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Standard Setting – Requirements



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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 an organisation 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

Forest management certification according to the Austrian Sustainable Forest Management Certification Scheme is based on requirements defined in PEFC Austria's standard(s) for sustainable forest management. Sustainable forest management is a holistic approach that takes into account ecological, social and economic criteria. Open, transparent and consensus-based participation of local and national stakeholders who are affected by forest management is an essential element in the development of the PEFC Austria's sustainable forest management certification scheme and the definition of sustainable forest management.

The PEFC Council endorses national forest management certification schemes for sustainable forest management. Forest conditions, their environmental, social, economical, and historical aspects vary amongst different regions and countries. The PEFC Council reflects this fact by incorporating in its standards national forest management certification schemes and standards which are suitable to local situations.

The resolutions made by the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE, recently "Forest Europe") serve as the basis for drawing up the technical documents. In addition, nationally relevant aspects of sustainable forestry management are also taken into consideration.

The technical documents are to be drawn up independently of the certification and accreditation processes, and they follow the principles of transparency, independence, cost efficiency, and non-discrimination, as well as being on a voluntary basis.

This document is based on ISO/IEC Guide 59. It is a component of PEFC Austria's technical documents.

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

This document describes the procedure for the development and revision of the forest management standard and possibly scheme-specific chain of custody standards of the Austrian PEFC Scheme.

2. Normative references

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

- ISO/IEC Guide 59, *Code of good practice for standardisation*
- ISO/IEC Guide 2, *Standardisation and related activities – General vocabulary*

3. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2 apply in addition to the definitions set out in this section.

3.1 Consensus

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

Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)

3.2 Disadvantaged stakeholder

A stakeholder who might be financially or otherwise disadvantaged in participating in the standard-setting work.

3.3 Enquiry draft

Proposed document that is available for public consultation.

3.4 Final draft

A proposed document that is available for formal approval.

3.5 Key stakeholder

A stakeholder whose participation is critical to the results of the standard-setting work.

3.6 Normative document

A document that provides rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results.

Note 1: The term “normative document” is a generic term that covers such documents as standards, technical specifications, codes of practice and regulations.

Note 2: “A document” is to be understood as any medium with information recorded on or in it.

Note 3: The terms for different kinds of normative documents are defined considering the document and its content as a single entity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)

3.7 Revision

Introduction of all necessary changes to the substance and presentation of a normative document.

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

3.8 Review

Activity of checking a normative document to determine whether it is to be reaffirmed, changed or withdrawn.

3.9 Stakeholder

A person, group or organisation with an interest in the subject of the standardisation.

Note: The nine major groups that have been defined by Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 provides an example of stakeholders involved in/concerned by sustainable forest management: (i) business and industry, (ii) children and youth, (iii) forest owners, (iv) indigenous people, (v) local authorities, (vi) NGOs, (vii) scientific and technological community, (viii) women, and (ix) workers and trade unions.

3.10 Standard

A document, established by consensus and approved by a recognised body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree or order in a given context.

Note: Standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, and aimed at the promotion of optimum benefits (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.11 Working draft

Proposed document that is available generally for comments or voting within a working group/committee.

3.12 Working group

At the initiative of forestry interest parties, different groups participating in the national PEFC process, particularly materially and directly affected stakeholders (forestry, wood processing, pulp and paper industry, environmental groups, retailing, trade unions, etc.), are invited to nominate representatives to the working group.

Note: The composition of the working group is reconstituted when starting a system revision following stakeholders identification.

4. Requirements for standardising setting

4.1 PEFC Austria shall make its standard-setting procedures publicly available and shall regularly review its standard-setting procedures including consideration of comments from stakeholders.

4.2 The PEFC Austria secretariat shall keep records relating to the standard-setting process providing evidence of compliance with the requirements of this document. Evidence of compliance with the requirements of this standard and the standardizing body's own procedures includes:

- a) Standard-setting procedures,
- b) Stakeholder identification mapping,
- c) Contacted and/or invited stakeholders,
- d) Stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting,
- e) Feedback received and a synopsis of how feedback was addressed,
- f) All drafts and final versions of the standard,
- g) Outcomes from working group considerations,
- h) Evidence of consensus on the final version of the standard(s),
- i) Evidence relating to the review process, and
- j) Final approval by the standardizing body.

The records shall be kept for a minimum of five years and shall be available to interested parties upon request.

4.3 PEFC Austria shall establish a permanent or temporary working group responsible for standard-setting activities (see 3.12). The working group shall be convened by the PEFC Austria Secretariat. The working group shall:

- a) be accessible to materially and directly affected stakeholders,
- b) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard where single concerned interests shall not dominate nor be dominated in the process. To ensure a balanced representation and effectiveness of its work, the working group shall be limited to 24 seats divided in following stakeholder groups:

- Forestry (max 6 seats)
- Wood processing/Trade/Energy (max 6 seats)
- Environment (max 4 seats)
- Social - labour (max 4 seats)
- Other interest groups (Science, Hunting, Visitors of forests-Recreational, Consumers,... max 4 seats).

- c) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that are materially affected by the standard, and those that can influence the implementation of the standard. The materially affected stakeholders shall represent a meaningful segment of the participants.

Note: Five stakeholder groups defined in 4.4b ensure that the WG includes sufficient expertise and that materially affected stakeholder represent a meaningful segment.

4.4 Procedures for dealing with any substantive and procedural complaints relating to the standardising activities, which are accessible to stakeholders, are given in Complaint Procedures and Rules of Arbitration (PEFC AT PB 4004). Upon receipt of the complaint, PEFC Austria shall:

- a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant,

- b) gather and verify all necessary information to validate the complaint, impartially and objectively evaluate the subject matter of the complaint, and make a decision upon the complaint, and
- c) formally communicate the decision on the complaint and of the complaint handling process to the complainant.

4.5 The PEFC Austria secretariat shall serve as the contact point for enquiries and complaints relating to its standard-setting activities. For easy accessibility complaints and enquiries shall be directed to PEFC Austria's office.

5. Standard-setting process

5.1 For the creation of a new standard, the standardizing body shall develop a proposal including:

- a) the scope of the standard,
- b) justification of the need for the standard,
- c) a clear description of the intended outcomes,
- d) a risk assessment of potential negative impacts arising from implementing the standard (such as factors that could affect the achievement of the outcomes negatively, unintended consequences of implementation, actions to address the identified risks) and
- e) a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable.

When revising an existing standard, this proposal must at least include points a) and e) above.

Note: Guidance for development of a proposal and justification is given in ISO Directives, Part 1, Annex C and Annex SL (Appendix 1).

5.2 PEFC Austria shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work.

Note: A stakeholder mapping exercise that includes defining which interest sectors are relevant and why, and for each sector what are likely to be the key issues, who are the key stakeholders, and what means of communication will best reach them, is a recognised means of meeting the requirement.

5.3 PEFC Austria shall identify disadvantaged and key stakeholders. PEFC Austria shall address the constraints of their participation and proactively seek their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities.

5.4 PEFC Austria shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and in suitable media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions. The announcement and invitation shall include:

- a) information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable,
- b) access to the proposal for the standard (refer to 5.1),
- c) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,
- d) an invitation to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is understandable,

- e) explicit invitation and clear instruction on how to submit feedback on the scope and standard-setting process and
- f) reference to publicly available standard-setting procedures.

Note: In a timely manner means (at the latest) four weeks before the first standard-setting activity is scheduled to occur.

5.5 PEFC Austria shall review the standard-setting procedures and the projected process based on comments received from the public announcement and establish a working group/ or adjust the composition of an already existing working group based on received nominations. The acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group/committee, considerations of an appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organization, an individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard-setting. The working group shall have balanced representation and decision-making by all stakeholder categories and include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that affected by the standard, and those that can influence implementation of the standard. The constitution of the working group is approved by the PEFC Austria General assembly.

5.6 The work of the working group shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where:

- a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group,
- b) all members of the working group shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and submit comments to the working drafts, and
- c) comments and views submitted by any member of the working group shall be considered in an open and transparent way and their resolution and proposed changes shall be recorded.

5.7 The PEFC Austria secretariat shall organise a public consultation, which may also include conducting workshops, on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that:

- a) the start and the end of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in suitable media, including PEFC Austria,

Note: In a timely manner means (at the latest) the day before the start of public consultation.

- b) a direct invitation to comment on the enquiry draft is sent to each stakeholder identified by stakeholder identification mapping (refer to 6.2) aiming for a balanced participation of stakeholder groups,
- c) the invitation of disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made by means that ensure that the information reaches its recipient and is understandable,
- d) the enquiry draft is publicly available and accessible,
- e) the public consultation is for at least 60 days,
- f) all comments received are considered by the working group in an objective manner,
- g) a synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration by the Working Group, is publicly available (for example on the website of PEFC Austria) and is sent to each stakeholder/party that gave feedback.

For new standards the standardizing body shall organize a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.

5.8 PEFC Austria shall organise pilot testing of the new standards and the results of the pilot testing shall be considered by the working group/committee.

Note: Pilot testing is not required in case of revision of a standard where experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.

5.9 The decision of the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of a consensus within a period of three sessions. In addition, external experts may be consulted, if required. In order to reach a consensus the working group can utilise the following alternative processes to establish whether there is opposition:

- a) a face-to face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, show of hands for a yes/no vote; a statement on consensus from the Chair where there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal balloting process, etc.,
- b) a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote,
- c) an e-mail meeting where a request for agreement or objection is provided to members with the members providing a written response (a proxy for a vote), or
- d) combinations thereof.

Where a vote is used in decision-making, the standard-setting procedures shall determine and include decision-making thresholds that quantifies consensus. The threshold must be consistent with the consensus definition (refer to 3.1). However, a majority vote cannot override sustained opposition in order to achieve consensus.

5.10 In the case of a negative vote which represents sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests surrounding a substantive issue, the issue shall be resolved using the following mechanism(s):

- a) discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group/committee in order to find a compromise,
- b) direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise,
- c) additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary) where further stakeholder input can help to achieve consensus on unresolved issues. PEFC Austria determines the scope and duration of any additional public consultation,
- d) dispute resolution process (PEFC AT PB 4004). If a consensus-based resolution cannot be achieved by the working group, the Arbitration Body of PEFC Austria will make a decision within 30 days. The decision is binding for the working group.

5.11 PEFC Austria Secretariat shall develop a standard-setting report that provides summary of the standard-setting process. The report shall be made publicly available.

5.12 PEFC Austria's General Assembly shall formally approve the standards/normative documents based on evidence of consensus reached by the working group.

5.13 The formally approved standards/normative documents shall be published in a timely manner no later than two weeks from its formal approval and made publicly available at no costs (e.g. on the website of PEFC Austria).

5.14 Standard(s) shall include:

- a) identification and contact information for the standardizing body,
- b) official language of the standard,
- c) a note that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference.
- d) the approval date and the date of next periodic review.

5.15 Printed copies shall be made available upon request at a price that covers no more than administrative costs (if any).

6. Revision of standards/normative documents

6.1 The standards/normative documents shall be reviewed and revised at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period. The review shall be based on consideration of feedback received during the standard's implementation and a gap analysis. If necessary, a stakeholder consultation shall be organized to obtain further feedback and input.

6.1.1 The decision to launch a review/revision of a standard is taken by the General Assembly of PEFC Austria. In the event of new scientific findings and practical experience, the documents can be revised upon the initiative of PEFC Austria at any time.

6.1.2 Where the decision is to reaffirm a standard, PEFC Austria shall provide a justification for the decision and make the justification publicly available. Where the decision is to revise the standard, PEFC Austria shall specify the type of revision (normal or editorial revision).

6.1.3 The procedures for the revision of the standards/normative documents shall follow those set out in chapter 5. When starting a system revision a stakeholder identification and reconstitution of the working group according 0 to 0 shall take place.

6.2 The standardizing body shall establish and maintain a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. This mechanism shall be accessible on the website of the PEFC Austria with clear directions for providing feedback. All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.

6.3 At the start of a review, PEFC Austria shall evaluate the standard against appropriate PEFC International standards, national laws and regulations, and other relevant standards to identify potential gaps in the standard. PEFC Austria shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research and relevant emerging issues.

6.4 Where the feedback and the gap analysis do not identify a need to revise the standard, PEFC Austria shall organize stakeholder consultation to determine whether stakeholders see a need for revising the standard. PEFC Austria shall include the gap analysis in the stakeholder consultation. The stakeholder consultation shall be organized as a public consultation period of at least 30 days (following the requirements of clause 5.7) and/or stakeholder meetings.

6.5 Procedures for revision of standards/normative documents (normal revision) shall conform to those stated in section 5. A normal revision can occur at the periodic review, or between periodic reviews, but does not include editorial revisions and time-critical revisions.

6.6 Editorial revisions can be made without triggering the normal revision process. PEFC Austria shall approve the editorial changes formally and publish an amendment or a new edition of the standard.

6.7 A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process and can be conducted only in the following situations:

- a) Change in national laws and regulations affecting compliance with PEFC International requirements
- b) Instruction by PEFC International to comply with specific or new PEFC requirements within a timescale that is too short for a normal revision.

A time-critical revision shall follow these steps: PEFC Austria shall draft the revised standard and may consult stakeholders. The revised standard shall be approved formally at the General-Assembly of PEFC Austria. PEFC Austria shall explain the justification for the urgent change(s) and make the justification publicly available.

6.8 The revision shall define the application date and transition date of the revised standards/normative documents.

6.9 The application date shall not exceed a period of one year from the publication of the standard. This is needed for the endorsement of the revised standards/normative documents, introducing the changes, information dissemination and training.

6.10 The transition date shall not exceed a period of one year except in justified exceptional circumstances where the implementation of the revised standards/normative documents requires a longer period.

7. Technical corrigenda and amendments

7.1 A published document may subsequently be modified by the publication of:

- a) a technical corrigendum (or a corrected republication of the current edition);
- b) an amendment.

7.2 The PEFC Austria Secretariat shall decide, bearing in mind both financial consequences and the interest of users of the document, whether to publish the technical corrigenda or amendment as a separate document or to incorporate them into a new edition of the corrected and updated document.

7.3 A technical corrigendum may be issued to correct either:

- a) a technical error or ambiguity in an normative document, inadvertently introduced either in the Working Group or in the publication stage and which could lead to incorrect or unsafe application of the normative document; or
- b) information that has become outdated since its publication, provided that the modification has no effect on the technical normative elements of the normative document.

7.4 Technical corrigenda shall be published by the PEFC Austria Secretariat after consultation with the Working Group and the PEFC Austria General Assembly.

7.5 An amendment alters and/or adds to previously agreed technical provisions in an existing document.

7.6 The procedures for developing and publishing an amendment shall follow at least the stages outlined in chapters 5.6, 5.9, 5.10, 5.12 and 5.13.

Figure 1: Standard-setting process

