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STANDARD**

PEFC ST 1004:202X

Requirements for certification bodies and
certification systems

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Enquiry draft

**Requirements for Certification Bodies operating
Certification against PEFC Endorsed Forest
Management Standards**



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The official version of the document is in English. Translations of the document can be obtained from the PEFC Council or PEFC National Governing Bodies. When there is doubt in regard to language interpretation, the English version is the reference.

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Foreword

The text of the document has been developed by a multi-stakeholder Working Group coordinated by the PEFC Council, Programme for the Endorsement of the Forest Certification (PEFC), and approved by the PEFC Council General Assembly on XX XX 20XX.

The development was undertaken in an open, transparent, consultative, and consensus-driven process covering a broad range of stakeholders in line with the requirements specified in the PEFC Council Technical Documents Development Procedures (PEFC GD 1003).

The requirements of the document become effective for all certification bodies operating forest management certification against a certification system endorsed by the PEFC Council (with a transition period of twelve months from the date of entry into force).

The PEFC Council provides mutual recognition of national forest certification systems and defines an international Chain of Custody standard (PEFC ST 2002) and rules for the usage of the PEFC trademarks (PEFC ST 2001). The PEFC Council requires that forest management certification shall be carried out by certification bodies who are accredited by accreditation bodies that are signatories of the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) for product certification or management system certification of IAF.

Accreditation reduces the risk for businesses and their customers by assuring that accredited certification bodies are competent to carry out the work they undertake. Accreditation bodies that are members of IAF are required to operate to the highest standard and to require the certification bodies they accredit to comply with appropriate international standards and IAF Guidance to the application of those standards.

Accreditations granted by IAF accreditation body members, based on regular peer evaluations to assure the equivalence of their accreditation programmes, allow companies with an accredited conformity assessment certificate in one part of the world to have that certificate recognised everywhere else in the world.

With the publication of this document, *Annex 6, Certification and Accreditation procedures*, is no longer valid.

Introduction

The PEFC Council requires that certification bodies operating forest management certification meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1 or ISO/IEC 17065 in combination with ISO/IEC 17067, and this document.

Forest management is considered either as a management system certification in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021-1 or as product certification in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 and ISO/IEC 17067, Type 6. Type 6 of ISO/IEC 17067 defines the type of a product certification system according to ISO/IEC 17065, which is mainly based on processes. Appendix 5 provide further information.

The term “shall” is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions that, reflecting the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1/ISO 17065 and requirements specific for PEFC forest management certification, are mandatory. The term “should” is used to indicate guidance that, although not mandatory, is provided by the PEFC Council as a recognised means of meeting the requirements.

This document is based on ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO/IEC 17065. It does not include the texts of these standards, which can be obtained from ISO or national standard organisations.

1. Scope

The requirements laid out in this document reflect PEFC’s international benchmark for operating sustainable forest management certification. They define requirements for forest certification systems, based on ISO/IEC 17021-1 or alternatively on ISO/IEC 17065, which use accredited certification bodies for the operation of forest management certification against national forest management and group forest management standards, based on PEFC ST 1003 and PEFC ST 1002.

This standard is a hybrid between a benchmark and an international standard. It includes international requirements to be implemented directly by certification bodies operating forest management certification against a regional, national, or sub-national forest certification system endorsed by the PEFC Council. Additionally, this standard includes benchmark requirements to be further developed by the regional, national, or sub-national forest certification system, adapted to the local conditions and following PEFC’s bottom-up approach principle. The following requirements within this standard are benchmark requirements: 7.2.2.5, 7.3.2.1 and Appendix 1, 4.2.2.

Interpretations for TOF are outlined in Appendix 7 to this document. All requirements within the standard referring to “forest” are also applicable to TOF unless otherwise indicated in Appendix 7.

All requirements within the standard referring to “forest” also cover plantations, as per Appendix 1 of PEFC ST 1003, *Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements*.

2. Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this standard. For both dated and undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendment) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17021-1, *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements*

ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies, certifying products, processes and services*

ISO/IEC 17067, *Conformity assessment - Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification systems*

ISO 19011, *Guidelines for auditing Management systems*

PEFC ST 1003, *Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements* (available from www.pefc.org)

PEFC ST 1002, *Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements* (available from www.pefc.org)

PEFC ST 2001, *PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements* (hereinafter PEFC Trademarks standard), (available from www.pefc.org)

IAF mandatory Document Mandatory Document 1:2018 *Audit and Certification of a Management System Operated by a Multi-Site Organisation*

IAF Mandatory Document MD 2:2017 *Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems*

IAF Mandatory Document MD 4 2022 *The use of Information and Communication Technology for auditing purposes*

IAF Mandatory Document 5:2019 *Determination of Audit time*

IAF Mandatory Document 23: *Control of Entities Operating on Behalf of Accredited Management Systems Certification Bodies*

3. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this standard, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC 17000, ISO/IEC 17021-1, ISO/IEC 17065/67, PEFC ST 1003, *Sustainable Forest Management*, and PEFC ST 1002, *Group Forest Management Certification*, apply.

3.1 Accreditation Body

Authoritative body that performs accreditation, where accreditation is the third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks (source: ISO/IEC 17011).

3.2 Affected stakeholder

A stakeholder who might experience a direct change in living and/or working conditions caused by implementation of a standard, or a stakeholder who might be a user of a standard and therefore is subject to the requirements of the standard.

Note 1: Affected stakeholders include neighbouring communities, indigenous people, workers, etc. However, having an interest in the subject matter of the standard (e.g. NGOs, scientific community, civil society) is not equal to being affected.

Note 2: A stakeholder who might be a user of the standard is likely to become a certified entity, e.g. a forest manager in the case of a forest management standard, or a wood processing enterprise in the case of a chain of custody standard.

3.3 Audit

Process for obtaining relevant information about an object of conformity assessment (the entity to which these requirements apply) and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which specified requirements are fulfilled.

Note: The term “audit” used in this document is equivalent to the term “evaluation” used in ISO/IEC 17065. This definition is based on ISO/IEC 17000.

3.4 Audit Programme

Arrangements for a set of one or more **audits** planned for a specific time frame and directed towards a specific purpose.

3.5 Audit plan

Description of the activities and arrangements for a specific **audit**.

3.6 Certificate

A document confirming that the organisation complies with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest **certification system**.

3.7 Certification decision maker

A person or a group of persons (e.g., a committee) that has not been involved in the audit process and is assigned by the **certification body** to make the certification decision.

3.8 Certified area

The forest area covered by a sustainable forest management system according to the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management Standard (PEFC ST 1003). In the group certification context, the certificate the area represents the sum of forest areas of the group **participants**.

3.9 Certification system

A certification system includes a set of 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 fulfilment of specified requirements has been demonstrated. A credible certification system relies upon three separate functions: standard setting, certification, and accreditation.

3.10 Certification bodies

For the purpose of this standard, a certification body is a third-party conformity assessment body operating certification against a PEFC endorsed forest **certification system**, which is accredited for that system either according to ISO/IEC 17021 or ISO/IEC 17065 by an **accreditation body** member of IAF MLA

3.11 Client organisation (client)

Organisation, including a **group organisation**, that is certified or is seeking certification of its forest management.

Note: The client organisation is the holder of a **certificate** and is responsible for ensuring that all requirements of the forest management standard are met with respect to the forest area covered by that **certificate**.

3.12 Controversial sources

Forest and tree based material sourced from:

- a) Activities not complying with applicable local, national, or international legislation on forest management, including but not limited to forest management practices; nature and environmental protection; protected and endangered species; property, tenure and land-use rights for indigenous

peoples, local communities, or other **affected stakeholders**; health, labour, and safety issues; anticorruption and the payment of applicable royalties and taxes.

- b) Activities where the capability of forests to produce a range of wood and non-wood forest products and services on a sustainable basis is not maintained or harvesting levels exceed a rate that can be sustained in the long term.
- c) Activities where forest management does not contribute to the maintenance, conservation or enhancement of biodiversity on landscape, ecosystem, species or genetic levels.
- d) Activities where ecologically important forest areas are not identified, protected, conserved or set aside.
- e) Activities where forest conversions occur, in other than justified circumstances where the conversion:
 - i. is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management, and
 - ii. does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas, and
 - iii. does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock, and
 - iv. makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and/or social benefits.
- f) Activities where the spirit of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) is not met.
- g) Activities where the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) is not met.
- h) Conflict timber.
- i) Genetically modified trees.

Note 1 (on 3.7 b, d and e): Not considered “controversial sources” are such activities in short rotation forest plantations with harvesting cycles under 35 years, that are on agricultural land.

Note 2 (on 3.7 i): The restriction on the usage of genetically modified trees has been adopted by the PEFC General Assembly based on the Precautionary Principle. Until enough scientific data on genetically modified trees indicates that impacts on human and animal health and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than, those presented by trees genetically improved by traditional methods, no genetically modified trees will be used.

3.13 Corrupt practice

Corrupt practices include bribery of public officials; embezzlement, trading in influence, abuse of function, and illicit enrichment by public officials; and bribery and embezzlement in the private sector, as well as money-laundering and obstruction of justice, in alignment with by the [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#).

3.14 Documented information

Information required to be controlled and maintained by an organisation using any format and media, from any source.

3.15 Forest owner/manager

Person, group of people or legal entity having the legal or tenure right, or executing traditional or customary tenure rights, to manage the forest in a clearly defined **certified area**, and the ability to implement the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard in this area.

3.16 Group certification

Certification of the **group organisation** under one **group forest certificate**.

3.17 Group entity

A legal entity that represents the **participants**, with overall responsibility for ensuring the conformity of forest management in the **certified area** to the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest **certification system**. For this purpose, the group entity is using a group management system.

Note: The structure of the group entity should follow the operations, number of **participants** and other basic conditions for the **group organisation**. It may be represented by one person.

3.18 Group forest certificate

A document confirming that the **group organisation** complies with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest **certification system**.

3.19 Group organisation

A group of **participants** represented by the **group entity** for the purposes of implementation of the sustainable forest management standard and its certification.

Note 1: The term “group organisation” is equivalent to the term “regional group” if the group is defined by regional boundaries or other terms chosen by the relevant forest **certification system** and complying with the content of this definition.

Note 2: The term “group organisation” is a specific form of a “multisite organisation”.

3.20 Major nonconformity

The absence of, or failure to implement and maintain, one or more requirements of the PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks or the regional, national, or sub-national forest certification standard/s endorsed by PEFC against which the **audit** is carried out, that may result in a systemic risk to the function and effectiveness of the forest management.

Note 1: A major nonconformity may be an individual nonconformity or a number of minor but related nonconformities, that when considered in total are judged to constitute a major nonconformity.

3.21 Minor nonconformity

A single failure to fulfil the requirements of the PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks or the regional, national, or sub-national forest certification standard/s endorsed by PEFC against which the **audit** is carried out that may result in no systemic risk to the function and effectiveness of the forest management.

3.22 Participant

A **forest owner/manager** covered by the **group forest certificate**, who has the ability to implement the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard in a **certified area**.

Note: The term “ability to implement the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard” requires the entity to have a long-term legal right, tenure right or traditional or customary tenure rights to manage the forest and would disqualify one-off contractors from becoming participants in group forest management certification.

3.23 PEFC authorised body

The PEFC authorised body is an entity that has permission from the PEFC Council to issue PEFC trademarks licences and to notify **certification bodies** on behalf of the PEFC Council. Usually, the authorised bodies are the **PEFC National Governing Bodies**.

3.24 PEFC National Governing Bodies (PEFC NGBs)

The PEFC National Governing Bodies (PEFC NGBs) are independent, national organisations established to develop and implement a PEFC system within their country. A list of the PEFC NGBs and their contact details can be found at the PEFC website. PEFC NGBs are often also the **PEFC authorised body**.

3.25 Reviewer

A person or a group of persons (e.g., a committee) that has not been involved in the audit process and is assigned by the **certification body** to review all the information and results related to the **audit**.

3.26 Substantiated concern

Information supported by proof or evidence, indicating that forest and tree based material originates in controversial sources.

Note: Substantiated concerns can be concerns by third parties, as well as concerns of the organisation itself.

3.27 Technical expert

Person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the audit team. The technical expert is not considered an auditor.

4. General requirements

4.1 Context of the regional, national, or subnational system and the organisation certifying against a PEFC endorsed standard

4.1.1 The regional, national, or sub-national forest management system shall define which one of the two following standards: ISO/IEC 17021-1 or ISO/IEC 17065, certification bodies in the respective geographical area shall implement.

Note: All the requirements of either ISO/IEC 17021-1 or ISO/IEC 17065 respectively shall be fulfilled, which means that either one or the other standard must be completely and correctly implemented by the **certification body**.

4.1.2 For systems based on ISO/IEC 17065, the principles according to ISO/IEC 17067:2013 type 6 shall be applied.

4.1.3 The requirements specified in this standard apply in addition to ISO/IEC 17021-1 or ISO/IEC 17065, respectively, and provide the minimal requirements for the accreditation of **certification bodies** certifying against PEFC standards.

4.1.4 The requirements against which the client organisation's forest management is audited or evaluated are those outlined in the latest version of the system specific forest management standards and/or corresponding mandatory documents endorsed by PEFC in the country or region where the client organisation's forest is located. PEFC standards ST 1003 and ST 1002 are benchmark standards to be implemented by the regional, national, or sub-national forest certification system owners.

Note: The latest version of the standards and their amendments are available from the PEFC Council official website www.pefc.org.

4.1.5 The use of the certification mark shall in any case be in conformance with the requirements of the respective standard used and with PEFC ST 2001 *PEFC Trademark Rules – Requirements*.

4.2 Legal and contractual matters

4.2.1 Certification agreement

4.2.1.1 The **certification body** shall establish a legally enforceable certification agreement (clause 17021-1 clause 5.1.2 or ISO/IEC 17065 clause 4.1.2) with the **client organisation**.

4.2.1.2 Where there are multiple offices of a **certification body** or multiple **participants** of a **client**, the legally enforceable agreement shall cover the certification body site(s) and all the **participants** of the **client organisation** included in a specific **certificate**. Similarly, the agreement shall include **certification bodies** that are working as subcontractors. Such bodies shall have the same qualification as the contracting **certification body** and be accredited for the same standard (ISO/IEC 17021-1 or ISO/IEC 17065)

4.2.1.3 The certification agreement with the **client organisation** (clause 17021-1 clause 5.1.2 or ISO/IEC clause 4.1.2) shall clearly specify the standard against which the **certification body** is operating, indicating that the **certification body** is accredited to operate the mentioned standard, and by which **accreditation body**.

4.2.1.4 The certification agreement shall ensure at least, the following:

- Implementation of the requirements:

- a) The **client** fulfils the certification requirements, including appropriate implementation.
- b) Changes in the certification requirements are implemented in an agreed transition period.

- c) The **client** keeps records of their compliance with the certification requirements for, at least, five years.
- d) The **client** informs the **certification body**, without delay, of changes that may affect its ability to conform with the certification requirements.

- Audit process:

- e) The client provides access during the certification process to observers from **accreditation bodies** and system owners e.g., for witnessing activities or validation **audits**.
- f) The client provides access during the certification process to **affected stakeholders** as observers, when applicable, according to the requirements outlined on 6.4 of this standard.
- g) The **client** is aware and accepts any conditions which may result in special **audits**.

- Trademarks use:

- h) The **client** does not use its certification in such a manner as to bring the **certification body** or the **accreditation body** or PEFC into disrepute and does not make any statement regarding its management system or product certification that the **certification body** or PEFC may consider misleading or unauthorized.
- i) Upon suspension, withdrawal, or termination of certification, the **client** discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference to the certification and takes action as required by the **certification system** (e.g., the return of certification documents) and takes any other measure, as appropriate.
- j) If the **client** provides copies of the certification documents to others, the documents shall be reproduced in their entirety or as specified in the **certification system**.
- k) In making reference to its product or management system certification in communication media such as documents, brochures, or advertising, the **client** complies with the requirements of the **certification body** and as specified in the **certification system**.
- l) The **client** complies with any requirements that may be prescribed in the **certification system** relating to the use of marks of conformity, and on information related to the product.

- Investigation of complaints:

- m) Immediate investigation of complaints raised by customers of the **client**.
- n) The **client** keeps a record of all complaints received through its mechanism in place to resolve complaints, and otherwise made known to it, relating to compliance with certification requirements, and makes these records publicly available and takes appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies that affect compliance with the requirements for certification.
- o) The **client** documents any actions taken to respond to the complaints.
- p) The **client** provides to the **certification body** any information required for the certification purposes.
- q) The **client** is aware and accepts any conditions which may result in special **audits**.

4.2.2 PEFC trademarks usage

- 4.2.2.1 Where the **certification body** makes use of the PEFC trademarks on the certification document, or for any other purposes linked to the PEFC **certification system**, the use shall only be carried out

based on a valid licence issued by the PEFC Council or another entity authorised by the PEFC Council, and in accordance with the PEFC Trademarks Rules - Requirements standard.

- 4.2.2.2** The **certification body** shall make clear to the **client organisation** that the PEFC trademarks on the issued **certificate** only refer to the client organisation's compliance with the PEFC **certification system** and does not provide the **client organisation** with the right to use the PEFC trademarks.

4.3 Management of impartiality

- 4.3.1** If the management system certification approach is applied, the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021 as set out in clause 5.2.1 to clause 5.2.13 apply. If the product certification approach is applied, the requirements ISO/IEC 17065 as set out in clause 4.2.1 to 4.2.12 apply.

- 4.3.2** The **certification body** shall put in place procedures to ensure that personnel involved in the certification activities are free from conflict of interest and independent from the **client organisation**. The **certification body** shall exclude any persons having a potential conflict of interest from the decision-making process.

- 4.3.3** Additionally, the **certification body** shall put in place integrity rules.

4.4 Confidentiality

- 4.4.1** The **certification body** shall comply with all applicable privacy and data protection laws.

- 4.4.2** The **certification body** shall commit to a Data Processing Agreement with the PEFC Council. The agreement shall specify the rights and obligations of each party concerning the protection of personal data. It regulates the particularities of data processing – such as its scope and purpose – as well as the relationship between the controller and the processor.

Note: The data to be provided to PEFC is described under chapter 6 of this standard, and any other documents on data collection (e.g., PEFC GD 1008, *PEFC Information and Registration System - Data Requirements*) or on the PEFC notification requirements.

- 4.4.3** This Data Processing Agreement shall be in compliance with any data protection legislation applicable in the countries in which the **client organisation** and the **certification body** are based.

4.5 Risk based approach

Certification bodies operating sustainable forest management certification shall follow risk-based approach and apply all the principles given in clause 4.8 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 and as per 7.2.2 of this standard, regardless of whether it is management or product certification.

5. Resource requirements

5.1 Personnel involved in the certification activities

5.1.1 General

5.1.1.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that all personnel have the relevant and appropriate knowledge and competencies corresponding to these activities, including PEFC specific knowledge.

5.1.1.2 Any personnel involved in PEFC certification shall have at least basic knowledge of the PEFC system and certification criteria.

5.1.1.3 Gender equality should be promoted.

5.1.2 Auditors

The **certification body** shall have a documented process to ensure that auditors have personal attributes, knowledge, and skills in accordance with the requirements of the standard ISO/IEC 17021 Annexe A point A.2.1 to point A.2.11.

5.1.2.1 Education

5.1.2.1.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that auditors have the knowledge corresponding to at least a secondary education that includes or is supplemented with courses related to forestry.

Note: Secondary education is the part of the national education system that comes after the primary or elementary stage, and that is completed prior to entrance to tertiary education, i.e., university or similar educational institution.

5.1.2.1.2 The specific education relating to forestry can be substituted by working experience in this sector if the **certification body** can demonstrate it is equivalent to the required education.

5.1.2.2 Working experience

5.1.2.2.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that auditors have relevant experience according to the type of the **audits** to be conducted.

5.1.2.2.2 The **certification body** shall ensure that the auditor has a minimum of three (3) years full time experience in forestry.

Note: Full time experience in a professional or managerial position applying forest management.

5.1.2.2.3 The number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one (1) year, if the auditor has completed a tertiary education in forestry.

Note: Tertiary education, also referred to as third stage, third level, and post-secondary education, is the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education.

5.1.2.3 PEFC forest management training

The **certification body** shall ensure that new auditors have received initial training on PEFC sustainable forest management certification recognised by the PEFC Council for the country/countries where they conduct **audits**. The **certification body** shall ensure that new auditors have successfully completed the training before they start their auditing activities.

Note: The [PEFC website](#) provides further information on training options.

5.1.2.4 Audit training

The **certification body** shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011:2018.

5.1.2.5 Audit experience

5.1.2.5.1 For the first qualification of an auditor, the **certification body** shall ensure that the auditor has performed, as auditor-in-training, forest management **audits** for at least four client organisations under the leadership of a qualified audit team leader within the last three years and covering at least 40 hours (5 days).

5.1.2.5.2 The number of forest management **audits** in training can be reduced by two (2) **audits** for auditors that are qualified for ISO 9001, 14001, or 45001 auditing in the forestry sector.

Note: Audit competency in management system-based product certification according to ISO/IEC 17065 related to forest products may also be recognised.

5.1.2.5.3 The **certification body** shall ensure that auditors conducting group **audits** have experience in PEFC **group certification audits**.

5.1.2.6 Competencies

5.1.2.6.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that auditors demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- a) The objectives and core processes of the PEFC system.
- b) Principles, requirements, criteria, and indicators of the PEFC forest management standard Benchmarks, PEFC ST 1003 and 1002, as applicable, and the national or regional forest certification standard and any other related documents, as applicable.
- c) Audit principles, procedures, and techniques, to enable the auditor to apply those appropriate to different **audits** and ensure that **audits** are conducted in a consistent and systematic manner.
- d) Managing of organisation, including organisational size, structure, functions and relationships, general business processes, risk management, in cultural and social aspects, such as knowledge of the client organisation's working language to be able to comprehend the organisation's operational context.
- e) Knowledge of the socio-demographics, sustainability issues, and cultural issues in the region of application of the forest management requirements.
- f) Knowledge of legislation, regulations, or other relevant requirements, enabling the auditor to operate in the right legal framework and to be aware of the legislative requirements applicable to the **client organisation** that is the subject of the **audit** and to judge on its legal compliance. Knowledge and understanding of this area shall cover:
 - i. contracts and agreements, including labour contracts and or collective bargaining agreements
 - ii. forest governance and law enforcement system of countries, including those covering social, health, and safety issues of workers
 - iii. international conventions relating to forest
 - iv. international conventions relating to worker rights (ILO core conventions)
 - v. international treaties and conventions relating to forestry, forest trade, and tree-based products
 - vi. data privacy and protection

- g) The principles of forest management based on techniques involving inventories, planning, protection and the management of forest ecosystems, identification and management of ecologically important forest areas, carbon stock, and biological diversity to be able to examine the forest management system of the organisation to be certified and to decide whether the requirements as set out in ST 1003 and ST 1002 are effectively implemented.
- h) Natural environment sciences, environmental technology, and the economic principles applicable to forest management, to be able to understand the fundamental relations between human activities and sustainable forest management.
- i) Technical aspects of forestry operations, associated with exploitations, technology, and derived uses, to be able to understand the activities of the **client organisation** and its effects on the management itself and the territory.
- j) International treaties and conventions on the field of forestry.
- k) Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for forest monitoring and management and landowner rights in the country or countries where the auditor provides certification, including knowledge of the national and regional land registers (cadastre) – to be able to collect relevant geospatial data (in the field and through third party suppliers), convert it into different digital formats, produce thematic maps and interpret them to determine land cover and land use changes.
- l) Information systems and technology for authorisation, security, distribution and control of documents, data, and records; and
- m) Application of risks assessment techniques.

5.1.2.6.2 The **certification body** shall ensure that the audit team consists of individual who collectively have all the required skills, competencies, and experience.

5.1.2.7 Maintenance of the qualification as an auditor

5.1.2.7.1 For maintaining the qualification of the auditor, the **certification body** shall ensure that the auditor has performed a minimum of five (5) third party **audits** per year including at least two (2) forest management **audits** where the sum of these **audits** should cover at least seven (7) day of audit work of 8 hours per day.

5.1.2.7.2 In exceptional circumstances, such as statutory leave or long-term illness, auditors unable to comply with 5.1.2.7.1 shall perform at least two (2) PEFC sustainable forest management **audits** under the supervision of a qualified auditor.

5.1.2.7.3 Additionally, the **certification body** shall ensure that for maintaining the auditor qualification, qualified auditors participate in a PEFC forest management refresher training recognised by the PEFC Council:

- a) At least, every two calendar years; and,
- b) Whenever a new version of the PEFC benchmarks and/or forest management standard or standards they are qualified to **audit** is published. The **certification body** shall ensure that such refresher training is successfully taken prior to start operating against it.

5.1.3 Audit team

5.1.3.1 General requirements

5.1.3.1.1 The audit team shall comprise auditor(s) fulfilling the requirements defined in 5.1.2.

5.1.3.1.2 All the requirements given in clause 9.2.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply for any **certification body** providing sustainable forest management certification.

5.1.3.1.3 The **certification body** shall have documented procedures for selecting and appointing the audit team, including the audit team leader.

5.1.3.1.4 The **certification body** shall consider gender balance within the audit team.

5.1.3.2 Technical experts

In some cases, **technical experts** may be required to support the required auditor competency in a particular technical area by providing appropriate technical expertise. **Technical experts** shall be independent from the auditee, and their names and affiliations shall be included in the audit report.

5.1.3.3 Translators and interpreters

5.1.3.3.1 Translators and interpreters used in the **audit** shall be independent from the **client organisation**.

5.1.3.3.2 In cases where independent translators are not available, the names of the translators and their links with the **client organisation** shall be included in the audit report.

5.1.3.3.3 The **certification body** shall make sure that any potential conflict of interest is managed.

5.1.4 Reviewer and certification decision maker

5.1.4.1 General

5.1.4.1.1 The **certification body** shall be responsible for and shall retain authority for its decisions relating to certification.

5.1.4.1.2 The **certification body** shall assign a person or group of persons that has not been involved in the auditing process to review audit reports and make certification decisions.

5.1.4.1.3. The **certification body** shall ensure that the person or group or persons involved in the reviewing and decision process have a legally binding relationship with the **certification body** to ensure that they comply with the requirements in this standard.

5.1.4.1.4 The **certification body** shall ensure that the person or group of persons involved in the reviewing and decision process comply with the competence requirements as set out in ISO/IEC 17021 Annex A 3.

5.1.4.1.5 The **certification body** shall ensure that the **reviewer** and the **certification decision maker** meet the following requirements.

5.1.4.1.6 If the **reviewer** and/or the **certification decision maker** are composed of a group of people, they shall collectively meet the requirements stated in clauses 5.1.4.2 to 5.1.4.7.

Note: The **reviewer** and the **certification decision maker** can be the same person. See note to clause 7.6.2 of ISO/IEC 17065:2012(E).

5.1.4.2 Education

5.1.4.2.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that **reviewers** and **certification decision makers** have the knowledge corresponding to at least a secondary education that includes or is supplemented with courses related to forestry

Note: Secondary education is the part of the national education system that comes after the primary or elementary stage, and that is completed prior to entrance to tertiary education, i.e., university or similar educational institution.

5.1.4.2.2 The specific education relating to forestry can be substituted by working experience in this sector if the **certification body** can demonstrate it is equivalent to the required education.

5.1.4.3 Working experience

5.1.4.3.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that **reviewers** and **certification decision makers** have relevant experience according to the type of the **audits** to be conducted.

5.1.4.3.2 The **certification body** shall ensure that the **reviewers** and **certification decision makers** have a minimum of three (3) years full time experience in forestry.

Note: Full time experience in a professional or managerial position applying forest management.

5.1.4.3.3 The number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one (1) year, if the **reviewers** and **certification decision makers** has completed a tertiary education in forestry.

Note: Tertiary education, also referred to as third stage, third level, and post-secondary education, is the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education.

5.1.4.3.4 A qualified PEFC chain of custody auditor shall be considered as already meeting the minimum working experience required.

5.1.4.4 PEFC forest management training

The **certification body** shall ensure that new **reviewers** and **certification decision makers** have received initial training on PEFC sustainable forest management certification recognised by the PEFC Council for the country/countries where they conduct **audits**. The **certification body** shall ensure that new **reviewers** and **certification decision makers** have successfully completed the training before they start their certification activities.

Note: The [PEFC website](#) provides further information on training options.

5.1.4.5 Audit training

The **certification body** shall ensure that **reviewers** and **certification decision makers** have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011.

5.1.4.6 Audit experience

For the first qualification of a **reviewer** or **certification decision maker**, the **certification body** shall ensure that the **reviewer** or the **certification decision maker** has observed, during the last year, at least one PEFC forest management **audit**.

5.1.4.7 Competencies

5.1.4.7.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that **reviewers** and **certification decision makers** demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- a) The objectives and core processes of the PEFC system.

- b) Principles, requirements, criteria, and indicators of the PEFC forest management standard benchmarks, PEFC ST 1003 and 1004, as applicable, and the national or regional forest certification standard and any other related documents, as applicable.
- c) Knowledge of the socio-demographics, sustainability issues, and cultural issues in the region of application of the forest management requirements.
- d) Audit principles, procedures, and techniques, to enable the auditor to apply those appropriate to different **audits** and ensure that **audits** are conducted in a consistent and systematic manner.
- e) Managing of organisation, including organisational size, structure, functions and relationships, general business processes, risk management, in cultural and social aspects, such as knowledge of the client organisation's working language to be able to comprehend the organisation's operational context.
- f) Legislation, regulations, or other relevant requirements, enabling the auditor to operate in the right legal framework and to be aware of the legislative requirements applicable to the **client organisation** that is the subject of the **audit** and to judge on its legal compliance. Knowledge and understanding of this area shall cover:
 - i. contracts and agreements, including labour contracts and or collective bargaining agreements
 - ii. forest governance and law enforcement system of countries, including those covering social, health, and safety issues of workers
 - iii. international conventions relating to forest
 - iv. international conventions relating to worker rights (ILO core conventions)
 - v. international treaties and conventions relating to forestry, forest trade, and tree-based products
 - vi. data privacy and protection
- g) The principles of forest management based on techniques involving inventories, planning, protection and the management of forest ecosystems, identification and management of ecologically important forest areas, carbon stock, and biological diversity to be able to examine the forest management system of the organisation to be certified and to decide whether the requirements as set out in ST 1003 and ST 1002 are effectively implemented.
- h) Natural environment sciences, environmental technology, and the economic principles applicable to forest management, to be able to understand the fundamental relations between human activities and sustainable forest management.
- i) Technical aspects of forestry operations, associated with exploitations, technology, and derived uses, to be able to understand the activities of the **client organisation** and its effects on the management itself and the territory.
- j) International treaties and conventions on the field of forestry.
- k) Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for forest monitoring and management and landowner rights in the country or countries where the auditor provides certification, including knowledge of the national and regional land registers (cadaster) – to be able to collect relevant geospatial data (in the field and through third party suppliers), convert it into different digital formats, produce thematic maps and interpret them to determine land cover and land use changes.
- l) Information systems and technology for authorisation, security, distribution and control of documents, data, and records; and
- m) Application of risks assessment techniques.

5.1.4.7.2 The **certification body** shall ensure that the team of **reviewers** and/or **certification decision makers** consists of individuals who collectively have all the required skills, competencies, and experience.

5.1.4.8 Maintenance of the qualification as a reviewer or certification decision maker

5.1.4.8.1 For maintaining the qualification of the **reviewer** or **certification decision maker**, the **certification body** shall ensure that the **reviewer** or **certification decision maker** has observed at least one PEFC forest management **audit** per year.

5.1.4.8.2 Additionally, the **certification body** shall ensure that for maintaining the reviewer or certification decision maker qualification, qualified **reviewers** or **certification decision makers** participate in a PEFC forest management refresher training recognised by the PEFC Council:

- a) At least, every two calendar years; and,
- b) Whenever a new version of the PEFC benchmarks and/or forest management standard or standards they are qualified to audit is published. The **certification body** shall ensure that such refresher training is successfully taken prior to operating against it.

5.2 Personnel records and annual monitoring

5.2.1 Records shall be available to demonstrate correct implementation of the competence requirements.

Note: Records can be available in digital format.

5.2.2 The **certification body** shall conduct and maintain evidence of annual monitoring of forest management auditors applying methods such as reviewing audit reports or client organisations' feedback, etc., based on the frequency of their usage and the level of risk linked to their activities, and periodic witness **audits**.

5.2.3 The **certification body** shall observe **audits** as part of the monitoring of forest management auditors at least every three (3) years.

5.2.4 When monitoring the competences of its personnel, the **certification body** shall do it with a view to identify training needs.

6. Information requirements

6.1 Public information

6.1.1 General

6.1.1.1 The **certification body** shall make available to **clients** and potential clients all relevant information related to its certification criteria and process, including the fee structure.

6.1.1.2 The **certification body** shall collect the minimum amount of personal data possible.

Note: A way to achieve this is providing generic information as contact person, and generic emails instead of personal emails, e.g., certification manager, certificationmanager@xmail.com.

6.1.2 Summary audit report

6.1.2.1 The **certification body** shall prepare a summary of the audit report. The summary audit report shall not include confidential data. The summary shall include at least the following:

- a) Front page including the name of the **certification body**, name of the **client**, and date of the report.
- b) Description of the **client organisation** and the **certified area** (**group forest certificate**, location/s, forest types, description of the **participants** at the moment of the **audit**, and reference to the PEFC publicly available database for any updates on **participants**).
- c) Audit scope, objectives, and process (including applied certification criteria, summary of risk assessment implemented, and if remote technology is used, technology and justification for the use).
- d) **Audit plan** (dates, stakeholder consultation, audit itinerary and locations (split by duration spent on-site and remotely – where relevant) and audit team).
- e) Audit results:
 - i. presentation of findings demonstrating conformity or nonconformity to all the applicable clauses of the certification requirements
 - ii. issued corrective actions and time frames for reporting of corrective actions and close out
 - iii. evaluation of previously issued corrective actions
 - iv. recommended certification decision
- f) Description of the **certification body**.

6.1.2.2 The summary of the audit report shall be made publicly available.

6.1.2.3 The summary of the audit report shall be provided to the PEFC Council and/or the **PEFC authorised body** together with any other information related to certification and audit process.

Note: Summary of audit reports are available on the PEFC database.

6.1.3 Certification documentation

6.1.3.1 The certification documentation shall include, as a minimum, the following information:

- a) unique certificate number code, according to requirement 6.1.2.3.
- b) place and date of issuance
- c) issue date and expiration date
- d) logo and/or signature of issuing party

e) accreditation mark

- 6.1.3.2** The accreditation mark shall be used as prescribed by the **accreditation body** (including accreditation number where applicable).
- 6.1.3.3** The effective date on a certification document shall not be before the date of the certification decision.
- 6.1.3.4** The number of the **certificate** shall be comprised, in this order, of: the abbreviation of the certification body name (the same abbreviation shall be used for any PEFC recognised **certificates** issued), followed by a dash (-), the abbreviation of the endorsed sustainable forest management standard, followed by another dash (-), the abbreviation 'SFM', followed by a dash (-), and the corresponding number given by the **certification body** to the **certificate**.

Example: XWZ-PEFC-SFM-877506 (XWZ is a hypothetical abbreviation for a non-existing **certification body**).

- 6.1.3.5** The abbreviation of the **certification body** is coordinated with the PEFC Council. Two **certification bodies** shall not have the same abbreviation.

Note: The accepted abbreviation for a **certification body** is displayed on the PEFC website, searching for the specific **certification body** on the [Find Certification Bodies](#) section.

- 6.1.3.6** For group forest certification, the **certification body** shall issue one single **certificate** with the name and address of the **group entity** of the **client organisation**. The **certificate** shall include a reference to the PEFC database for the list of **participants** on the **certificate**. The scope or other reference on the **certificate** shall make clear that the certified activities are performed by the network of **participants** in the list.
- 6.1.3.7** The list of all **participants**, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/their size(s), and any other information as required by the PEFC Council or the **PEFC NGB**, shall be kept updated by the **group entity**, provided to the **certification body** and publicly available on the PEFC website.
- 6.1.3.8** Where a sub-certificate is issued to the **participants**, it shall contain the same scope, or a sub-scope of that scope, and include a clear reference to the main **certificate**. The sub-certificate shall include a statement saying, "the validity of this **certificate** depends on the validity of the main **certificate**, which shall be verified on the PEFC database". In cases where the sub-certificate also includes a sub-certificate number, it shall be linked to the certificate number and be included in the **certificate** as per 6.1.3.4.
- 6.1.3.9** The **certification body** shall issue the certification document in English, and any other language, as appropriate.
- 6.2 Information exchange between the certification body and PEFC Council and/or the PEFC authorised body**
- 6.2.1** The **certification body** shall inform the PEFC Council or the **PEFC authorised body**, in writing, no later than within 15 days, if a certification is suspended, withdrawn, or terminated, or where there are any changes in decisions relating to the status or scope of certification.
- 6.2.2** The **certification body** shall collect and report information, as required by the PEFC Council or the **PEFC authorised body**.
- 6.3 Information exchange between the certification body and the client organisation**
- 6.3.1** The **certification body** may provide to the **client organisation** publicly available documents or information, such as guidance, clarifications and/or interpretations, published by the PEFC Council or **PEFC NGBs**.

6.3.2 The **certification body** shall monitor and evaluate the client's capacity to demonstrate continual improvement in forest management performance over time and include an evaluation of progress in audit reports.

6.4 Involvement of affected stakeholders

6.4.1 The **certification body** shall publicly inform stakeholders on the options they have for providing input and involve a balanced representation of **affected stakeholders** within the audit process.

Note: Balanced representation means that major groups of significantly **affected stakeholder** are represented.

6.4.2 **Affected stakeholder** involvement shall support the certification bodies' operations to:

- a) ensure impartial operations
- b) oversee the consistency of all the client organisation's operations
- c) oversee the appeals procedures
- d) oversee the complaint mechanism
- e) support the risk-based assessment
- f) demonstrating transparency of the audit process

6.4.3 The **certification body** shall have procedures in place for the involvement of **affected stakeholders**. This procedure shall ensure that such involvement does not impact impartiality, independency, and confidentiality of the certification body's and the client's operations.

6.4.4 The certification body's procedure shall cover the process for acceptance of **affected stakeholders** as observers during the on-site **audit**, and the grounds of rejection of participation. The request for participation of **affected stakeholders** as observers during the on-site **audit** by **affected stakeholders** shall be approved in advanced by the **certification body** together with the **client organisation**.

7. Process requirements

7.1 Pre-certification activities

7.1.1 Application

The **certification body** shall obtain from the **client organisation**, as a minimum, the following information and documentation as part of the application for forest management certification:

- a) corporate entity (if applicable), and legal status (including legal business registration)
- b) if the application is for a **group forest certificate**, information on all the **participants** in the group
- c) description of the area of the **client organisation** (locations, FMUs, types of forests, productive and conservation areas, etc.)
- d) forest management documented procedures of the **client organisation** as defined in the forest management standard
- e) details of **participants** providing technical infrastructure covered by the sustainable forest management system. e.g., chemical storage, depots, maintenance facilities, firefighting facilities, administrative offices, etc.
- f) any relevant information to assess if the application is to be treated as a transfer of certification instead of a new application (see also 7.2.2)
- g) any relevant information of the **client organisation** or their legal predecessor on participation in PEFC or other **certification system** for the purpose of forest management, in the current moment or in the last five years. This information shall include, but not be limited to, suspension, withdrawal, or termination from other systems on the last five years, identified non-conformities, certification decision, justification and any corrective actions that may have been taken and their resolutions (see also 7.2.2); and
- h) name of consultant/s used for PEFC certification implementation purposes, if any.

Note: The information does not have to be obtained at the moment of first contact with the **client organisation**, but at least before the application review takes place.

7.1.2 Application review

7.1.2.1 All the requirements given in clause 7.3 of ISO/IEC 17065:2012(E) shall apply.

7.1.2.2 The **certification body** shall define criteria for the acceptance of the **client**, including legal predecessors, when relevant. Prior to acceptance, the **certification body** shall conduct a customer due diligence and research information, including verification of the antecedents.

7.1.2.3 The **certification body** shall carry out a review of the client organisation's documentation for completeness prior to the **audit**.

7.1.2.4 The **certification body** shall consider applications when all information listed under clause 7.1.1 has been provided.

Note: 7.1.2.7 and 7.1.2.8 and 7.1.2.9 described the requirements that the **certification body** shall follow when the application is a transfer of an existing **certificate** from one **certification body** to another and not a new application.

7.1.2.5 The **certification body** shall assess information provided by the **client organisation** on its participation or its legal predecessor's participation in PEFC or other **certification system** for the purpose of forest certification. In case the participation in PEFC or in other **certification system** was suspended, withdrawn, or terminated, the **certification body** shall investigate the commitment and capacity of the organisation to comply with PEFC certification requirements. If the investigation

shows an inability or significant unlikelihood to comply, the application shall not be further processed until the organisation has demonstrated that they have the ability and commitment to comply.

- 7.1.2.6** The **certification body** shall have mechanisms in place to identify if the **client organisation** or suppliers of the **client organisation** are sanctioned for engagement in **corrupt practices**.
- 7.1.2.7** When the **certification body** identifies that the certification is to be treated as a transfer, the **certification body** shall operate according to ISO/IEC 17065 clause 7.4.5 and IAF MD2:2017.
- 7.1.2.8** In the case of transfer of certification, the **certification body** shall ensure that any open **major nonconformities** are closed by the previous **certification body** prior to accepting the transfer of the **certificate**.
- 7.1.2.9** Transfer is only possible if the accepting **certification body** is recognised by PEFC for the same system and according to the same accreditation standard (ISO/IEC 17021-1 or ISO/IEC 17065).

7.2 Planning

7.2.1 Audit programme

- 7.2.1.1** The **certification body** shall have documented procedures to ensure that an **audit programme** is established at least for a certification cycle, to provide a basis for agreement regarding the conduct and scheduling of the audit activities.
- 7.2.1.2** The certification cycle shall not be longer than 5 years.
- 7.2.1.3** When defining the **audit programme**, the **certification body** shall consider the information and the evaluation conducted as part of the application review (7.1.1 and 7.1.2) and the information from the past audits conducted (if any).

Note: Guidance for preparing the **audit programme** is provided by ISO 19011:2018, clause 5.

- 7.2.1.4** The **certification body** shall identify season-specific activities and ensure that the 5-year **audit** has the capacity to assess such activities when they are occurring.

7.2.2 Risk-based approach

- 7.2.2.1** The requirements as set out in the standard ISO/IEC 17021-1 apply.
- 7.2.2.2** The **certification body** shall have documented procedures for risk-based auditing and shall carry out risk-based **audits**. In particular, the establishment of **audit programmes** and **audit plans** shall be risk-based.
- 7.2.2.3** The **certification body** shall determine the risks for each **client organisation**.

Note: Additional indicators for the risk assessment of **group forest certification** are defined in Appendix 1 of this standard.

- 7.2.2.4** The **certification body** shall identify and determine through a risk assessment any risks that would prevent the **client organisation** from conforming with the certification requirements. This risk assessment shall consider at least the following indicators:
 - a) structure, operations, processes, and products
 - b) deforestation, land-use change, and forest conversion
 - c) Silvicultural techniques and rotation period
 - d) richness of biological diversity
 - e) cultural heritage

- f) recreation and other socio-economic functions of the forest
- g) human rights and remuneration of forest workers
- h) work conditions including safety in forest operations and management of fatigue
- i) dependence of and interaction with local communities and indigenous people
- j) available resources for administration, operations, training, and research
- k) forest governance and law enforcement in the country or region of the **client organisation**
- l) information and concerns of relevant **affected stakeholders** and complaints, and
- m) use of the PEFC trademarks

7.2.2.5 The standard requires that the regional, national, or sub-national forest **certification system** shall define the conditions which constitute risks for each indicator on low, medium, and high level.

7.2.2.6 The **certification body** shall define and justify deviation of audit frequency and intensity for individual sampling categories.

7.2.2.7 When conducting sampling, the **certification body** shall consider the results of the risk assessment.

7.2.3 Determining audit time

7.2.3.1 The standard requires that the regional, national, or sub-national **certification system** shall define requirements for determining and calculating the audit time, including thresholds.

Note: Appendix 4 includes an example of how such requirements can be developed.

7.2.3.2 The requirements shall cover at least the following criteria:

- a) risk indicators and results from the risk assessment as per 7.2.2
- b) any outsourcing of any activities included in the scope of forest management standard
- c) the results of any prior **audits**, including those of client organisation's management systems
- d) quality/level of confidence of the internal monitoring and **audit programme**
- e) number of full-time employees and subcontractors
- f) complexity of the management system
- g) seasonal activities
- h) number of forest management units
- i) area covered by the **certificate**
- j) the nature of the terrain
- k) other issues such as surrounding transport, roads, and sale of forest products, if applicable

7.2.3.3 The **certification body** shall have a procedure in place to calculate audit time as defined by the regional, national, or sub-national **certification system**, and implement this procedure in its **audit programme** and **audit plans**.

Note: Requirements for determining audit time for **group forest certification** are defined in Appendix 1 of this standard.

7.2.3.4 The audit time determined by the **certification body**, and the justification for the determination, shall be recorded.

7.2.4 Multiple management system standards

All the requirements given in clause 9.1.6 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply. When planning of auditing according to multiple management system standards is provided, this shall ensure adequate risk-based on-site auditing.

7.2.5 Determining audit objectives, scope, and criteria

7.2.5.1 The **certification body** shall clearly define the scope, the extent, and the boundaries of the **audit**, such as **participants**, organisational units, activities, and processes to be audited.

7.2.5.2 The **certification body** shall plan the tools and audit techniques which will be used to gather evidence. It shall be clearly defined for which purpose the tools and techniques are used and which requirements are covered, if applicable.

7.2.5.3 The **certification body** shall consider the following criteria when defining the scope:

- a) Representation: the client's operations and processes shall be randomly but representatively considered. The **certification body** shall determine the processes that it considers important to be evaluated. The effectiveness of these processes shall be reflected in the audit report.
- b) Protection: areas with high impact on the achievement of the objectives of the forest management standard and identified ecologically important forest areas shall be considered.
- c) Correction: high risk areas and areas with previously identified nonconformities shall be considered.
- d) Prevention: the areas shall be determined by the **certification body** after its risk assessment.

7.2.6 Audit plan

7.2.6.1 The **certification body** shall have documented procedures to ensure that a risk-based **audit plan** is established for each **audit** and selected **participant**. The **audit plan** shall provide the basis to conduct and schedule the audit activities.

7.2.6.2 The **certification body** shall consider existing complaints and **affected stakeholders** concerns when planning the **audit**.

7.2.6.3 The **audit plan** shall be communicated in advance and agreed with the applicant **client organisation**.

Note: Guidance for preparing the **audit plan** is provided by ISO 19011:2018, clause 6.3.2.

7.2.6.4 The **certification body** shall define the timelines for the submission of the audit report by the **certification body** to the **client** for confirmation of the findings.

7.3 Initial certification

7.3.1 Stage 1

7.3.1.1 The audit stage 1 has the function of a document and "readiness" review. The scope of this stage 1 audit shall comprise, at least:

- a) Confirming the scope and objective of the certification **audit**.
- b) Confirming the **participants**, locations, and activities covered by the sustainable forest management system.
- c) Auditing the applicant client's forest management documentation.
- d) Evaluating forest management area' specific conditions.

- e) Evaluating the clients' procedures for internal **audits** and management system integrity and the effectiveness of their implementation.
- f) Determining the conformity of the applicant **client organisation** with the PEFC trademarks usage rules and its effective implementation.
- g) Consultation with **affected stakeholders**.
- h) Determining eventual risks to be considered in the stage 2 audit.
- i) Finalizing the **audit plan** for stage 2.

7.3.1.2 The audit stage 1 may happen remotely, according to 7.4.4.

7.3.2 Stage 2

7.3.2.1 The audit stage 2 shall take place on-site at office and forest management unit/s of the **client organisation**.

7.3.2.2 The **audit plan** for the stage 2 audit shall be adapted on the basis of the findings and risks identified of the stage 1 audit and the comments received from stakeholders.

7.3.2.3 The audit stage 2 shall assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the forest management system, processes, and procedures on the defined forest management area.

7.4 Conducting audits

7.4.1 General

All the requirements given in clause 9.4 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 apply.

7.4.2 Conducting the opening meeting

The **certification body** can conduct the opening meetings using information and communication technologies (ICT) according to IAF MD4 (in its latest version), and any other requirements established on this standard.

Note: "ICT" is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing, and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT may be appropriate for auditing/assessment both locally and remotely (Source: IAF MD4:2022, 02).

7.4.2 Conducting the closing meeting

7.4.2.1 The audit team leader shall conduct a closing meeting with the certification management and senior management of the **client organisation** to present the audit findings, and any recommendations related to continued certification. The list of **participants** in this meeting shall be recorded.

7.4.2.2 The audit team leader shall ensure that the **client organisation** is able to understand the conclusions and especially all the nonconformities found.

7.4.2.3 The **certification body** can conduct the formal closing meeting using information and communication technologies (ICT) according to IAF MD4 (in its latest version) and any other requirements established on this standard.

7.4.3 Audit report

7.4.3.1 The audit report shall include the rationale for the application of the indicators to address the risk in the audit planning (7.2.2).

7.4.3.2 The **certification body** shall define the timelines for the submission of the audit report by the **certification body** to the **client** for confirmation of the findings.

7.4.4 Remote audits

7.4.4.1 The **certification body** can conduct remote **audits** using information and communication technologies (ICT) according to IAF MD4 (in its latest version) and any other requirements established on this standard for each type of **audit**.

Note: “ICT” is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing, and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT may be appropriate for auditing/assessment both locally and remotely (Source: IAF MD4:2022, 02).

7.4.4.2 The **certification body** shall have in place a documented process for the conduction of remote **audits**, which includes, as a minimum:

- a) criteria and indicators to assess the appropriateness of the use of ICT
- b) risks associated with its usage and how they may impact audit effectiveness
- c) available technology and how to be used
- d) eligibility criteria of the **client organisation** (e.g., accessibility of digital files, client organisation staff capabilities)
- e) client organisation capacities

7.4.4.3 **Audits** can be conducted remotely or partially remotely when the assessment of the risk associated with the use of ICT and how it may impact audit effectiveness is low.

7.4.4.4 To conduct remote **audits**, auditors shall receive appropriate training and be qualified for the use of ICT and the conduction of remote **audits**.

7.4.4.5 The **certification body** shall agree with the **client organisation** the use of ICT during the **audits**.

7.4.4.6 Prior to the conduction of the **audit**, the **certification body** shall define the ICT to be used and make sure of its efficiency through testing and any other means, as appropriate.

7.4.4.7 Certification processes should include ICT when:

- a) the effectiveness of the **audit** can be increased through the use of ICT
- b) travel to the **client organisation** is not possible

7.5 Certification decision

7.5.1 Nonconformities

7.5.1.1 Nonconformities identified during the **audit** shall be classified as major and minor.

7.5.1.2 Nonconformities identified in **audits** shall result in corrective action(s) by the **client organisation** resolving the nonconformities.

7.5.1.3 The **certification body** shall require the **client organisation** to:

- a) identify the root cause of the non-conformity
- b) develop an action plan to address the identified cause
- c) specify timeframe for completion
- d) assign responsibilities for the implementation of the action plan

- 7.5.1.4** Before the action plan is implemented, the **certification body** shall assess the action plan, including the timeframe, verify that it has the capacity to address the issue and, in case it has, accept it.
- 7.5.1.5** The time period for completion of the corrective action(s) for **major nonconformities** identified in **audits** and their verification by the **certification body** shall follow the rules of the **certification body** but not exceed three months.
- 7.5.1.6** Where the actions taken to address a **major nonconformity** have not effectively addressed the issue within three months, the **certification body** shall either suspend or withdraw the **certificate**, as appropriate (see 7.5.1.3).
- 7.5.1.7** The **certification body** shall have procedures for immediate suspension or withdrawal of the **certificates** in cases of identification of non-reversible nonconformities or in case of intentional corrupt or fraudulent activities by certified organisations.
- 7.5.1.8** If specific natural conditions or extraordinary circumstances do not allow the implementation of corrective actions within the timeframes described in clause 7.5.1.5, the **certification body** can give an exemption. The maximum time period is 12 months, and the justification shall be documented.

Example: Extraordinary circumstances can be a pandemic situation or a natural disaster.

- 7.5.1.9** Corrective action(s) for **minor nonconformities** shall be verified no later than during the next **audit**.
- 7.5.1.10** Corrective action(s) for all nonconformities identified in **audits** shall be verified by the **certification body**. **Major nonconformities** shall require on-site verification unless the **certification body** can justify and document that verification can be undertaken without on-site verification through the use of ITC.
- 7.5.1.11** Before granting initial certification, **major** and **minor nonconformities** shall be corrected and the corrective actions verified and accepted by the **certification body**.
- 7.5.1.12** Before granting recertification, as a minimum, **major nonconformities** shall be corrected and the corrective actions verified and accepted by the **certification body**.

7.5.2 Certification status

- 7.5.2.1** The **certification body** shall define the status of the **certificate** as:
- a) Valid: according to the latest **audit** conducted, the client organisation's forest management system, process, and procedures comply with the forest certification requirements.
 - b) Suspended: the certification is temporarily invalidated by the **certification body**.
 - c) Withdrawn: the certification has been permanently terminated by the **certification body** due to lack of compliance with the forest certification requirements.
 - d) Terminated: the certification has been voluntarily cancelled by the **client organisation** during the validity of the certification cycle.
 - e) Expired: the certification is not renewed after the certificate expiry date; and not-PEFC recognised: the specific regional, national, or sub-national forest management standard against which a certification is issued is not recognised by the PEFC Council.
- 7.5.2.2** If certification is terminated, suspended, or withdrawn, or PEFC Council suspends or terminates the recognition of the regional, national, or sub-national system, the **certification body** shall inform the **client organisation** that any further use of the PEFC trademarks and claims is not allowed. In case of suspension, the **certification body** shall monitor whether the **client** is in compliance.

7.6 Maintaining certification

7.6.1 Surveillance activities

7.6.1.1 Surveillance **audits** shall be carried out at least annually. The **certification body** shall carry out at least four surveillance **audits** before the expiry date of the **certificate**.

7.6.1.2 The frequency of surveillance **audits** may be increased according to the level of overall risk related to the profile of the **client organisation** and the results of previous **audits**.

7.6.1.3 Surveillance **audits** may take place partially remotely, or completely remotely, according to 7.4.4, when:

- a) the **certification body** can justify that the audit techniques used deliver sufficient confidence in the certified entity's compliance with the certification criteria; and
- b) the certification body's assessment, according to its procedure to conduct remote **audits**, results on a low risk when conducting the **audit** or part of the **audit** remotely; and
- c) no **major nonconformity** was raised during the previous initial, surveillance, or recertification **audit** and in case any **minor nonconformity** was raised, the **minor nonconformity** can be verified remotely; and
- d) the **client organisation** has a centrally controlled management system accessible remotely and provides the **certification body** with all the records required to conduct the **audit**.

7.6.1.4 The period between two fully on-site surveillance **audits** shall not exceed two years.

7.6.2 Recertification

7.6.2.1 All the requirements given in clause 9.6.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 apply.

7.6.2.2 The recertification audit shall take place on-site. Certain parts of the recertification **audit**, such as the opening or the closing meeting, may take place remotely, as per 7.4.4.

7.6.3 Special audits

7.6.3.1 The **certification body** shall define the conditions under which it carries out short-notice and unannounced **audits** and inform the **client organisation** accordingly. Unannounced **audits** may take place when the **certification body** has a **substantiated concern** that the **client organisation** is knowingly breaching a requirement on the standard.

7.6.3.2 The conditions shall include the investigation of **substantiated concerns** and other reasons.

7.6.3.3 Special **audits** may be conducted remotely, in compliance with 7.4.4, when:

- a) The **certification body** can justify that the audit techniques used deliver sufficient confidence in the certified entity's compliance with the certification criteria; and
- b) The certification body's assessment, according to its procedure to conduct remote **audits**, results in a low risk when conducting the **audit** or part of the **audit** remotely.

7.7 Appeals

7.7.1 The **certification body** shall have in place a documented appeals process whereby **client organisations** can appeal certification decisions.

Note: The term appeal is defined on ISO 17000:2020.

7.7.2 The **certification body** shall publish its appeal process, including clear deadlines.

7.8 Complaints

7.8.1 The **certification body** shall have in place a documented complaints process whereby any person or organisation can raise complaints in relation with the certification process.

Note: The term complaint is defined on ISO 17000:2020.

7.8.2 The **certification body** shall publish its complaints process, including clear deadlines.

7.8.3 The **certification body** shall inform the complainant about its investigations, the corresponding results and in case, the action to be taken by each party.

7.8.4 When the **certification body** receives or becomes aware of any **substantiated concerns** of controversial activities by **client organisations**, or complaints against **client organisations**, the **certification body** shall notify the PEFC Council and the **PEFC authorised body** within 30 days of the concern or complaint, including measures that the **certification body** has taken or will take.

Note: Controversial activities are those mentioned under definition **3.11, controversial sources**.

7.8.5 The **certification body** shall provide at least once a year a summary in English about the received complaints to the PEFC Council and the **PEFC authorised body**. This overview shall cover, as a minimum:

- a) identification of the appellant/complainant (subject to disclosure)
- b) identification of the **client organisation**, including certificate number (if **group forest certification**, identification of the **participant/s**)
- c) description
- d) subject of the complaint
- e) summary of the complaint handling process
- f) requirement not complied with
- g) evidence
- h) outcome/resolution of the complaint

7.8.6 This summary shall be provided not later than end of January for the previous year.

7.8.7 The **certification body** shall provide to the PEFC Council and the **PEFC authorised body**, on request, any information of their investigation of a complaint received against a **client organisation**.

7.9 Records

7.9.1 All the requirements of clause 9.9. of ISO/IEC 17021-1 apply.

7.9.2 The **certification body** shall retain records of the compliance of the **client organisation** with the certification requirements at least for the current cycle and the previous cycle, being the sum of both, as a minimum, five years. Otherwise, records shall be retained for a period defined by the **certification body**.

Note: If legal requirements establish a retention period different than five years, the legal requirements are to be applied, but should not be less than five years.

8. Management system requirements

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 All the requirements given in clause 8 of ISO/IEC 17065 apply.
- 8.1.2 The **certification body** shall have in place an efficient set of procedures to ensure consistent and uniform implementation of the system's audit requirements.
- 8.1.3 The **certification body** shall have a system in place to record and track local, national, and international legislation on forest management applicable to the **client organisation**.

Note: A list of applicable legislation can be found on Appendix 5.

- 8.1.4 On request, the **certification body** shall provide to the PEFC Council or the **PEFC authorised body** any information necessary for PEFC monitoring activities, including but not limited to management of risks of conflict of interest or impartiality within the audit team. And certification bodies' rules and procedures for identifying and dealing with non-compliance by **client organisations**.
- 8.1.5 In addition to the complaints and appeals mechanisms, the **certification body** shall have in place monitoring activities that include actions to identify and mitigate misrepresentation or corruption. These actions shall include at least a publicly available mechanism for stakeholders to report instances of potential misrepresentation or corruption.
- 8.1.6 The **certification body** shall establish effective mechanisms to protect the confidentiality and safety of **affected stakeholders** or any other person providing information in relation with PEFC certification, such as complaints and appeals or involvement of **affected stakeholders** as per 6.4.

8.2 Internal audits of the certification body

- 8.2.1 On request, the results of annual internal **audits**, limited to the performance of PEFC forest management certification, shall be provided to the PEFC Council or the **PEFC authorised body**.

Appendix 1 (normative): Group Forest Management Certification

1 Introduction

This annex is for the **audit** and certification of forest management in **client organisations** with a network of **participants** to ensure that the **audit** provides adequate confidence in the conformity of the client organisation's forest management with the forest management standard, across all **participants** listed, and that the **audit** is both practical and feasible in both economic and operative terms.

2 Eligibility criteria for the group forest certification client organisation

- 2.1** Eligibility criteria for the **group certification** organisation, including definitions, are included in PEFC ST 1002, *Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements*.
- 2.2** In addition to general eligibility criteria, PEFC ST 1002, *Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements* contains requirements concerning functions and responsibilities of the **group entity** and the **participants** of a **group forest certification** model.

3 Eligibility criteria for the certification body

3.1 General

- 3.1.1** The **certification body** shall provide information to the **client organisation** about the eligibility criteria laid down in PEFC ST 1002 before starting the evaluation process. The **certification body** shall not proceed with the evaluation if any of the eligibility criteria for the **group certification** are not met.
- 3.1.2** Before starting the evaluation process, the **certification body** shall inform the **client organisation** that the **certificate** will not be issued if, during the **audit**, nonconformities in relation to these eligibility criteria are found.

3.2 Application review

- 3.2.1** The certification body's procedures shall ensure that the initial contract review identifies the complexity and scale of the activities covered by the forest management subject to certification and any differences between **participants** as the basis for determining the level of sampling.
- 3.2.2** The **certification body** shall undertake a risk assessment for the **client organisation** considering the scope of certification the **client** is asking for. The results from the risk assessment shall be documented and determine the details of the scope and audit procedures for the group certification **audit** and shall be part of the audit report
- 3.2.3** The **certification body** shall identify the **group entity** of the **client organisation** that is its contractual partner and has full responsibility for the performance of the applicant **client organisation**. The certification agreement shall allow the **certification body** to carry out the certification activities at all **participants** of the **group certification**.

3.3 Audit

- 3.3.1** The **certification body** shall have documented procedures for **group certification**. The **certification body** shall establish the way the **certification body** satisfies itself, inter alia, that the forest management requirements are applied to all the **participants** and that all the criteria in the forest management standard are met by all the **participants**.
- 3.3.2** If more than one audit team member is involved in the evaluation/surveillance of a network, the **certification body** shall designate a unique audit team leader whose responsibility is to

consolidate the findings from all members of the audit team, to coordinate between them and to produce a synthesis report.

3.3.3 The following additional risk indicators are to be considered in the corresponding parts of the certification process:

- a) the number of **participants** of a group
- b) the size and structure of the **participants** of a group
- c) the variation of the risk indicators defined in 8.2. over the **participants** of a group
- d) the participation of forest cooperatives in a group

3.4 Determining audit time

3.4.1 The **certification body** shall be able to demonstrate its justification for the time spent on **group certification audits** in terms of its overall policy for allocation of audit time and as determined by the regional, national, or sub-national **certification system**.

3.4.3 Reductions can be applied to take into account the clauses of the forest management and group certification standard that are not relevant to **participants** and are only examined at the **group entity**. Reductions shall be justified and documented.

3.4.4 No reduction is permitted for the **group entity**.

3.5 Certification decision

3.5.1 When nonconformities are found at any individual **participant**, either through the client organisation's internal auditing or from auditing by the **certification body**, an investigation shall take place to determine whether the other **participants** may be affected. The **certification body** shall require the **client organisation** to review the nonconformities to determine if there is risk of a forest management system deficiency applicable to all **participants** and verify the review. If risks are identified, root cause analyses and corrective action should be performed at both **group entity** and **individual participant** levels. If risk cannot be established, the **client organisation** shall be able to demonstrate to the **certification body** the justification for limiting its follow-up action.

3.5.2 The **certification body** shall require evidence of these actions and increase its sampling frequency until it is satisfied that control is re-established.

3.5.3 If the nonconformities indicate an overall forest management deficiency applicable to the overall function of the **group certification**, the **certification body** shall deny certification to the whole **group organisation client organisation** pending satisfactory corrective action.

3.5.4 The **certification body** shall suspend certification in its entirety, if the **group entity** or a significant number of the **participants** does not/do not fulfil the criteria for the maintaining of the **certificate**.

3.5.5 If the number of nonconformities in individual **participants** identified during the **audit** may signify a systematic problem with the group's internal management system, adequate nonconformities shall be issued to the whole group.

3.5.6 If during the **audit** the **certification body** identifies nonconformity at one or more **participants** that may lead to a systemic failure, the nonconformity shall be raised at group level.

3.5.7 It shall not be admissible that, in order to overcome the obstacle raised by the existence of a nonconformity at one single **participant**, the **client organisation** seeks to exclude from the scope the "problematic" **participant** during the certification process.

4 Selection of participants in the audit programme

4.1 General

4.1.1 The **certification body** shall have procedures for the selection of **participants** in the **audit programme/plans**. As a minimum, these procedures shall include:

- a) determination of sample categories
- b) determination of the sample size
- c) selection of the **participants**

4.2 Determination of the sample size

4.2.1 As a minimum, a sample consisting of a number of **participants** equivalent to the square root of the total number of the **participants** audited during the internal **audits** rounded to the upper whole number shall be audited individually at least once a year.

Note: Internal **audits** are calculated according to MD1, as per PEFC ST 1002.

4.2.2 The size of the sample can be adapted by a the regional, national, or sub-national system taking into account one or more of the following indicators:

- a) results of a risk assessment. In this case deviations of sample sizes in case of low or high risk for individual categories shall be defined
- b) results of internal **audits** or previous certification **audits**
- c) quality / level of confidence of the internal monitoring programme
- d) use of technologies allowing the gathering of information concerning specified requirements

Note: Such technologies can be e.g., the use of satellite data or drones which allow compliance statements for specific requirements of a sustainability standard.

- e) based on other means of gathering information about activities on the ground.

Note: Such a mean can be a survey with **participants** who provide some information about their activities on the ground.

4.2.3 The sample size shall be further increased if non-conformities are identified during the **audit**.

4.3 Determination of sample categories

4.3.1 The calculated sample shall be distributed between established categories.

4.3.2 The sample distribution between categories shall be representative of the whole group and established based on a combination of structural indicators, the result of a risk assessment based on specific risk indicators and random selection.

4.3.3 Random selection shall represent at least 25% of the sample.

4.3.4 Structural indicators are:

- a) ownership type (e.g., state forest, communal forest, private forest)
- b) size of management units (different size classes)
- c) biogeographic region (e.g., lowlands, medium range mountains, alps)

4.3.5 The standard requires to refer to clause 7.2.2 for the specific risk indicators and the conditions which constitute risk for each indicator on low, medium, and high level as defined by the regional, national, or sub-national forest **certification system**.

4.4 Selection of participants

4.4.1 Random selection shall represent at least 25% of the sample.

4.4.2 The **participants** selected for the **audit** through the sampling shall vary from year to year.

4.4.3 In selecting the **participants**, the **certification body** should also select a sample of **participants** that have undergone internal auditing, in order to be able to inspect the system stability.

4.4.4 The largest **participants** which are together representing a minimum of 10% of the **certified area** shall be audited at least once in the certificate cycle.

Appendix 2 (normative): Accreditations accepted by the PEFC Council

1. Forest management or product certification shall be carried out by **certification bodies** who are accredited by **accreditation bodies** that are signatories of the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement of IAF or a regional organisation such as the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), Interamerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC) etc. The **accreditation body** shall be signatory to the IAF MLA with a main scope of ISO/IEC 17021-1 or alternatively of ISO/IEC 17065, as correspond to the requirements of the regional, national, or sub-national forest **certification system**.
2. The scope of accreditation shall explicitly cover a specific PEFC forest management standard issued under the respective **certification system** which is based on PEFC ST 1003 and PEFC ST 1002 and endorsed by the PEFC Council and presented at the PEFC Council official website www.pefc.org, including the version and the year of the standard the accreditation certificate covers.
3. The scope of accreditation shall also explicitly state according to which standard the **certification body** is accredited (ISO/IEC 17021-1 or ISO/IEC 17065). It shall further mention the present standard and other requirements against which the **certification body** has been assessed, e.g., this standard PEFC ST 1004.

Note: As part of the accreditation assessments, **accreditation bodies** should conduct stakeholder consultation and in-field evaluation of the performance of the **certification body**.

4. The accreditation certificate shall be available in English and any other language, as necessary.

Appendix 3 (normative): PEFC notification of certification bodies

(Requirements are not applicable to the accreditation of the certification body)

- 1 **Certification bodies** operating PEFC recognised forest management certification shall be notified by the PEFC Council or the relevant **PEFC authorised body** of the specific country in which they operate.
- 2 The notification shall require that the **certification bodies** shall have a valid accreditation recognised by the PEFC Council (see Annex 2 of this document). The **certification body** shall provide the relevant **PEFC authorised body** with information on granted certifications as specified by the relevant **PEFC authorised body**.
- 3 The PEFC notification may require the **certification body** to pay a PEFC notification fee as specified by the relevant **PEFC authorised body**.
- 4 In order to ensure the independence of **certification bodies**, the PEFC notification conditions implemented by the PEFC Council or the **PEFC authorised body** shall only cover:
 - a) administrative conditions (e.g., communication of the **certification body** with the **PEFC NGBs** or the PEFC Council, transfer of information, etc.)
 - b) financial conditions (fees imposed on certified entities)
 - c) compliance with requirements for **certification bodies** verified through accreditation as described in this standard
- 5 The PEFC notification conditions shall not discriminate against **certification bodies** or create trade barriers.
- 6 Notification contracts shall include any necessary clauses to cover obligations and responsibilities regarding confidentiality and data use.

Appendix 4 (informative): List of forest management related legislation applicable to client organisations

Applicable local, national, or international legislation on forest management includes legislation, legal obligations, requirements, regulations, codes and nationally ratified international treaties, conventions and agreements codes covering and/or regulating

- land tenure rights, including customary rights as well as management rights, obtained according to the legally prescribed procedure
- anti-corruption legislation, including bribery & fraud
- the issuing of rights and licences according to the legally prescribed procedure, specifying legally-gazetted boundaries
- legal business registration, obtained according to the legally prescribed procedure
- concession licenses and ensuring that licences only cover legally gazetted areas, obtained according to the legally prescribed procedure
- management planning, including conducting forest inventories, having a forest management plan and related planning and monitoring, including approval by respective authorities.
- harvesting permits and/or licenses, or other legal documents required for specific harvesting operations, obtained according to the legally prescribed procedure prior to the implementation of forest harvesting activities
- forest harvesting specific fees such as royalties, payment of stumpage fees and other volume-based fees, as well as land area taxes or fees, based on correct classification of quantities, qualities and species.
- VAT and other taxes (including income and profit tax) that apply to the material being sold, including selling material as growing forest (standing stock sales).
- harvesting techniques and technology including the timing of harvest, selective cutting, shelter wood regeneration, clear felling, transport of timber from felling participants and seasonal limitations
- protected areas and protected, rare or endangered species and their habitats and potential habitats, including identification of protected areas
- environmental impact assessment in connection with harvesting, acceptable levels of damage and disturbance of soil resources, the establishment of buffer zones (e.g. along watercourses, open areas, breeding participants), maintenance of retained trees on felling participants, seasonal limitations on harvesting, and environmental requirements for forest machinery
- personal protection equipment for persons involved in harvesting activities, use of safe felling and transport practice, establishment of protection zones around harvesting participants, and safety requirements to machinery used, and safety requirements in relation to chemical usage
- employment of personnel involved in harvesting activities, including contracts and working permits, obligatory insurances, certificates of competence and other training requirements, and payment of social and income taxes

- minimum working age and minimum age for personnel involved in hazardous work, legislation against forced and compulsory labour and discrimination and legislation allowing for freedom of association
- customary rights relevant to forest harvesting activities, including sharing of benefits
- “free prior and informed consent” in connection with transfer of forest management rights and customary rights to the organisation in charge of the harvesting operation.
- rights of indigenous people as far as it’s related to forestry activities
- classification of harvested material is in terms of species, quantities, and qualities in connection with trade and transport
- trading permits and transport documents that accompany the transport of wood from forest operations
- offshore trading and transfer pricing
- CITES permits
- export/import licenses, and product classification related to customs (codes, quantities, qualities, and species)
- due diligence/due care procedures

Appendix 5 (informative): The selection of ISO/IEC 17021-1 or ISO/IEC 17065

1 General

The decision to base the requirements for PEFC endorsed regional, national, or sub-national certification systems in ISO/IEC 17021 or ISO/IEC 17065 lays with the regional, national, or sub-national certification system. This standard has been established to ensure that both standards are used and implemented in a way to achieve the same effect in sustainable forest management.

2 Certification of management systems

Ensuring that the management systems are implemented effectively by organisations, **certification bodies** are working according to the ISO/IEC 17021 standard. This standard defines the structure and procedures of bodies providing management system certification and using different annexes providing the competence of the **certification bodies**, in particular its auditors and decision-making staff. In different public or private standards system owners define additional competence and procedural criteria to guarantee the reliability of the certificates and thus the efficiency of the management system with regard to their purpose.

3 Certification of products, processes, and services

3.1 The quality of the products is ensured through tests, inspections and through suitable production processes. Therefore, product certification concentrates on these areas. The focus is the quality and performance of products and services. Ensuring that certified products or services are conforming to specifications, **certification bodies** are working according to the ISO/IEC 17065 standard. This standard defines the structure and procedures of bodies providing certification of products, processes, and services. In different public or private standards system owners define competence of staff involved and procedural criteria to guarantee the reliability of the certificates.

3.2 The standard ISO/IEC 17067 provides fundamentals for product certification and provides guidance how to establish product certification systems. Type 6 of this standard provides elements for intangible product criteria such as effectiveness of the processes and procedures, the responsiveness of the management and the competence of personnel involved to ensure product or service quality. **Certification bodies** will concentrate their activities on the management system, the processes and internal quality assurance activities.

4. How to decide whether forest management certification is conducted as management

4.1 The regional, national, or sub-national forest management system owners shall determine to which standard **certification bodies** shall work (and consequently be accredited). The following consideration may support this decision.

- a) Both systems follow the functional approach according to the ISO/ EC 17000: 2020 standard Section A1.
- b) Both standards require that the relevant processes are in place and established in a way to guarantee quality and performance of the forest management systems and related products.
- c) The evaluation principles according to ISO/IEC 17000 apply for both standards.
- d) An important point to consider is the labelling of the products. Only product certification allows labelling directly on the product, while management system certification is focused to the management systems and not the product.

- e) Combined **audits** with other management systems are only possible if the **certification body** works in accordance with the ISO/IEC 17021 standard.
- f) IAF defines more detailed rules for management system certification, which can, however, be adopted by the system owner for product certification. Respective input is provided by EA-6/04 M:2011 (Guidelines on the Accreditation of Certification of Primary Sector Products by means of sampling).

Appendix 6 (normative): Supplementary requirements for certification bodies providing certification against TOF (Trees Outside Forests) requirements endorsed by PEFC

Forest Management	Trees outside Forests
<p>5.1.2.1 Education</p> <p>5.1.2.1.1 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that auditors have the knowledge corresponding to at least a secondary education that includes or is supplemented with courses related to forestry.</p> <p>Note: Secondary education is the part of the national education system that comes after the primary or elementary stage, and that is completed prior to entrance to tertiary education, i.e., university or similar educational institution.</p> <p>5.1.2.1.2 The specific education relating to forestry can be substituted by working experience in this sector if the certification body can demonstrate it is equivalent to the required education.</p>	<p>5.1.2.1 Education</p> <p>5.1.2.1.1 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that auditors have the knowledge corresponding to at least a secondary education that includes or is supplemented with courses related to forestry and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p> <p>Note: Secondary education is the part of the national education system that comes after the primary or elementary stage, and that is completed prior to entrance to tertiary education, i.e., university or similar educational institution.</p> <p>5.1.2.1.2 The specific education relating to forestry and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification can be substituted by working experience in this sector if the certification body can demonstrate it is equivalent to the required education.</p>
<p>5.1.2.2 Working experience</p> <p>5.1.2.2.2 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that the auditor has a minimum of three (3) years full time experience in forestry.</p> <p>Note: Full time experience in a professional or managerial position applying forest management.</p> <p>5.1.2.2.3 The standard requires that the number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one (1) year, if the auditor has completed a tertiary education in forestry</p>	<p>5.1.2.2 Working experience</p> <p>5.1.2.2.2 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that the auditor has a minimum of three (3) years full time experience forestry and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p> <p>Note: Full time experience in a professional or managerial position applying forest management and management in disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p> <p>5.1.2.2.3 The standard requires that the number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one (1) year, if the auditor has completed a tertiary education in forestry or disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p>

<p>Note: Tertiary education, also referred to as third stage, third level, and post-secondary education, is the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education.</p>	<p>Note: Tertiary education, also referred to as third stage, third level, and post-secondary education, is the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education.</p>
<p>5.1.2.5 Audit experience</p> <p>5.1.2.5.1 The standard requires that for the first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor has performed, as auditor-in-training, forest management audits for at least four client organisations under the leadership of a qualified audit team leader within the last three years and covering at least 40 hours (5 days).</p> <p>5.1.2.5.2 The standard requires that the number of forest management audits in training can be reduced by two (2) audits for auditors that are qualified for ISO 9001, 14001 or 45001 auditing in the forestry sector.</p> <p>Note: Audit competency in management system-based product certification according to ISO/IEC 17065 related to forest products may also be recognised.</p>	<p>5.1.2.5 Audit experience</p> <p>5.1.2.5.1 The standard requires that for the first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor has performed, as auditor-in-training, forest management audits and management audits in disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification for at least four client organisations under the leadership of a qualified audit team leader within the last three years and covering at least 40 hours (5 days).</p> <p>5.1.2.5.2 The standard requires that the number of management audits in training can be reduced by two (2) audits for auditors that are qualified for ISO 9001, 14001 or 45001 auditing in the forestry sector or disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p> <p>Note: Audit competency in management system-based product certification according to ISO/IEC 17065 related to forest products or products from disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification may also be recognised.</p>
<p>5.1.2.6 Competencies</p> <p>5.1.2.6.1 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that auditors demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:</p> <p>f) Knowledge of legislation, regulations, or other relevant requirements, enabling the auditor to operate in the right legal framework and to be aware of the legislative requirements applicable to the client organisation which is the subject of the audit and to judge on its legal compliance. Knowledge and understanding of this area shall cover:</p> <p>i. forest governance and law enforcement system of countries, including those covering social, health and safety issues of workers.</p>	<p>5.1.2.6 Competencies</p> <p>5.1.2.6.1 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that auditors demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:</p> <p>f) Knowledge of legislation, regulations, or other relevant requirements, enabling the auditor to operate in the right legal framework and to be aware of the legislative requirements applicable to the client organisation which is the subject of the audit and to judge on its legal compliance. Knowledge and understanding of this area shall cover:</p> <p>i. forest and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification governance and law enforcement system of countries, including those covering social, health and safety issues of workers</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. international conventions relating to forest iii. international conventions relating to worker rights (ILO core conventions) iv. international treaties and conventions relating to forestry, forest trade and tree-based products; and v. data privacy and protection. <p>g) The principles of forest management based on techniques involving inventories, planning, protection and the management of forest ecosystems, identification and management of ecologically important forest areas, carbon stock and biological diversity to be able to examine the forest management system of the organisation to be certified and to decide whether the requirements as set out in ST 1003 and ST 1002 are effectively implemented.</p> <p>h) Natural environment sciences, environmental technology, and the economic principles applicable to forest management, to be able to understand the fundamental relations between human activities and sustainable forest management.</p> <p>i) Technical aspects of forestry operations, associated with exploitations, technology, and derived uses, to be able to understand the activities of the client organisation and its effects on the management itself and the territory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. international conventions relating to forest and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification iii. international conventions relating to worker rights (ILO core conventions) iv. international treaties and conventions relating to forestry, forest trade and tree-based products and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification and trade of products from these disciplines; and v. data privacy and protection. <p>g) The principles of forest management based on techniques involving inventories, planning, protection and the management of forest ecosystems, agroforestry and silvopastoral systems (as applicable, according to the disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification), identification and management of ecologically important forest areas, ecologically important non-forest ecosystems, carbon stock and biological diversity to be able to examine the forest and/or TOF management system of the organisation to be certified and to decide whether the requirements as set out in ST 1003 and ST 1002 are effectively implemented.</p> <p>h) Natural environment sciences, environmental technology, and the economic principles applicable to disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification and forest management, to be able to understand the fundamental relations between human activities and sustainable forest and TOF management.</p> <p>i) Technical aspects of forestry operations and operations of disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification, associated with exploitations, technology, and derived uses, to be able to understand the activities of the client organisation and its effects on the management itself and the territory/landscape.</p>
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<p>j) International treaties and conventions on the field of forestry.</p>	<p>j) International treaties and conventions on the field of forestry and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p>
<p>5.1.2.7 Maintenance of the qualification as an auditor</p> <p>5.1.2.7.1 The standard requires that for maintaining the qualification of the auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor has performed a minimum of five (5) external audits per year including at least two (2) forest management audits where the sum of these audits should cover at least seven (7) day of audit work of 8 hours per day.</p> <p>5.1.2.7.2 In exceptional circumstances such as statutory leave or long-term illness, auditors unable to comply with 5.1.2.7.1 shall perform at least two (2) PEFC sustainable forest management audits under the leadership of a qualified auditor.</p> <p>5.1.2.7.3 Additionally, the standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that for maintaining the auditor qualification, qualified auditors participate in a PEFC forest management refresher training recognised by the PEFC Council:</p> <p>At least, every two calendar years; and,</p> <p>Whenever a new version of the PEFC benchmarks and/or forest management standard or standards they are qualified to audit is published. The certification body shall ensure that such refresher training is successfully taken prior to start operating against it.</p>	<p>5.1.2.7 Maintenance of the qualification as an auditor</p> <p>5.1.2.7.1 The standard requires that for maintaining the qualification of the auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor has performed a minimum of five (5) external audits per year including at least two (2) on disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification management audits where the sum of these audits should cover at least seven (7) day of audit work of 8 hours per day.</p> <p>5.1.2.7.2 In exceptional circumstances such as statutory leave or long-term illness, auditors unable to comply with 5.1.2.7.1 shall perform at least two (2) PEFC sustainable forest management audits or management audits on disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification under the leadership of a qualified auditor.</p> <p>5.1.2.7.3 Additionally, the standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that for maintaining the auditor qualification, qualified auditors participate in a PEFC forest management refresher training recognised by the PEFC Council that includes a specific module for TOF:</p> <p>At least, every two calendar years; and,</p> <p>Whenever a new version of the PEFC benchmarks and/or forest management standard or standards and/or TOF requirements they are qualified to audit is published. The certification body shall ensure that such refresher training is successfully taken prior to start operating against it.</p>
<p>5.1.4 Reviewer and certification decision maker</p> <p>5.1.4.2 Education</p> <p>5.1.4.2.1 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that reviewers and certification decision makers have the knowledge corresponding to at least a secondary education that includes or is supplemented with courses related to forestry.</p>	<p>5.1.4 Reviewer and certification decision maker</p> <p>5.1.4.2 Education</p> <p>5.1.4.2.1 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that reviewers and certification decision makers have the knowledge corresponding to at least a secondary education that includes or is supplemented with courses related to forestry and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p>

<p>Note: Secondary education is the part of the national education system that comes after the primary or elementary stage, and that is completed prior to entrance to tertiary education, i.e., university or similar educational institution.</p> <p>5.1.4.2.2 The specific education relating to forestry can be substituted by working experience in this sector if the certification body can demonstrate it is equivalent to the required education.</p>	<p>Note: Secondary education is the part of the national education system that comes after the primary or elementary stage, and that is completed prior to entrance to tertiary education, i.e., university or similar educational institution.</p> <p>5.1.4.2.2 The specific education relating to forestry and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification can be substituted by working experience in this sector if the certification body can demonstrate it is equivalent to the required education.</p>
<p>5.1.4.3 Working experience</p> <p>5.1.4.3.2 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that the reviewers and certification decision makers have a minimum of three (3) years full time experience in forestry.</p> <p>Note: Full time experience in a professional or managerial position applying forest management.</p> <p>5.1.4.3.3 The standard requires that the number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one (1) year, if the reviewers and certification decision makers has completed a tertiary education in forestry.</p> <p>Note: Tertiary education, also referred to as third stage, third level, and post-secondary education, is the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education.</p>	<p>5.1.4.3 Working experience</p> <p>5.1.4.3.2 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that the reviewers and certification decision makers have a minimum of three (3) years full time experience in forestry and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p> <p>Note: Full time experience in a professional or managerial position applying forest management and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p> <p>5.1.4.3.3 The standard requires that the number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one (1) year, if the reviewers and certification decision makers has completed a tertiary education in forestry or disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification</p> <p>Note: Tertiary education, also referred to as third stage, third level, and post-secondary education, is the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education.</p>

<p>5.1.4.4 PEFC forest management training</p> <p>The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that new reviewers and certification decision makers have received initial training on PEFC sustainable forest management certification recognised by the PEFC Council for the country/countries where they conduct audits. The certification body shall ensure that new reviewers and certification decision makers have successfully completed the training before they start their certification activities.</p> <p>Note: The PEFC website provides further information on training options.</p>	<p>5.1.4.4 PEFC forest management training</p> <p>The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that new reviewers and certification decision makers have received initial training on PEFC sustainable forest management certification recognised by the PEFC Council for the country/countries where they conduct audits, which includes a module for TOF. The certification body shall ensure that new reviewers and certification decision makers have successfully completed the training before they start their certification activities.</p> <p>Note: The PEFC website provides further information on training options.</p>
<p>5.1.4.7 Competencies</p> <p>5.1.4.7.1 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that reviewers and certification decision makers demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:</p> <p>f) Legislation, regulations, or other relevant requirements, enabling the auditor to operate in the right legal framework and to be aware of the legislative requirements applicable to the client organisation which is the subject of the audit and to judge on its legal compliance. Knowledge and understanding of this area shall cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. forest governance and law enforcement system of countries, including those covering social, health and safety issues of workers ii. international conventions relating to forest iii. international conventions relating to worker rights (ILO core conventions) iv. international treaties and conventions relating to forestry, forest trade and tree-based products; and v. data privacy and protection. 	<p>5.1.4.7 Competencies</p> <p>5.1.4.7.1 The standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that reviewers and certification decision makers demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:</p> <p>f) Legislation, regulations, or other relevant requirements, enabling the auditor to operate in the right legal framework and to be aware of the legislative requirements applicable to the client organisation which is the subject of the audit and to judge on its legal compliance. Knowledge and understanding of this area shall cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. forest and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification governance and law enforcement system of countries, including those covering social, health and safety issues of workers ii. international conventions relating to forest and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification iii. international conventions relating to worker rights (ILO core conventions) iv. international treaties and conventions relating to forestry, forest trade and tree-based products and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification and its trade v. data privacy and protection.

<p>g) The principles of forest management based on techniques involving inventories, planning, protection and the management of forest ecosystems, identification and management of ecologically important forest areas, carbon stock and biological diversity to be able to examine the forest management system of the organisation to be certified and to decide whether the requirements as set out in ST 1003 and ST 1002 are effectively implemented.</p> <p>h) Natural environment sciences, environmental technology, and the economic principles applicable to forest management, to be able to understand the fundamental relations between human activities and sustainable forest management.</p> <p>i) Technical aspects of forestry operations, associated with exploitations, technology, and derived uses, to be able to understand the activities of the client organisation and its effects on the management itself and the territory.</p> <p>j) International treaties and conventions on the field of forestry.</p>	<p>g) The principles of forest management based on techniques involving inventories, planning, protection and the management of forest ecosystems, agroforestry and silvopastoral systems (as applicable, according to the disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification), identification and management of ecologically important forest areas, ecologically important non-forest ecosystems, carbon stock and biological diversity to be able to examine the forest and/or TOF management system of the organisation to be certified and to decide whether the requirements as set out in ST 1003 and ST 1002 are effectively implemented.</p> <p>h) Natural environment sciences, environmental technology, and the economic principles applicable to disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification and forest management, to be able to understand the fundamental relations between human activities and sustainable forest management.</p> <p>i) Technical aspects of forestry operations and operations of disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification, associated with exploitations, technology, and derived uses, to be able to understand the activities of the client organisation and its effects on the management itself and the territory/landscape.</p> <p>j) International treaties and conventions on the field of forestry and disciplines directly connected to the complementary land use covered by TOF certification.</p>
<p>5.1.4.8 Maintenance of the qualification as a reviewer or certification decision maker</p> <p>5.1.4.8.1 The standard requires that for maintaining the qualification of the reviewer or certification decision maker, the certification body shall ensure that the reviewer or certification decision maker has observed at least one PEFC forest management audit per year.</p>	<p>5.1.4.8 Maintenance of the qualification as a reviewer or certification decision maker</p> <p>5.1.4.8.1 The standard requires that for maintaining the qualification of the reviewer or certification decision maker, the certification body shall ensure that the reviewer or certification decision maker has observed at least one PEFC TOF management audit per year.</p>

<p>5.1.4.8. Additionally, the standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that for maintaining the reviewer or certification decision maker qualification, qualified reviewers or certification decision makers participate in a PEFC forest management refresher training recognised by the PEFC Council:</p> <p>At least, every two calendar years; and,</p> <p>whenever a new version of the PEFC benchmarks and/or forest management standard or standards they are qualified to audit is published. The certification body shall ensure that such refresher training is successfully taken prior to start operating against it.</p>	<p>5.1.4.8.2 Additionally, the standard requires that the certification body shall ensure that for maintaining the reviewer or certification decision maker qualification, qualified reviewers or certification decision makers participate in a PEFC forest management refresher training recognised by the PEFC Council, which includes a module for TOF:</p> <p>At least, every two calendar years; and,</p> <p>whenever a new version of the PEFC benchmarks and/or forest management standard or standards and TOF requirements they are qualified to audit is published. The certification body shall ensure that such refresher training is successfully taken prior to start operating against it.</p>
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