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Transition to the revised PEFC Austria scheme 2024



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Foreword

PEFC Austria (PEFC: Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) is a national organisation with the purpose of facilitating sustainable forest management through sustainable forest management certification and labelling of wood products. Consumers can trust that products carrying the PEFC label are made of raw material from sustainably managed forests, from recycling and/or non-controversial sources. PEFC Austria is a work group responsible for the standard setting and the administration of the Austrian PEFC scheme.

PEFC Austria standards are developed within an open and transparent procedure based on consensus and supported by consultation of a variety of stakeholders. Since 1999, PEFC Austria is full member of PEFC International whose strict endorsement procedure guarantees international recognition.

To improve the readability, the male form is used for all denominations of persons. It refers to all genders.

Introduction

PEFC Austria is committed to periodically revise its scheme requirements in an open, transparent and consensus based process, no later than in five years. The implementation of the revised scheme and the certification against revised standards require a transition period necessary for all players to familiarise with the new requirements, to implement changes to the scheme and necessary organisational arrangements. Also endorsement of the revised scheme by the PEFC Council is a principal step within the transition period ensuring continuing international recognition of the PEFC Austria scheme.

The term “shall” is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions that, reflecting the requirements that are mandatory. The term “should” is used to indicate guidance that, although not mandatory, is provided as a recognised means of meeting the requirements. The term “may” used throughout this standard indicates permission expressed by this standard whereas “can” refers to the ability of a user of this standard or to a possibility open to the user.

1 Scope

1.1 This document describes procedures for the transition period to forest management certification according to the revised PEFC Austria scheme (2024) ensuring compliance with application dates and transition dates defined in the revised standards of the scheme. This document applies to certification bodies as well as to their clients.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies:

- PEFC AT ST 1001 PEFC-Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in Austria
- PEFC AT ST 1002 Criteria and Indicators for the Determination of Sustainable Forestry in Austria
- PEFC AT ST 1003 Group Forest Management Certifications according to the PEFC-System in Austria - Requirements

- PEFC AT ST 1004 Requirements for Certification Bodies for Forest Management Certification

3 Definitions

3.1 **Accredited certificate** is a certificate issued by a certification body within the scope of its accreditation that bears the accreditation body's symbol.

3.2 **Application date** is a date from which on the scheme can be applied for a certification activities.

3.3 **Transition date** is a date by which all certificates shall be issued or re-issued against the revised PEFC Austria scheme.

4 Transition requirements

4.1 Application date

4.1.1 The application date of 27. April 2025 is set up eleven months from the formal approval of the revised scheme by the PEFC Austria's General Assembly.

4.1.2 Within the period between the formal approval date and the application date the entities involved in the scheme shall perform the following activities:

a) PEFC Austria to ensure endorsement of the revised scheme by the PEFC Council; to disseminate information about changes to the scheme; provide necessary training and provide support in the implementation of organizational changes required by the revised scheme;

b) applicants for forest management certification and participating forest owners to familiarize with and implement the changes in the revised scheme, in particular development/update of sustainability reports, compliance with the requirements for participation of forest owners, internal audits and follow up actions

c) certification bodies to familiarize with and implement changes in the revised scheme relating to the certification bodies. This shall include necessary changes in the certification bodies' accreditation and a new notification contract with PEFC Austria ensuring compliance with the requirements in the revised standards.

4.1.3 The certification body shall not issue a forest management certificate against the revised scheme before the application date.

4.2 Transition date

4.2.1 The transition date of 27. April 2026 is set up one year from the application date.

4.2.2 After the application date, the certification body shall carry out all certification, re-certification and annual surveillance audits against and in compliance with the revised scheme to ensure that by the time of the transition date all forest management certificates are issued or re-issued as accredited certificates stating compliance with the revised scheme.

4.2.3 Applicants for forest management certification, particularly of the group certification in natural growth regions, shall ensure that after the issuance of the certificate against the revised scheme, all participants of the group forest management certification are issued with new confirmations on participation stating compliance with the revised scheme.