions to be affiliated and recognized by PEFC within your organization's statutes. Eventually, once PEFC recognition of your System has been achieved, you may find stakeholders utilize the "PEFC [Country Name]" format for your organization on a more informal basis.

**Using “PEFC” in your name has certain implications. Here are some considerations for when naming your organization:**

- Using “PEFC” in your name may limit your organization’s ability to function or communicate prior to official PEFC membership or endorsement (see [PEFC ST 2001, PEFC Logo Usage Rules – Requirements](#) and [PEFC GD 1005, Issuance of PEFC Logo Use Licenses by the PEFC Council](#));
- Using an independent organization name may provide more flexibility for your organization if you wish to implement your System prior to, or outside of, PEFC System recognition;
- Using “PEFC” within your organization’s title informally can help to leverage PEFC’s reputation to establish recognition of your System.

**Table 1**

**Examples of PEFC National Governing Bodies**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Australia</b>	Responsible Wood
<b>Brazil</b>	Brazilian Forest Certification Programme (CERFLOR)
<b>Canada</b>	PEFC Canada
<b>Chile</b>	Chile Forest Certification Corporation (CERTFOR)
<b>China</b>	China Forest Certification Council
<b>Indonesia</b>	Indonesian Forestry Certification Cooperation (IFCC)
<b>Malaysia</b>	Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC)
<b>Norway</b>	PEFC Norway
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	PEFC Slovakia
<b>Slovenia</b>	Institute for Forest Certification
<b>Spain</b>	PEFC Spain
<b>Uruguay</b>	Sociedad de Productores Forestales del Uruguay
<b>USA</b>	Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. (SFI)



PEFC Spain

## In brief

In line with the idea of “Think Global, Act Local”, PEFC requires Systems to be developed at a national level and in compliance with PEFC’s international requirements. This bottom-up approach enables your forest management standard to be adapted to your local conditions, consistent with your national laws and regulations, and to meet the expectations of your stakeholders on the ground.

For PEFC, how you develop your forest management standard is equally important as its final content. PEFC sets out requirements for the national standard setting procedures and process, as well as performance and management requirements to be addressed within your national forest management standards.

This section re-introduces the main components of a System and guides you through developing the necessary documentation.

## Key questions answered

- What documents do I need to prepare for my System?
- How do I develop the different standards and procedures?
- How do I ensure all relevant stakeholders participate?
- What is balanced representation and how do I achieve it?
- What is a group forest certification model and do I require it within my System?

# PHASE 2

## DEVELOPING YOUR SYSTEM

### References

#### STANDARDS

- PEFC ST 1001, Standard Setting – Requirements
- PEFC ST 1003, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements
- PEFC ST 2002, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements
- Annex 6 - Certification and Accreditation Procedures
- PEFC ST 2003, Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard
- PEFC ST 1002, Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements
- PEFC ST 2001, PEFC Logo Usage Rules – Requirements

#### GUIDELINES

- PEFC GD 1007, Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their revision
- PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme
- PEFC GD 1005, Issuance of PEFC Logo Use Licenses by the PEFC Council
- PEFC GD 1006, PEFC Notification of Certification Bodies by the PEFC Council

#### SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- PEFC GL7, PEFC Council Procedures for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals
- ISO Documentation, available for purchase at [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

#### AVAILABLE TEMPLATES

- Procedures for Notification of Certification Bodies for Chain of Custody and Forest Management Certification
- Procedures for Issuance of PEFC Logo Use Licenses





## Getting started

This section focuses on creating your System and producing all the necessary documents.

The documents are divided into three categories, as shown in Table 2, based on their primary function:

- 1) Certification standards,**
- 2) Implementation procedures;** and
- 3) Administrative procedures.**

The guide [PEFC GD 1007, Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their revision](#) provides an additional overview of PEFC's requirements and is a useful reference throughout the development process.



**Table 2****Required documentation with your PEFC-endorsed System**

Document to be prepared for your System	Description	PEFC reference documents
<b>1) Certification standards</b>		
Standard setting procedures	Rules for the process of setting national SFM standards, which ensure the meaningful participation of stakeholders.	PEFC ST 1001, Standard Setting – Requirements
Forest management standard(s)	Requirements for individual forest owners to demonstrate sustainable management of their forests.	PEFC ST 1003, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements
Chain of Custody standard	Requirements for forest product processing companies to identify, track and sell products from PEFC-certified forests.	PEFC ST 2002, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements
PEFC Logo Usage Rules	Requirements for correct usage of the PEFC logo and labels.	PEFC ST 2001, PEFC Logo Usage Rules
<b>2) Implementation procedures</b>		
Certification and accreditation procedures	Requirements for Certification Bodies to operate PEFC certification for example auditor competence and accreditation requirements.	Annex 6 - Certification and Accreditation procedures  PEFC ST 2003, Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard
Group forest management certification procedures	Rules for the functioning of group forest management certification.	PEFC ST 1002, Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements
<b>3) Administrative procedures</b>		
Notification procedures	Procedure and contract for notification of Certification Bodies.	PEFC GD 1004 PEFC GD 1005
Logo license issuing procedures	Procedure and contract for the issuance of PEFC Logo Use Licenses.	PEFC GD 1004 PEFC GD 1006
Complaints and appeals procedures	Procedure for the impartial handling of complaints and appeals relating to your National Governing Body.	PEFC GD 1004 PEFC GL7



## Support with developing your System

For organizations actively pursuing System development, there are a number of ways to access further support and guidance including:

- Correspondence with PEFC;
- Talking with other PEFC members to share experiences and ideas. Feel free to contact the members directly or to get in touch with PEFC to facilitate discussion. Some of our members support new organizations through bilateral “twinning” support on an ad hoc basis;
- PEFC maintains a register of consultants with in-depth knowledge of forest certification. These consultants are able to provide technical input to support your process on a short-term basis or as an advisor through the complete process;
- The PEFC Collaboration Fund, a small grants program, is a potential source of funding and technical cooperation. There is an annual call for proposals which is advertised on the PEFC website;
- Reference the various training material and templates that PEFC has made available to facilitate the development of your System documentation.

# PART 1 - Certification standards

As a first step in developing your certification standards, you will have to develop standard setting procedures. Comprehensive and realistic procedures ensure a clear way forward.

Your standard setting procedures will include processes for developing your forest management standard(s), and in the event that you choose not to adopt the international PEFC Chain of Custody standard, they will also include processes for developing your own Chain of Custody standard. If you intend to apply for PEFC endorsement, your national forest management standard(s) must be developed in compliance with PEFC's standard setting requirements. This is different for the implementation and administrative procedures, which may be developed by the standardising body and/or the National Governing Body directly without a full, participatory standard setting process.

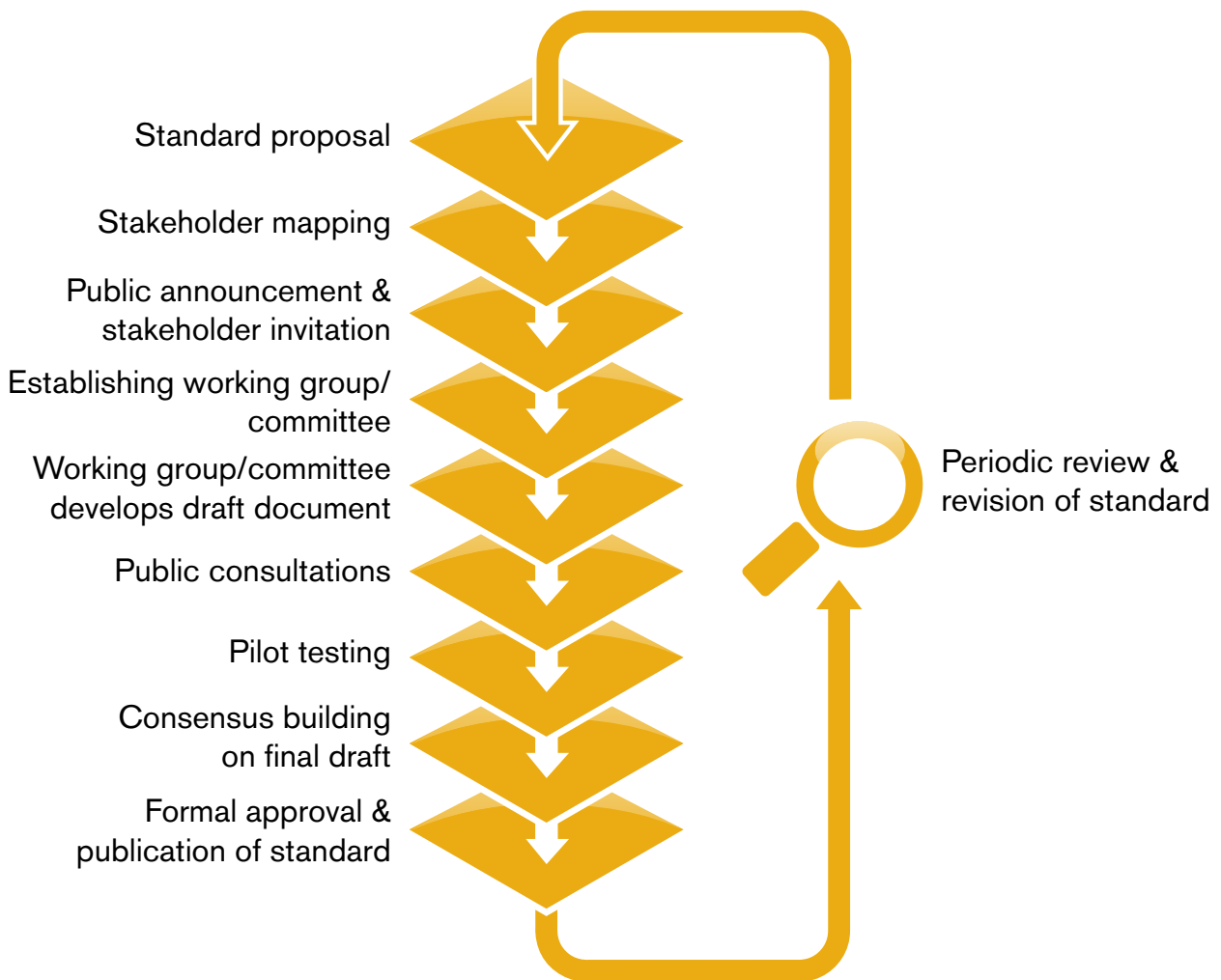
**In PEFC's view, standard setting procedures shall describe the following:**

- **The standardising body status and structure;**
- **The standard setting process** – outlines activities, timeline, roles and responsibilities, and how each PEFC requirement will be met within your national context;
- **Procedures for record-keeping** – describes your chosen approach, which will also need to be compliant with PEFC criteria. Your records must be kept for a minimum of five years, made available on request, and they will be submitted as part of your eventual application for PEFC endorsement;
- **Procedures for ensuring the balanced representation of stakeholders** – approach for mapping and inviting all interested parties and allowing them to participate in the decision making in a balanced way;
- **The mechanism for reaching consensus** – outlines the bodies responsible and the process for consensus building;
- **Handling complaints and appeals** – explains requirements for naming a point of contact for enquiries and complaints, as well as how complaints are to be acknowledged, evaluated, addressed and formally communicated (see also [PEFC GD 1004](#));
- **Procedures for the periodic review and revision of the standard** – outlines the process of reviewing the standard, ensuring continuous improvement of your standard over time.

# Standard setting process

**Diagram 3**

**PEFC standard setting process**



# Standard setting process – frequently asked questions

The document, [PEFC ST 1001, Standard Setting – Requirements](#), provides considerable detail on how to undertake the standard setting process in line with PEFC requirements. For additional guidance to help you to meet the requirements, the following frequently asked questions are addressed:

## 1. What is a standard proposal for?

The starting point of any development (or revision) of a national standard is a standard proposal. It is not a first draft of the national standard, but a document that explains the rationale of developing your standard. You need to specify the scope of the standard, why it is needed, and what the intended outcomes of the standard are. The standard proposal also needs to include an analysis of any negative impacts that the standard could have. Last, it must include the planned steps and timetable of the standard-setting process. All in all, this document provides a great overview to anyone interested in your process. Therefore you must incorporate it in your public announcement and invitation to stakeholders.

## 2. What is stakeholder mapping and how do I do it?

A stakeholder mapping exercise is a means of identifying interested persons for your national standard setting process. It requires that thorough consideration be given to identifying potential interest groups, their representatives and deciding what means of communication is best suited to actively encourage their engagement.

We require that stakeholders are categorized according to the nine major groups outlined in the UN Agenda 21:

- Business and industry;
- Non-governmental organizations;
- Scientific and technological communities;
- Farmers and small forest landowners;
- Workers and trade unions;
- Local authorities;
- Indigenous people;
- Women;
- Children and youth.

From the interest groups, you should identify organizations and persons that represent these interests in your country. These are the stakeholders. They need to be informed about the process and invited to participate either directly or by representation. To achieve diverse representation across stakeholder groups throughout the process, you should set specific targets for stakeholders you want to involve and consider where extra effort would be required to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the process and can participate.

**“** *This is important to get right in the early stages. Spend time developing a stakeholder map, as it provides a critical foundation to what follows and cannot be done retrospectively. Keep records of organizations that you have contacted and received comments from during initial engagement and subsequent public consultations.* **”**



**Alun  
Watkins,**  
PEFC UK

### 3. How can I encourage participation in the standard setting working group/committee?

The standard setting working group/committee will build consensus on your forest management standard, and as such, relies on the involvement of active and committed individuals from different interest groups. In some cases, it may be challenging to encourage individuals to invest their time in the process. Consider following up your invitation with a meeting to discuss the process and the importance of their involvement. Usually through such personal contact, people are more inclined to engage and eventually feel ownership in the process.

**“ The long-term strength of your PEFC System is your working group.**

*Although in the short-term getting everyone involved may delay the development of your System, in the long-term, the participants will bring value. The more parties involved in the process, the more rich the outcome and the stronger the support and shared ownership for the System. Present your national organization clearly and circulate invitations to regular meetings.”*

**Ana Belen Noriega,**  
PEFC Spain



**“ The participatory process required for the development of certification standards is to ensure that the inputs and views from all the relevant and interested parties are considered.**

*To enable participation in such consultations, MTCC has been providing financial assistance to some of the smaller NGOs. Every effort is taken to ensure that the standard setting process is balanced in representation, transparent and participatory in approach.”*

**Yong Teng Koon,**  
Malaysian Timber  
Certification Council



**“ It is essential to involve stakeholders** across the whole value chain of forest products and all interest groups in the discussion on sustainability in PEFC certified forests. Participation in the working group is about sharing and learning. It offers an opportunity to share one's views and to have impact on the outcome of the process, which defines the management of PEFC certified forests in Finland.”



**Auvo Kaivola,**  
PEFC Finland

#### 4. What is balanced representation?

Balanced representation does not only mean that you have a lot of different interest around the table. It also means that the different interests receive balanced emphasis. No interest group may dominate the process.

It is important to reach out to as many stakeholders and interest groups as possible to engage them in the process. Once the process is ongoing, it is important to put due consideration into how to ensure a balanced process and decision-making structure.

A typical example of unbalanced representation is a working group consisting of four different interest groups, where three groups have only one representative and the fourth group has four. These four people could, by their sheer number, dominate the process and overrule the others. This can be avoided by ensuring that the number of representatives is equally distributed across the interest groups. Another solution is setting up a voting system where interest groups have an equal vote, regardless of the number of representatives.

This includes your considerations for gender balance across the working group. For example, when deciding between different nominees, you might choose a female representative if this could improve gender balance.



**Honest and open dialogue with potential stakeholders is important.**

*Be careful to listen to everyone's concerns. Find a leader who is respected by all stakeholders, as they will help to build trust and active participation across diverse stakeholders."*



**Tanja Olsen,**  
PEFC Denmark



**The standard setting process is based on a balanced representation of all stakeholders.** PEFC stands for

*involving all stakeholders who are related to sustainable forest management. For this open-minded approach, we must guarantee that all these stakeholders have the same strength of voice to avoid overruling of underrepresented interests. Even this equal treatment of small and big interest groups is one of the aspects that make PEFC unique all over the world."*



**Gerhard Pichler,**  
PEFC Austria

## 5. How to get consensus?

The standardising body needs to have procedures for consensus building, which is important to the standard setting and any subsequent revision processes. Consensus building is a group activity that forms agreement considering the views of all the stakeholders and may utilize a range of approaches, including:

- At a face-to-face meeting, you may have a verbal yes/no vote, a show of hands; a formal balloting process; a secret ballot; or a statement from the Chair accompanied/unaccompanied by dissenting voices or hands;
- Within an email conversation, you may request for agreement or objection by a written response (proxy vote);
- At a telephone conference, you may have a verbal yes/no vote; or
- Combinations of the above or other suitable means.

## 6. What to take as a basis for a first draft?

The starting point for the standard setting working group/committee varies between countries; whether building on existing work, a draft document specifically prepared for the group, or starting from a blank piece of paper. You may choose to reference the national forest management standard of a neighboring or similar country who has already undertaken the process. The standard setting working group/committee must find a way to develop and agree on the content of your forest management standard working draft. An important reference during this process will be **PEFC ST 1003, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements**, as each of the requirements there must be addressed within your national forest management standard.

Once consensus has been reached on your forest management standard, it becomes an enquiry draft that is circulated for public consultation.



**“Consensus” is an easy word to say, but the way to achieve it isn’t easy.**

*The SFM standard connects various stakeholders, and is able to affect them. Therefore “consensus” is very important for all related stakeholders to come together and let them share, and let them argue, so that there will be mutual agreement on the result.”*

**Rungnapa Wattanavichian,**  
Thailand Forest Certification Council



**For Chile, the first step was to study the standards of countries with a similar forest structure** for identification of relevant aspects that were consistent with our national circumstances. It was essential to consider characteristics of our local forestry sector together with the international market requirements for forest products.”

**Andre Laroze,**  
Chile Forest Certification Corporation (CERTFOR)





What would you recommend when beginning the standard setting process?

“

**Make contact with other PEFC members** who share basic common interests such as: region, similar forest types, social, cultural and economic characteristics and/or a common language. Having their guidance and learning from their experiences was key to the CERFOAR development.”

**Florencia Chavat,**  
Sistema Argentino de  
Certificación Forestal  
(CERFOAR)



“

**Very early on in the standard setting process, start contacting stakeholders and actively building their interest and involvement in the process.** Their participation is not only required during the development phase but also once the System is ready for implementation, so build strong channels of communication and opportunities for active engagement.”

**Marten de Groot,**  
PEFC Netherlands



“

**In order to streamline the Irish process, the standard setting working group appointed from among its own members a "Technical Working Group" (TWG) which met more frequently to accelerate the drafting process. At every stage, the work of the TWG was disseminated to the whole working group for comments, and elaborated on further at each working group meeting. In addition to the Chairperson, the National Secretary of PEFC Ireland acted as secretary to the working group and the TWG; and a professional consultant forester with expertise in certification was engaged as a technical consultant and attended all meetings. On occasion, observers with prior experience in certification were invited to attend the working group and TWG meetings to help to offer advice.**”



**William Merivale,**  
PEFC Ireland

What should be considered in developing the forest management standard content?

“

**The PEFC bottom-up approach allows some flexibility in the creation of the SFM standard** because it follows international benchmarks while being specifically developed for the country. Thanks to this local adaptation, foresters are able to implement them more efficiently.”

**Rose Ondo,**  
PAFC Gabon



“

**The forest management standard needs to respect local forest conditions** but must also reflect the broader global definition of SFM that has been described in numerous international forums on the criteria for SFM and is reflected in PEFC Council requirements.”

**Paul Wooding,**  
PEFC Canada



## Standard setting process – Chain of Custody

For the development of the Chain of Custody standard, we strongly recommend that you formally adopt PEFC's Chain of Custody standard (see [PEFC ST 2002, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements](#)) within your System, as this can bring many advantages. Adopting PEFC's robust, internationally recognized standard will save your organization time, as you will not need to undertake the standard setting process, and it will limit your expenses, as your Chain of Custody standard will not need to be assessed during the endorsement process. Moreover, adoption will enable you to benefit from established international markets, which already recognize PEFC's standard, logo and claims. It also supports the mutual recognition of PEFC certified fiber from around the world and ensures system compatibility for companies operating and trading internationally.

If you adopt the PEFC's Chain of Custody standard, this must be recorded in your minutes, a statement must be made on the adopted document itself, and the official document name must be amended to fit your System's document structure. If you rather decide to develop a national Chain of Custody standard, PEFC's standard setting requirements outlined and described above need to be followed.

## Standard setting process – PEFC Logo Usage Rules

As certificate holders in your country will use the PEFC logo and labels, you will also need to formally adopt the PEFC Logo Usage Rules ([PEFC ST 2001](#)) as part of the certification standards in your System.

The PEFC Council holds two trademarks, the PEFC logo and the initials "PEFC". Both are copyrighted material and registered trademarks owned by the PEFC Council. The use of the PEFC trademarks is regulated and governed by the PEFC Council. PEFC National Governing Bodies manage the PEFC trademarks usage in their country on the PEFC Council's behalf.

As globally trusted registered trademarks, our trademarks assist businesses, consumers, forest owners and managers, and other stakeholders, to identify and promote merchandise and goods from sustainably managed forests. They indicate that forest-derived products originate from a PEFC-certified forest.

PEFC and its members must protect their trademark and ensure that their eco-labels are used accurately and verifiably, and that any claims associated with them are relevant and not misleading. Correct usage of the logo on products and associated documentation, and in any communication, is essential for protecting PEFC's credibility. That's why the [PEFC ST 2001, PEFC Logo Usage Rules – Requirements](#) must be adopted as part of your System documentation.

## PART 2 - Implementation procedures

The implementation procedures regulate the correct implementation and functioning of the certification process. In a PEFC System, this comes down to two types of documents:

1. Certification and accreditation procedures;
2. Group forest management certification requirements (if group certification is to become available in your country).

### Certification and accreditation procedures

Although the tasks of certification and accreditation are undertaken by the respective bodies, you have a key role to play in preparing for their involvement. Early communication is critical. Get in touch with Certification Bodies operating in your country and let them know about the process that is underway. Likewise, identify the Accreditation Body operating in your country and start building a relationship with them. Eventually you will need them to develop an accreditation program for your forest management standard. It is important to get them on board early and invested in the process.

Within PEFC's certification system, national Accreditation Bodies must be members of the IAF or of one of the IAF regional accreditation groups. You can determine if there is an Accreditation Body functioning in your country by referencing the IAF website ([www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF\\_Members\\_\\_Signatories/4](http://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_Members__Signatories/4)) or by conducting research domestically.

If an Accreditation Body does not exist in your country, you may consider working with appropriate agencies to stimulate the development of an Accreditation Body. An alternative option, if your country lacks an Accreditation Body or if the existing one is not interested in developing a program for your System, is to identify a suitable foreign Accreditation Body that would be willing to engage in international cooperation to support your needs. A suitable Accreditation Body may, for instance, share the same working language as your country or be in close geographic proximity. You will need to approach them and discuss the idea to determine if they are interested in fulfilling such a function temporarily or on a long-term basis.

**What should you consider when preparing Certification and Accreditation Bodies?**

**“ Start early contact with the accreditation and the Certification Bodies and tell them about the SFM standard development. Inform them of similar experiences in other countries to demonstrate the need and opportunity to develop accreditation for forest management and Chain of Custody certification. Involve the main Certification Bodies of your country in the development of the standard to contribute their knowledge in auditing techniques and to participate in the pilot application.”**



**Marta Salvador,**  
PEFC Spain



**Be patient.** This process can be time-consuming in terms of communication and administration.”



**Hubert Palus,**  
PEFC Slovakia

## Drafting certification and accreditation procedures

Certification procedures define the competence of the Certification Bodies and auditors, as well as how Certification Bodies conduct forest management and Chain of Custody audits. The accreditation process in turn ensures that Certification Bodies comply with certification procedures. In this way, only competent Certification Bodies and auditors, with appropriate experience and working according to ISO and IAF procedures, perform PEFC certification.

### Defining the competence of the Certification Bodies, auditors and Accreditation Bodies

PEFC's requirements for Certification Bodies, auditors and the certification process rely on international certification and accreditation procedures as defined by ISO, IAF, and in some cases, regional accreditation groups. Your System must require that Accreditation Bodies work according to the ISO 17011 and belong to the International IAF, to ensure that accreditation is conducted by competent Accreditation Bodies.

When drafting the procedures, we advise you to integrate PEFC's own text where the PEFC obligatory requirements must be followed. For forest management certification, refer to [Annex 6 - Certification and Accreditation Procedures](#) as the starting point from which additional national requirements and interpretations can be elaborated.

For Chain of Custody certification, PEFC's certification requirements for Certification Bodies are presented in [PEFC ST 2003, Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard](#). If your system utilizes PEFC's Chain of Custody standard, then additional system specific certification requirements cannot be defined at national level. If you need to develop your own certification procedures for Chain of Custody certification, these procedures must at minimum match the content of PEFC ST 2003.

For your awareness, please find below a summary of the type of requirements covered in these documents.

### Certification Body and auditor competence

A Certification Body carrying out PEFC certification shall prove competence by:

- Fulfilling the requirements defined in:
  - ISO/IEC 17021 (recommended) or ISO 17065 for forest management certification;
  - ISO/IEC 17065 for Chain of Custody certification;
  - [PEFC ST 2003, Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard](#) for Chain of Custody certification;
  - Other requirements for Certification Bodies and auditors defined by your national Accreditation Body as well as your System;

- Having the technical competence in forest management, on its economic, social and environmental impacts, and on the forest certification criteria and/or the technical competence in forest-based product procurement and processing, material flows in different stages of processing and trading;
- Having a good understanding of the PEFC System and standards against which it carries certification;
- Selecting auditors that have adequate technical know-how on the certification process and issues related to forest management or Chain of Custody certification respectively;
- Providing technical expert(s) in a group of auditors;
- Proving compliance of Certification Bodies and auditor competency of these requirements through verification by accreditation.

## Defining how Certification Bodies are to conduct forest management audits and Chain of Custody audits

The Certification Body will require procedures for forest management certification and for Chain of Custody certification. Their procedures must meet the requirements set out in your System and by PEFC, and will be verified through the accreditation process.

In summary, the Certification Body procedures should include:

- Internal procedures for certification;
- An agreed procedure for a Certification Body informing the National Governing Body or PEFC of certificates issued and changes in validity or scope;
- Provisions for multi-site certification;
- Controls for PEFC logo usage;
- Annual surveillance audits and full assessment audits at least once every five years;
- Publicly available certification report summaries for forest management;
- Use of information from external parties as part of audit evidence for forest management;
- Auditor competence requirements.

## Group forest management certification procedures

In many countries, forest ownership is fragmented with many small-, family- and community-owned forests. For these forest owners, group certification is an alternative approach to individual certification, allowing several forest owners to become certified as a group and share the financial costs, as well as the administrative and organizational responsibilities. It is this sharing that enables these smaller forest owners to obtain certification and access to global markets, especially those markets requiring both wood and non-wood forest products from certified sources.

Without group certification, small forest holdings would be faced with significant barriers to certification, including:

- High transaction costs;
- Extra administrative and management burdens;
- Lack of geographic cohesion and cooperation towards meeting forest management objectives.

Within group certification, a group entity represents the individual forest owners, with overall responsibility for ensuring conformity with the forest management standard in the certified area. Individual forest owners who voluntarily join the group are required to comply with all the requirements, cooperate and assist in the forest certification implementation, and are obliged to carry out relevant corrective and preventive actions established by the group entity.

If you choose to include group forest management certification in your System, it is important to consider the requirements set out in the PEFC group forest management certification document ([PEFC ST 1002, Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements](#)), which must be reflected in your own System documentation. Your group forest management certification procedures will need to describe the way that group certification is organized, set requirements for the group entity and its responsibilities, and those of its members. In order to become PEFC-certified, the group entity must comply with your set requirements. The group members will be assessed against your forest management standard, just like individually certified forest owners. Non-compliance against forest certification requirements by a single group member will risk losing the entire group's certification.





PEFC International



*Given the rainbow nation's extreme socio-economic diversity, we believe it is essential that access to certification is fair across all scales of forestry. Using group certification under PEFC, we anticipate improving the rigour and efficiency of certification in South Africa while allowing unprecedented access for smallholders."*



**Steve Germishuizen,**  
South African Forestry  
Assurance Scheme

## PART 3 - Administration procedures

Successful administration of your System requires consistent, efficient and professional processes. To govern the critical functions of ongoing system administration, you need to adopt procedures for issuing Certification Body notification, logo usage licenses, and complaints and appeals handling. By this point, your organization will also have to have a fee structure in place to clearly communicate to various constituents the costs of notification and/or certification.

To ensure the harmonized implementation of PEFC internationally, PEFC's guideline ([PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme](#)) outlines requirements for these procedures. PEFC GD 1004 also includes a draft version of the administration contract. You will find more details on the opportunities and responsibilities of administering a PEFC-recognized system in Phase 5 - Running your System. The emphasis below is rather on providing guidance for the development of the necessary procedures.

### Notification of Certification Bodies

Notification establishes the necessary link between your National Governing Body and a Certification Body, and allows Certification Bodies to issue recognized certificates. A template entitled [Procedures for Notification of Certification Bodies for Chain of Custody and Forest Management Certification \(PEFC GD 1006\)](#) is available and includes a sample notification contract, an application form for PEFC Notification and other supporting documentation.

Notification of Certification Bodies must be granted through the signature of a notification contract. The notification contract requires the Certification Body to:

- Meet the PEFC Council and the PEFC endorsed system requirements, such as keeping a valid accreditation;
- Agree to be listed on the publicly available PEFC Information and Registration System, including the Certification Body's identification data;
- Inform the National Governing Body about newly issued certificates, changes on issued certificates, and the suspension, termination and withdrawal of certificates;
- Inform certified entities about what information will be shared with PEFC, and that this information will be made publicly available (except turnover);
- Pay a notification fee for every issued certificate, if applicable (see page 42).

In addition, the notification contract also:

- Defines the scope of the notification (certification standard, country, etc.);
- Establishes conditions for termination of the contract;
- Cannot include any discriminatory measures.

## Logo usage licensing

Before using the PEFC logo and labels, all entities, both certificate holders (including PEFC members) and non-certificate holders, are required to obtain a logo usage license from the PEFC Council or their National Governing Body.

As the licensing body, your National Governing Body will need to have written procedures for the PEFC logo licensing (see [PEFC GD 1004](#)) which ensure that:

- The PEFC logo usage license is based on a written contract between your National Governing Body and the PEFC logo user;
- The logo users comply with the PEFC logo usage rules;
- The contract clearly defines the scope of the logo usage, for example, the logo usage groups;
- The PEFC logo usage license can be terminated by your National Governing Body in the case of the PEFC logo user's non-adherence to the conditions of the PEFC logo usage rules or in the case of cancellation of the contract between the PEFC Council and your National Governing Body;
- Where unauthorized use has taken place, the contract provides for a penalty of one fifth of the market value of the products to which the unauthorized logo use relates, unless the PEFC logo user proves that such unauthorized use was unintentional. In the latter case, the penalty will be limited to CHF 15,000.
- In addition, your National Governing Body will need to have a mechanism for the investigation and enforcement of compliance with PEFC logo usage rules and take action, including legal action if necessary, to protect the PEFC trademarks.

A template for [Procedures for Issuance of PEFC Logo Use Licenses](#) is available, including a template for the logo license contract. The PEFC Council administrative procedure for the issuance of logo usage licenses is defined on [PEFC GD 1005](#).

**What advice do you have for the System administration?**

**“** *You need a technically skilled and practical person because administration covers a lot of different issues.”*



**Hubert Palus,**  
PEFC Slovakia

**“** *This function requires people who understand the forest, wood and paper products businesses who use the System.”*



**Simon Dorries,**  
Responsible Wood

## Fee structure

At the same time as developing your notification procedures or earlier, you will need to establish your organization's fee structure and rates for Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification. As the revenue from certification fees will likely become a primary revenue source for your organization, it is important to place due consideration in establishing competitive market rates that will support your organization's functions in the long-term. The notification fees are defined as part of the notification contracts. For more information, see [PEFC GD 1006](#).

You may wish to use various models to forecast system growth based on your country's forest resource and industry size, to understand your revenue potential across different rates. The fees of other PEFC systems, PEFC Council and other forest certification programs are usually available publicly and may provide guidance.

It should be noted that as part of the membership fee, PEFC members are charged an annual fee for every hectare of certified forest and Chain of Custody certificate. This expenditure should be taken into consideration when establishing your own fee structure. For a more detailed description of membership fees, refer to Phase 3 – PEFC Council membership and Table 3 for the development fee rates applicable in 2018.

## Complaints and appeals

As with any program or activity, there may be issues of non-conformity or non-compliance from time to time. To encourage additional feedback and system integrity beyond the process of checking whether certification requirements are met, a complaints and appeals process enables stakeholders to submit information or a complaint on your System. Establishing a procedure to consider and investigate complaints ensures transparency for stakeholders and supports your organization in handling the complaint in a professional manner.

For ease of effectiveness, complaints or appeals concerning PEFC national members should be dealt with at national level. To this end, [PEFC GD 1004](#) requires National Governing Bodies to have their own complaints and appeals procedures that provide for:

- a) Acknowledgement of the complaint to the complainant;
- b) Gathering and verification of all necessary information, validation and impartial evaluation of the complaint, and decision making on the complaint;
- c) Formal communication of the decision on the complaint and the complaint handling process to the complainant and concerned parties;
- d) Appropriate corrective and preventive actions.

Complaints against PEFC national members, if upheld, can have serious consequences, including the suspension or termination of PEFC endorsement.



PEFC International

## Key questions answered

- What is the PEFC Council?
- What are the benefits of becoming a PEFC national member?
- When should I join?
- Who are the PEFC national members?
- How much does it cost?
- What are the requirements for becoming a PEFC national member?
- What is the application process?

# PHASE 3

## PEFC COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

### References

#### GUIDELINES

- PEFC GD 1002, Acceptance of PEFC Members

#### SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- PEFC Council Statutes
- PEFC Strategy 2018–2022

### *In brief*

The National Governing Body members form an essential component of the PEFC Council. This section focuses on PEFC Council membership requirements and explains the application process.



## What is the PEFC Council?

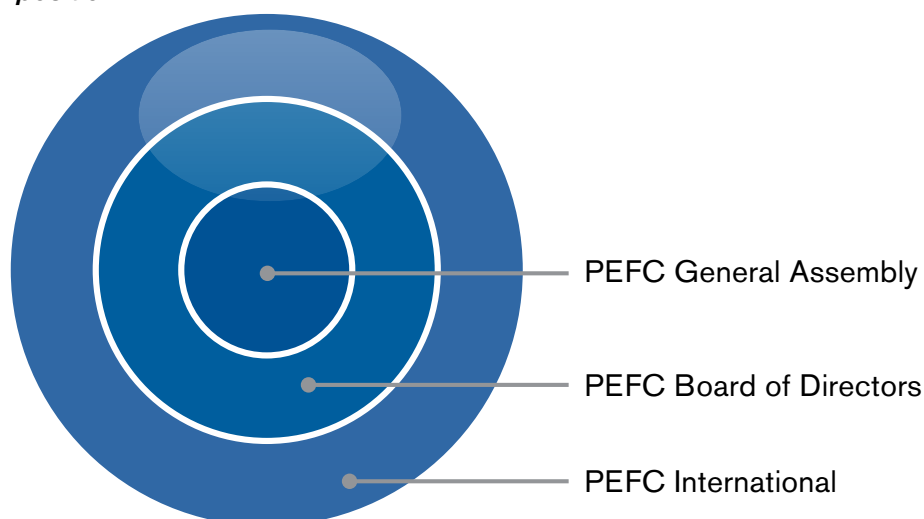
PEFC is an international membership association representing a wide range of stakeholder interests. Its membership is comprised of:

- National Governing Bodies: known within the PEFC Council as the national members;
- International stakeholder members: NGOs, businesses and associations operating in two or more countries and committed to supporting PEFC's principles;
- Extraordinary members: a membership category currently being phased out, but which originally included international associations granted with observer status, prior to the creation of the international stakeholder membership category.

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### Diagram 4

#### PEFC Council composition



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PEFC members form the **PEFC General Assembly**, the highest authority of PEFC. It includes both national members and international stakeholder members with voting rights, and extraordinary members as observers.

The **PEFC Board of Directors** supports the work of the PEFC General Assembly and is accountable to the members. The Board of Directors members are elected by the PEFC General Assembly and are chosen to ensure a balance between the major stakeholder groups, professional expertise, the geographical distribution of members and gender.

The **PEFC Secretariat** at the PEFC International office is led by the Secretary General and supported by a small team. They work to support the decisions of the PEFC General Assembly and the PEFC Board of Directors and implement PEFC's strategy.



# What are the benefits of becoming a PEFC national member?

PEFC membership is a pre-requisite for applying for PEFC endorsement for your System. However, there are many other benefits to becoming a PEFC member:

- Being able to vote in the PEFC General Assembly, thereby influencing the strategic direction of the organization;
- Accessing and collaborating with an alliance of global leaders and experts on SFM, and representatives of other countries' Systems from all over the world;
- Obtaining the rights from PEFC Council to administer PEFC Chain of Custody certification in your country with income-generating potential;
- Ongoing access to support, training and advice from PEFC;
- Participating in PEFC Council annual meetings and events to share experiences and learn together with other members.
- Using the PEFC trademarks. Once you become a member, you can use the PEFC logo for promotional, communication and educational purposes.

## When should I join?

The moment when National Governing Bodies apply for membership varies. Some apply early in their System development to harness the opportunities for support and mentoring, whilst others apply just prior to their application for endorsement.

**When do you recommend becoming a PEFC member?**



**As early as possible.** *It's good to be in the "family" to get support and advice from other national Systems. It is easier to go through the development process if you have a better knowledge of the other PEFC Systems."*



**Tanja Olsen,**  
PEFC Denmark

What is the value of PEFC membership to your organization?



**Being under the PEFC umbrella has assisted us in gaining acceptance in various public procurement policies for example the CPET and TPAC. Our scheme does not include a Chain of Custody standard, so we make use of the PEFC Chain of Custody standard and logo.**



**Paul Wooding,**  
PEFC Canada

**Kathy Abusow,**  
Sustainable Forestry  
Initiative Inc.



**“PEFC endorsement adds international value to SFI Inc.’s position as a highly respected, third-party certification program with certified lands across North America.”**

**“Joining PEFC, affirmed the credibility of CERFOAR’s objectives, procedures, importance and global visibility.**

*Our membership provides an excellent opportunity for the Argentine forest sector and its companies to participate in an international organization, generating tools and conditions to strengthen and stimulate SFM.”*

**Florencia Chavat,**  
Sistema Argentino de  
Certificación Forestal  
(CERFOAR)



**“PEFC membership brings international recognition to PAFC Gabon and its standards.**

*Throughout its development, PAFC Gabon was strongly supported by other members of the PEFC Alliance. Now as the first endorsed member in Africa, PAFC Gabon is willing to do the same and support its neighbours, in particular through its implication within the PAFC regional initiative.”*

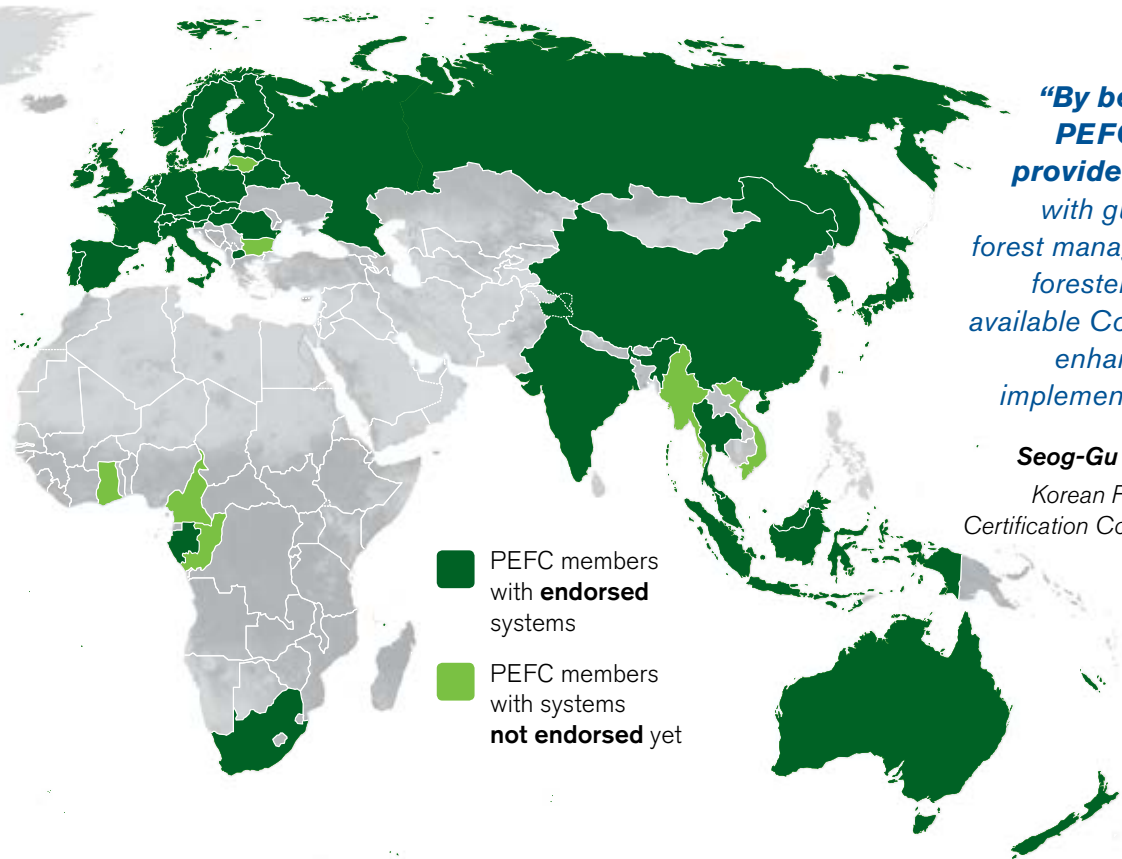
**Rose Ondo,**  
PAFC Gabon



**Antonio Brunori,**  
PEFC Italia



*“PEFC membership allows us to realize the environmental slogan **“Think Global, Act Local”** in our country in a credible way. PEFC Italia is proud to be part of this international family. We adjusted our sustainability approach to different forest scenarios, bringing the Italian SFM standard towards a broader and more international perspective.”*



*“By being a member of the **PEFC Alliance, KFCC can provide** domestic forest owners with guidelines for sustainable forest management and can provide foresters with an internationally available CoC certification program, enhancing the promotion and implementation of SFM in Korea.”*

**Seog-Gu Son,**  
Korean Forest  
Certification Council



*“PEFC allows us to participate actively in the development of a global project to value forests, their products and the people who work in them. Personally, being part of PEFC has allowed me to meet many professionals, from many different parts of the planet. I've been able to share similar concerns and work together to find solutions in an open, honest and constructive way.”*

**Ana Belen Noriega,**  
PEFC Spain



*“It is interesting, refreshing and demanding to share **experience and knowledge with like-minded people** and organizations who face similar challenges but in different national, market and forest contexts.”*

**Simon Dorries,**  
Responsible Wood



Map as of September 2019. Please find an up-to-date list of PEFC members and endorsed systems at [www.pefc.org/about-pefc/membership/national-members](http://www.pefc.org/about-pefc/membership/national-members).

## How much does the membership cost?

PEFC's membership fee for national members is calculated annually and is based on two parts: **1) a subscription fee** and **2) a development fee**. The subscription fee rate is linked to the FAO roundwood production figures for your country and a corresponding categorization from XXS to XXL, and the development fee is linked to the amount of PEFC forest management and Chain of Custody certification in your country. Membership fees create the core income for PEFC International, enabling the organization to implement the PEFC strategy and manage the association.

Fee rates are subject to change annually based on a PEFC General Assembly decision. On an ad hoc basis, the PEFC Board of Directors will consider submitted requests from organizations for temporary reduction in membership fees, particularly for new members in the initial stages of business development. This is an option that you may wish to explore if the rates are prohibitive to joining PEFC's membership. The National Governing Bodies membership fee rates applicable since 2017 are as follows:

**Table 3**  
**PEFC subscription fee**

Membership size	Roundwood	Subscription fee
XXS	0-1 million m <sup>3</sup>	CHF 5,000
XS	1-5 million m <sup>3</sup>	CHF 9,227
Small	5-10 million m <sup>3</sup>	CHF 18,452
Medium	10-30 million m <sup>3</sup>	CHF 27,678
Large	30-50 million m <sup>3</sup>	CHF 48,500
XL	50-100 million m <sup>3</sup>	CHF 73,808
XXL	more than 100 million m <sup>3</sup>	CHF 89,705

**Table 4**  
**PEFC development fee**

Forest management	CHF 0.00437 per hectare
Chain of Custody certifications	CHF 136 per certified organization

# What are the requirements for becoming a PEFC national member?

The national candidate organization for the PEFC National Governing Body shall:

- a) Be a legal entity;
- b) Have its own statutes which do not conflict with the PEFC Council statutes;
- c) Include amongst its objectives the implementation of the PEFC System within its country;
- d) Have made a commitment to follow the PEFC Council rules and requirements;
- e) Have support of national forest owners or a national forestry organization(s);
- f) Provide participating interested parties with a fair, ongoing and appropriate possibility to influence the organization's decision making.

## **Why do I need support from the forest owners in my country and how do I show it?**

Forest owners and managers are important stakeholders and the eventual users of your System. It is important that they feel ownership and actively support your System during the development phase and beyond.

To reinforce the importance of this engagement, PEFC sets a membership requirement for forest owners or national forestry organizations to endorse the role of your organization as PEFC National Governing Body. By having the support of the majority forest owner(s) in a country, it can also help to ensure that only one System is PEFC-endorsed per country.

In general, this requirement is demonstrated with letters of support from pertinent forest owner associations or relevant government ministries and/or organizations. Moreover, demonstrating that representatives of these groups are actively engaged in your Systems' governance and standard setting process is welcome.

## What is the application process?

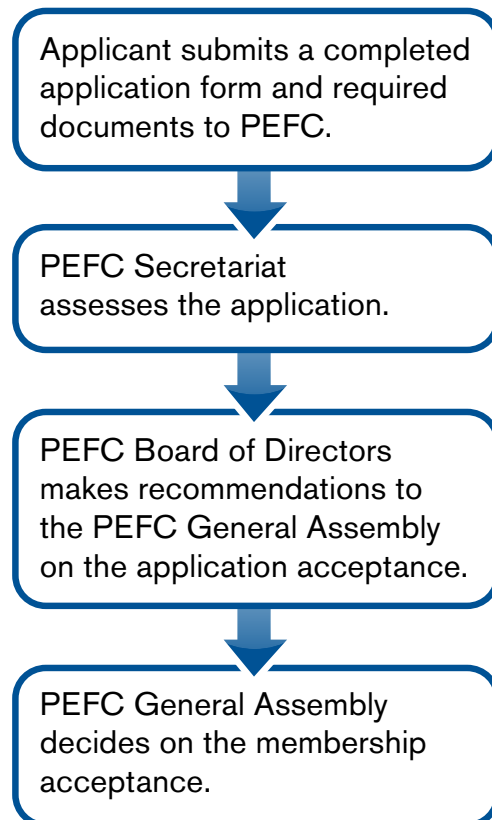
Your National Governing Body should submit your PEFC membership application form and the required supporting documentation to PEFC International. Your application will be carefully reviewed by the PEFC Secretariat and submitted to the PEFC Board of Directors for consideration and recommendation. Your application will then be put forward to the PEFC General Assembly for formal approval. The process will take between three to six months and is outlined in Diagram 5.

The Application form is located in Annex 2 of [PEFC GD 1002, Acceptance of PEFC Members](#).

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### Diagram 5

#### **PEFC membership application process**







## Key questions answered

- When can I submit my System?
- What documents do I include in the application?
- What should I expect during the assessment process?
- How much will it cost and how long does it take?



# PHASE 4

## PEFC ENDORSEMENT

### References

#### GUIDELINES

- PEFC GD 1007, Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their Revision

The above includes the additional **informative guides:**

- PEFC IGD 1007-01, PEFC Standard and System Requirement Checklist

#### *In brief*

This section discusses the assessment process, which determines whether your System meets PEFC's sustainability benchmarks and achieves PEFC endorsement. It outlines the steps you must take and what to expect.



4

# Overview of the assessment process

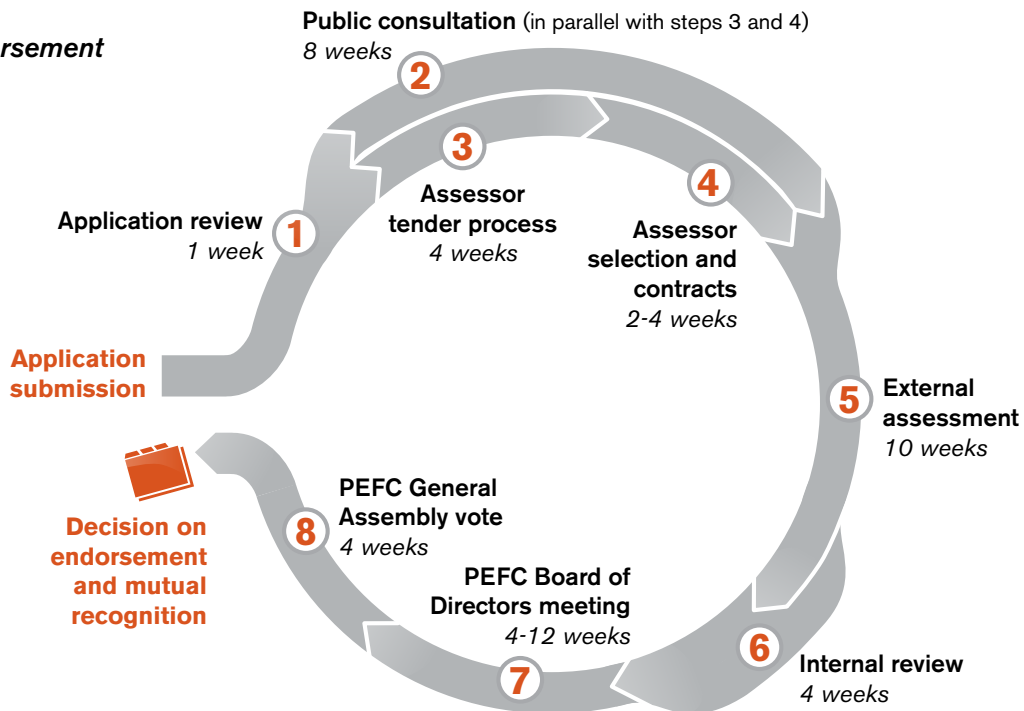
Once you have developed your System following PEFC's requirements, you have obtained PEFC membership, and your annual membership fees are in order, you may apply for PEFC endorsement (see [PEFC GD 1007, Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their revision](#)). This will help you to gain international recognition and provide your certified entities with market access through PEFC.

During the assessment process, PEFC International plays only an administrative role. An independent, PEFC-registered assessor conducts the assessment, contacting you at specific times throughout the process to seek your input and clarification, and ultimately producing the assessment report which makes recommendations and informs the PEFC Board of Directors and the PEFC General Assembly during their considerations related to the potential endorsement of your System.

The assessment fee typically varies between € 15,000 and € 30,000. The variability in cost is related to the length and complexity of your System as well as the competitive bids received from assessors in response to PEFC's call for tender. Generally, the assessment process lasts between seven to twelve months from your application submission until the PEFC General Assembly votes on its acceptance.

**Diagram 6**

## **PEFC endorsement process**



Note: indicative timeline based on average process

## Your application

Send your application to the PEFC Secretariat in electronic format including the English translations of the following documents:

- a) Formal letter with the request for assessment from your National Governing Body;**
- b) System description;**
- c) Standard setting procedures and standard setting process development report.**  
You must include either reports and records of the standard setting process or a description of how the PEFC requirement was fulfilled;
- d) Forest management standard(s);**
- e) Group forest certification model description** (if applicable);
- f) Chain of Custody standard;**
- g) PEFC logo usage rules – requirements**
- h) Administrative procedures** (logo licensing, complaints and appeals procedures, notification procedures);
- i) Description of certification and accreditation procedures;**
- j) Completed PEFC Standard and System Requirements Check-list.**

We recommend carefully reviewing whether you are able to add any further evidence to your application such as minutes from meetings and contracts. Delays may occur if the assessor needs to request additional documentation to verify your System compliance. As a condition for the endorsement process to start, the National Governing Body should have paid its membership fee.

## International consultation

A global public consultation is an integral part of PEFC's assessment process. PEFC will announce the sixty-day global public consultation on the PEFC website and invite all interested stakeholders to submit their comments related to your System. PEFC Council stakeholders, including the PEFC members and other organizations, are also encouraged to directly invite participation in the consultation. Part of the consultation is a webinar in which you should introduce your System to interested stakeholders. The assessor will evaluate the consultation results and include their consideration in the final assessment report.

## PEFC-registered assessors

PEFC-registered assessors evaluate Systems applying for PEFC endorsement. They are consultants with suitable qualifications and experience, and they receive regular training from PEFC. Once you have submitted your completed application, PEFC will invite the assessors to tender for the assessment of your System. The interested assessors will make bids and PEFC will appoint one assessor based on their experience, assessment team, methodology and price.

You can find the current PEFC registered assessor at <https://treee.es/registeredassessors>.

# External assessment process

Once your assessor has been selected, the external assessment process begins. The process lasts on average ten weeks and consists of two phases:

## Phase 1:

- Initial assessment of your System against PEFC's requirements and compilation of a draft assessment report;
- Submission of the draft assessment report to your National Governing Body for your opportunity to comment;
- Comment period;
- Field assessment.

## Phase 2:

- Development of a final draft assessment report;
- Review of the final draft assessment report by PEFC International;
- Final assessment report submitted to PEFC Board of Directors and then to the PEFC General Assembly.

## Phase 1

### Initial assessment

Phase one of the assessment includes the development of a draft report covering the following:

1. A general analysis of your System structure;
2. An assessment of your standard setting procedures and process against [PEFC ST 1001, Standard Setting – Requirements](#);
3. An assessment of your forest certification standard(s) against [PEFC ST 1003, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements](#);
4. An assessment of your group forest management certification model against [PEFC ST 1002, Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements](#);
5. An assessment of your Chain of Custody standard(s) against [PEFC ST 2002, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements](#);
6. An assessment of your logo licensing procedures against [PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme – see chapter 6](#);
7. An assessment of your procedures for notification of Certification Bodies against [PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme – see chapter 5](#);
8. An assessment of your complaints and dispute resolution procedures against [PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme – see chapter 8](#);
9. An assessment of your certification and accreditation procedures against those defined in [Annex 6 - Certification and Accreditation Procedures](#);
10. Any other aspects, which can affect the functioning, credibility and efficiency of your System.

The report will highlight any nonconformance.

### Opportunity to comment

During a three-week period, your National Governing Body will have an opportunity to respond to the draft report and any nonconformance found. This is also a chance to provide additional evidence and make minor amends to your System documentation. In exceptional circumstances, you may request additional time to submit comments, subject to agreement by PEFC and your assessor.

### Field assessment

During the ten-week assessment period, the assessor will carry out a field visit to gather additional information about your System and to interview your National Governing Body and relevant stakeholders.

## Phase 2

### Finalizing the draft assessment report

During Phase 2 of the assessment, the assessor will finalize their report, taking into account:

- Comments and additional information provided by your National Governing Body; and
- Comments received as a result of the international consultation.

### Internal review by PEFC International

PEFC International will carry out a quality assurance on the final draft of the assessment report.

### Final assessment report

The assessor will finalize the assessment report, considering any comments from PEFC International and highlighting any remaining nonconformance. The assessment report will make a recommendation to the PEFC Board of Directors.

## Endorsement Decision

The final assessment report including the assessors' endorsement recommendation will be submitted to the PEFC Board of Directors for consideration, which in turn will make a recommendation to the PEFC General Assembly. The PEFC General Assembly will vote and their decision regarding your System endorsement and mutual recognition, and the final assessment report, will be made public.

In some cases the endorsement decision can include a condition, usually when minor nonconformities were identified in the assessment. A typical endorsement condition is that non-conformities have to be solved within six months after the endorsement decision.

To maintain its PEFC endorsement, the system must meet specific endorsement milestones. The first milestone is the start of the periodic review within five years of the national approval of the sustainable forest management standard. The second milestone is the submission of the system within two years after the start of the review.



PEFC

## Key questions answered

- What are my obligations to PEFC Council once I am notifying Certification Bodies in my country?
- How to maintain stakeholder engagement and involvement in the System?
- How often do I need to revise my standards?
- How can I encourage companies to use certification?

# PHASE 5

## RUNNING YOUR SYSTEM

### References

#### GUIDELINES

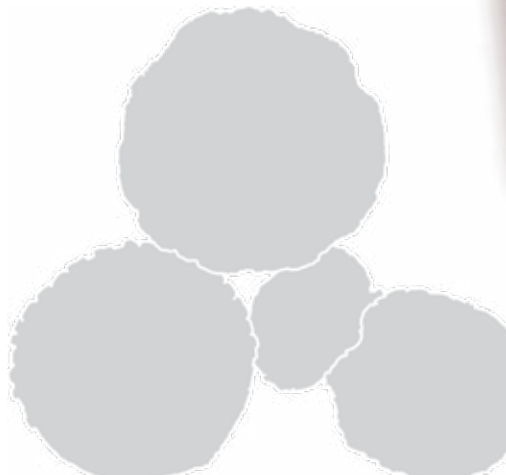
- PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme

#### SUPPORTING MATERIAL

[www.pefc.org/resources/brochures](http://www.pefc.org/resources/brochures)

### *In brief*

While it may seem like a long way off while you are in the midst of developing your System, eventually you will have a fully operational System to manage. This section offers an overview of the various functions you must fulfill in order to maintain the day-to-day operations and promote the growth of your certification System. It is not too early to start considering these eventual tasks during the development of your System, as it could help you in making the right choices in terms of institutional arrangements, funding mechanisms and even staffing appointments.



## System operations

The PEFC Secretariat conducts the administration of the PEFC scheme in countries without a member. Once you are ready to take over, an administration contract must be signed between your organisation and the PEFC Council.

The Administration Contract formally confirms your rights and duties as a PEFC National Governing Body concerning administrative issues. The contract will only be signed after you have demonstrated that your administrative procedures developed in Phase 3 comply with the PEFC's requirements (see [PEFC GD 1004, Administration of PEFC Scheme](#)). To do so, PEFC Secretariat will assess your procedures.

You can start the process to take over the administration from PEFC Council either before getting your system endorsed if you are already a PEFC member or the latest at the moment you submit your scheme documentation for endorsement. In any case, the administration procedures shall be submitted as part of the System documentation when applying for endorsement.

Administration of the PEFC System includes the following tasks:

- Certification Bodies: notification, fee collection, support and ensuring they comply with PEFC requirements;
- PEFC trademarks usage: issuing logo licenses, providing access to the Label Generator, ensuring proper usage of the trademarks and managing logo usage approvals and exemptions, in coordination with the PEFC Secretariat;
- PEFC Information and Registration System: keeping information up-to-date and collecting certification figures;
- Complaints and appeals: handling any that may arise.

## Governance

Within the context of your statutes, decision making structure and strategy, the day-to-day management of your organization will require significant investment of time. Your board of directors or management will meet regularly to make key decisions and this requires preparatory and follow-up work. As a PEFC member, it will be important that the PEFC values are reflected in your organization's operations and strategic documentation. Regular revision of your own national strategy will also be required to ensure relevancy and alignment with the current five-year PEFC strategy approved by members during a General Assembly.

Open, transparency and proactive engagement with all stakeholders will be key ingredients to success for your organization.



## Training

PEFC members are in a unique position of offering training events to their target audiences and can use the events to deliver multiple benefits. They can increase capacity of Certification Bodies, better equip sales staff within certified companies to communicate certification, provide opportunities for revenue generation or generate additional value-add to committed stakeholders and members.

Especially in the early stages of launching your System, providing training for Certification Bodies and companies can help to ensure consistent implementation of requirements. There will probably be numerous Certification Bodies operating in your country, each working with a number of auditors, and to ensure they correctly interpret and apply your standards, they will require regular training. In developing your national training programs, PEFC members are encouraged to utilize PEFC's training materials, which are largely in template format. PEFC can also help to organize an event for you or with you in your country.

## Creating demand / Procurement policies

Instead of directly targeting potential certificate holders, another option might be to create a demand for certified products among professional end-users. Consider banks, insurance companies and publishers who all use vast amounts of paper; housing/development corporations who use large amounts of wood; and retailers who use great amounts of both. Since every company is committed to delivering what the customer wants, such end-user demands can be powerful, although they require considerable effort to achieve results. The best way forward is to build personal relationships with the end-users, or with their associations, and to suggest that they formalize their demand for PEFC-certified products in a procurement policy. A draft procurement policy can be viewed here: [“Sustainable timber: a guide to procurement for the public sector”](#).

Government institutions do not only use timber and paper products; they can also influence the national market demand for certified products by implementing public procurement policies. Such national policies can guide the market as a whole to a preference for certified products.

There are many subjects to think about, and depending on your capacities and resources, you may or may not be able to cover them all at the outset. In addition, your national context may direct where you need to focus most. In general, a “forest economy” with vast forest resources will concentrate most efforts on promoting forest certification to its forest owners, whereas a “trading economy”, with little forest area but with a developed processing industry, will focus on promoting Chain of Custody certification to industries and trade, thus creating demand for certified products at the end-user level.

## Promotion and outreach

Communications, outreach and marketing activities are all essential for a National Governing Body. Maintaining transparency, stakeholder engagement and stimulating demand require you to utilize different methods for general promotion and for distributing information about your System and organization. Stimulating organizations to pursue certification may require targeted outreach activities to explain your requirements and the related benefits. In some cases, you may also find yourself working to influence market drivers to encourage certification, whether it is through educating general consumers or influencing the establishment of public and/or private procurement policies.

Within your national context, organizational strategy and available resources, you will need to evaluate your priorities for undertaking promotion and outreach activities. Here are some typical approaches and target groups to consider:

### Online promotion

Having a website is a “must have” to communicate with your stakeholders and to the wider public. You are welcome to make use of the PEFC website template at [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org) to save your resources and to contribute to the uniform appearance of PEFC globally.

You are free to take advantage of the content that has already been developed for these websites and translate and adapt it to your needs. News published on the PEFC International website that you deem relevant to your audience, can also be published on national websites in English or translated.

Additionally, you may choose to regularly distribute a newsletter to keep your contacts updated on PEFC developments.

You may also want to consider utilizing social media such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. Few members use all tools but rather take advantage of those that are most beneficial for them.

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/PEFCInternational](http://www.facebook.com/PEFCInternational)



**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/pefcinternational](http://www.instagram.com/pefcinternational)



**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/pefc](http://www.twitter.com/pefc)



**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/user/pefcinternational](http://www.youtube.com/user/pefcinternational)



**LinkedIn:** [www.linkedin.com/company/programme-for-the-endorsement-of-forest-certification-pefc-](http://www.linkedin.com/company/programme-for-the-endorsement-of-forest-certification-pefc-)



## Offline promotions

PEFC develops and maintains an entire suite of communication materials and PEFC members are encouraged to utilize them as much as possible. For tools and materials to support your organization, PEFC makes available, for example: corporate identity guidelines, templates, a marketing toolkit and introductory presentations. To disseminate information about PEFC to potential customers, partners and stakeholders, PEFC's brochures can be translated, tailored and re-produced for your utilization. To view the range of PEFC brochures currently available, visit [www.pefc.org/resources/brochures](http://www.pefc.org/resources/brochures).

## Other promotion activities

One of your key objectives is growing certified forest area and/or Chain of Custody certifications in your country. Not only does this contribute to the promotion of SFM and the growth of PEFC, it can also be a valuable source of income to further strengthen your organization.

Select your target groups strategically. Naturally, it makes sense to first target the groups that manage the forest resource and follow along the supply chain to those who will have first access to PEFC-certified timber, such as those involved in primary processing, for example at sawmills and at pulp and paper mills. Secondly, consider targeting individuals involved in secondary processing and trade, such as paper wholesalers, timber traders and manufacturers. However, you should also contact the final users, such as decision-makers in construction and retail companies in order to increase demand.

Some of your stakeholders who have an interest in certified forest products will probably be keen to raise awareness of your efforts in the market. Make sure to leverage your common ground for joint promotions, thus sharing your costs. As your System matures, your objective in reaching out to these target groups will most likely shift from introducing and encouraging certification, to motivating and equipping them to also promote and communicate certification throughout the marketplace.

**There are several proven ways to increase interest for certification, for instance:**

**Outreach meetings:** set up appointments to meet with specific representatives amongst your target groups. Provide them with information, listen to their perspectives and needs, and look to identify areas of mutual interest. While face-to-face meetings can be time consuming, they provide a great opportunity to meet objectives and deliver results while fostering relationships.



Dr. Hubert Paluš

**Seminars:** invite your target group to a “certification seminar”. For instance, a seminar may feature a diverse range of speakers to discuss the advantages, experience and process of becoming certified. As you plan a list of speakers for your seminar, include yourself so that you can present your organization and your System; the Certification Bodies who can explain the process of certification; certified companies to speak about the advantages of having certified products; and professional end-users who value certification. If organizing your own seminar is too expensive, consider a webinar or offer to speak at someone else’s event. As your organization starts to build a reputation, you will receive increasingly more guest speaker invitations.

**Trade fairs:** consider exhibiting your organization and System at a well-attended trade fair. Consider collaborating with other PEFC members, or certified companies, to share the expenses, design requirements and staffing arrangements. If exhibiting is too onerous in the early stages of your organization, rather target the well-attended trade fairs covering sectors relevant to your outreach priority. As a visitor, you can have conversations with all the exhibiting companies, distribute information, attend seminars and make valuable contacts.

**Articles and advertisements:** articles in selected local or trade publications can inform potentially interested parties of the existence of your System and the advantages of forest management and Chain of Custody certification. Look for opportunities to communicate your work, bearing in mind that local press will most likely be interested in subjects such as local forests becoming certified.

## Revision process

You need to meet specific endorsement milestones to ensure ongoing PEFC endorsement. The first milestone is to start the periodic review of your standard within five years of its national approval. You must periodically review, and if necessary revise, your standards, to ensure they incorporate PEFC international requirements, latest knowledge and best practices, and new market and stakeholder demands. The revision of your System may take considerable time, but should be finished within two years. The assessment of your revised System may again require seven to twelve months.

To help you, the PEFC Secretariat will send you a reminder before the date of the endorsement milestone. Ultimately, however, it is the System owner's responsibility to meet the endorsement milestones on time.

The revision process provides an opportunity to re-group your stakeholders and engage new stakeholders in the process. Look for opportunities to communicate and maintain your stakeholder network on an ongoing basis. Some of the ideas presented over the page will support your organization in ensuring ongoing engagement with your stakeholders.

**What are the benefits of regular  
System revision?**



***In Finland, during 2013-2014,  
we underwent the third revision of our  
PEFC sustainability criteria. More than  
40 organizations are participating in our  
working group and we are pleased that each  
revision engages more participants.***

*For PEFC Finland, the revision process  
is a chance to demonstrate the opportunities that  
PEFC certified forests offer to the whole Finnish  
society. We create an active and inspiring forum to  
exchange perspectives on SFM between trading  
and consumer organizations, people who enjoy  
forests for recreational purposes, indigenous  
people and other organizations, together with  
forest owners, forest workers and entrepreneurs  
and forest industries."*

**Auvo Kaivola,**  
PEFC Finland



## Abbreviations

<b>CPET</b>	United Kingdom's Central Point of Expertise on Timber
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUTR</b>	European Union Timber Regulation
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FLEGT</b>	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
<b>IAF</b>	International Accreditation Forum
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>NGO</b>	Non-government organizations
<b>REDD+</b>	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
<b>SFM</b>	Sustainable Forest Management
<b>TPAC</b>	Dutch Timber Procurement Assessment Committee
<b>UN</b>	United Nations

## More information

As PEFC's documentation is regularly revised, make sure you utilize the current versions available at [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org).

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