

PEFC B 2002 : 2012	Requirements for the qualification of auditors and certification bodies for forest certification
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Adopted by the Extraordinary General Assembly of the PEFC Belgium Commission
on 27 June 2012

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1. Scope

The document sets out the duties, responsibilities and general requirements in terms of the competencies and the missions of auditors and certification bodies involved in forest certification and the certification and accreditation procedures.

2. Normative references

- PEFC B 1001:2012 Requirements for the implementation of forest management certification
- PEFC B 1002: 2012 Sustainable forest management standards for the Walloon Region
- PEFC B 1003:2012 - Requirements for the implementation of the Chain of Custody
- PEFC B 1004:2012 - Requirements for use of the logo

3. Terms and definitions

The terms and definitions are given in the document PEFC B 4001:2012 Terms and Definitions.

4. Certification Bodies – Requirements

4.1. Scope of the certification

The scope of the certification is set out in the Belgian Forest Certification Scheme in Chapter PEFC B 0001:2012.

4.2. Competencies of CB

PEFC certification will be carried out by impartial, independent third parties that are not involved in the standards setting process as governing or decision-making bodies, or in forest management, and that are independent of the certified entity.

- 1) Certification bodies carrying out forest verification will fulfil the requirements laid down in ISO/IEC 17021:2011 or ISO Guide 65.
- 2) The certification body carrying out forest certification will have technical competence in the field of forest management, as regards its economic, social and environmental impact, as well as on forest certification criteria.
- 3) The certification body will be fully familiar with the Belgian Forest Certification Scheme on the basis of which it carries out forest certification

Compliance by the certification body with the above requirements must be verified by an accreditation as described in Chapter 6.

4.3. Qualification criteria for auditors

Certification bodies have a responsibility to use competent auditors with adequate technical know-how regarding the certification process and issues related to forest management.

- The auditors must fulfil general criteria for quality and environmental management systems auditors as defined in ISO 19 011.
- The auditor carrying out the field audits must have a degree in forestry. This auditor must be fluent in the language used in the region of the audited party and be able to write his reports in this language.
- The auditor must have a good knowledge of forest management and forestry legislation in the region being audited.

The certification body can fulfil the technical competence defined for auditors by means of the presence of a technical expert(s) in a group of auditors carrying out forest management audits.

Compliance by the certification body with the above requirements must be verified by an accreditation as described in Chapter 6.

5. Certification procedure

5.1. Application

The regional entity makes an application for certification to a certifying body (CB).

The certification body shall require the regional entity to specify in its application file the geographical boundaries of its area of intervention.

In respect of regional certification, the CB asks the regional entity applicant to forward to it one month before the audit date:

- The composition of the regional entity (and by-laws if applicable);
- A status report of the regional forest management
- Action sheets in response to the improvement plan and the list of its follow-up indicators;
- The Environmental Management System including the following elements:
 - The documented commitment of the entity's senior regional officers to comply with the regional standards and the legal requirements
 - Documentation of the structure and responsibilities within the regional entity
 - Documented procedures for internal audits, in particular, the requirements for the qualification of internal auditors and for defining the sampling method
 - Documented procedures for managing non-compliance and corrective and preventive measures
 - Documented procedures for managing participants' records
 - Documented procedures for managing the documentation of the files
 - The five-year action plan responding to the progress plan

The number of member owners and the corresponding total surface area.

5.2. Preparation for the audit

The certification body must decide on the basis of these documents whether it can proceed with the audit or whether additional elements are needed and if so whether the audit is therefore postponed to a later date.

5.3. Assessment

The audit criteria are the requirements of the relevant regional standards of the Belgian Forest Certification Scheme.

The certification body must have established internal procedures to conduct the forest management certification in respect of the Belgian Forest Certification Scheme. The certification procedures applied must meet or be compatible with the requirements defined in ISO/IEC 17021:2011 or ISO Guide 65 and with the requirements of ISO 19011.

The audit team appointed by the certification body gathers the evidence on which compliance with standards is assessed. Audit evidence to determine compliance with the forest management standards includes relevant information from third parties (e.g. government agencies, community groups, conservation bodies, etc.). The CB takes all necessary measures to ensure that the consultation of external stakeholders and in particular members of the regional entity takes place during the audit.

In addition to the requirements set out above, the certification body monitors use of the PEFC logo if the entity is a PEFC logo user under group B in accordance with the PEFC B 1004 :2012 - Requirements for the use of the logo.

5.3.1. Audit programme

To check that the applicant regional entity meets the requirements of this Belgian Forest Certification scheme, that it is effectively applied and that it achieves all the goals of the process, the audit includes:

- A preparation and presentation phase of the report
- A documentary assessment phase by the regional entity
- An assessment phase by the regional entity of the appraisal of the implementation of the commitments from the member organisations and forest owners that takes into account the following:
 - Organisations involved in one of the Progress Plan's action sheets
To check that the conditions for implementing and monitoring their commitments are regularly assessed by the regional entity, the certifying organisation meets the main bodies involved in the progress plan to cover, over the entire certification cycle, all of its goals.
 - Member forest owners
To assess the effectiveness of the implementation by the regional entity of the internal controls and appraise the ownership of the PEFC system and compliance with the commitments in respect of the forest owner's Sustainable Management Charter, the certifying body will physically meet a sample of owners, controlled or otherwise internally. The number and the sample of owners surveyed are based on the total membership. The list of owners is decided jointly by the certifying body and the regional entity.

5.3.2. Audit duration

The maximum duration of monitoring audits is 12 months and maximum duration of reassessment audits is three years for forest management certification.

The total number of days is devoted to:

- preparation, reporting and follow-up of the audit
- The assessment of the regional entity and bodies involved in the Progress Plan (system audit)
- The assessment of the owners or operators (field audit)

Regarding the field audit, the certification body assesses compliance with the criteria on a sample of all individual forest owners participating in the regional certification.

The size of the sample for the (re)assessment audit is at least $0,8\sqrt{n}$, where n is the number of individual forest owners participating in regional certification. The sample is made up of 20% of owners who have already been audited internally and 80% of forest owners who have not yet been audited internally over the five past year. The size of the sample for surveillance audits is $0,6 * \sqrt{n}$.

The maximum period for surveillance audits is one year and maximum period for reassessment audits is five years for forest management certification.

The cycle of renewal of the Belgian Forest Certification Scheme is 5 years. The concepts of certificate renewal (3 years) and for the renewal of the Scheme are decoupled.

The duration of the renewal and monitoring audits must reflect the renewal cycle of the Belgian scheme and not the type of audit. In the event of a renewal of the Belgian scheme, the duration of the monitoring audit must be replaced by the duration of the renewal audit in the twelve months following the recognition of the Belgian Scheme by PEFC International.

5.3.3. Decision on certification – drafting of the report

During external audits, infringements of the law are taken into consideration. The results of the collection of evidence and the audit are presented to the audited party during a final meeting. Non-conformities have to be included in the audit report along with the corrective measures proposed and planned by the audited party. The audited party receives a copy of the report.

The certification decision may be positive, conditional or negative. If the decision is positive, the certificate is issued immediately. A conditional or negative decision is based on non-conformity with the certification criteria. Non-conformity gives rise to corrective actions or possibly the rejection, deferral or withdrawal of the certificate. Major non-conformities prevent the issuance of a certificate. Minor non-conformities are not necessarily an obstacle to certification. A conditional decision on certification must be accompanied by corrective measures to be implemented according to a specific timetable. The certificate may be conditionally issued if the corrective actions are agreed upon. Non-conformity may occur at the level of the region or at the level of the participant in regional certification. In the second case, if corrective measures are not implemented, the non-conformity may lead to the expulsion of the applicant from the regional certification process.

In drafting the certification documents, the following elements will appear:

- Name or corporate name and address of the regional entity
- Scope of application: "Sustainable forest management"
- Area: Forests of Region x whose owners have adhered to the approach
- Basic Scheme: "Belgian Forest Certification Scheme – General Document"
- Effective date of certification and certificate expiry date (3 years) after the certification or renewal date
- The logo and accreditation number of the accreditation body.

A summary of the forest certification report, including the findings on the conformity of the audited party with the forest management standards, is prepared by the certification body. The audited party endorses the summary report and makes it available to the public

The certificate issued as part of regional forest certification covers only the forest area of these owners and/or those participating in the regional certification. Every certificate must be accompanied by information about the accreditation (accreditation number and name of the accreditation body).

In addition, the CB informs PEFC Belgium of the list of holders of a sustainable forest management certificate as well as any change in respect of the dates or scope of these certificates.

The conformity of CB's procedures with the above requirements shall be verified by a certification as described in Chapter 6.

6. Accreditation procedures

Certification bodies carrying out forest management certification must be accredited by a national accreditation body so as to ensure the credibility of the certification work and facilitate mutual recognition. All certificates issued must be accompanied by information on accreditation, including the accreditation number and the name of the accreditation body.

Accreditation bodies must be part of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) and/or the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) umbrella organisations and implement procedures described in ISO/IEC 17011:2001 and other documents recognised by the above organisations.

The certification body must undertake forest management certification as "accredited certifications". The two following options are recognised by PEFC Council and PEFC Belgium:

- a) A certification body carrying out forest management certification must have accreditation from a national accreditation body that covers forest management certification as a specific field of operation.
- b) A certification body carrying out forest management certification as a part of the QMS (Quality Management System as defined by 9001:2000), EMS (Environmental Management System as defined by ISO14001) or EMAS (Environmental Management and Auditing System as defined by EC Regulation 761/2001) must have accreditation from a national accreditation body that covers QMS, EMS or EMAS accreditation in this specific sector.

The scope of application of the accreditation must explicitly cover the Walloon forest management standards and also ISO 17021.

In the event of non-conformity with the accreditation requirements, certification bodies are not regarded as having met PEFC Council requirements and their certifications are not considered certified for PEFC purposes.

7. Notification of certification bodies

Certification bodies issuing certificates of sustainable management in accordance with the Belgian Forest Certification Scheme must be notified by the PEFC Belgium.

To ensure the independence of certification bodies, the conditions of notification decided on by the PEFC Belgium only cover the following aspects:

1. Administrative conditions:
 - The certification body agrees to attend information meetings dedicated to certification bodies organised by the PEFC Belgium (maximum three a year).
 - The certification body informs the PEFC Belgium of all forest management certificates issues and changes concerning validity and scope of these certificates.
2. Financial conditions
3. The certification body undertakes to comply with the certification requirements laid down in the BFCS through its accreditation, as described in Chapter 7.

This notification requirement is described in a specific procedure available in the PEFC B 4003: 2011 document. The PEFC's notification conditions are not discriminatory for the certification bodies and do not create trade barriers.

8. Appeals, complaints and disputes

Accredited certification bodies must comply with procedures for dispute settlement. Any disputes between an applicant and a certification body concerning audits or the issuing, suspension, withdrawal or refusal of a certificate will be dealt with in line with these procedures.