

GABONESE ASSOCIATION OF THE PAN-AFRICAN FOREST CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

PAFC GABON



PAFC GABON FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEME

Requirements for certifying bodies providing PEFC Chain of Custody certification

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With the collaboration of:

ECOFORAF



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Transition date: no longer than one year after the endorsement date by the PEFC Council

1. General remarks

Chain of Custody certification is issued for a 5-year period by competent, **independent certifying bodies** with adequate means and accredited by COFRAC (French accreditation committee) or any other accrediting body that is a member of EA (European co-operation for Accreditation) or IAF (International Accreditation Forum) based on ISO Guide 65 and on these regulations for verification of Chain of Custody of forest products.

In addition, the certifying body (CB) must inform PAFC Gabon without delay of:

- any new Chain of Custody certificates issued and any changes to certificates already issued;
- a list of all sites covered in the case of multi-site certification.

In the case of multi-site certification covering sites in more than one country, the CB shall send the list of the sites concerned to the PEFC National Governing Body in the country where the client organisation's registered office is located (or directly to the PEFC if there is no PEFC National Governing Body in that country). This PEFC National Governing Body must then send other PEFC National Governing Bodies a list of sites covered by the certification that are located within their country.

The CB is responsible for checking correct use of the PEFC trademark by certified entities.

The requirements outlined below apply to Chain of Custody CBs when requesting accreditation to issue this PEFC Chain of Custody certificate.

The term “client organisation” used in this document refers to an individual business, or group of businesses in the case of multi-site certification, that either hold or are applying for PEFC Chain of Custody certification.

The certifying body must treat all information as confidential. If it provides information to the PEFC Council or to PAFC Gabon, it must have the client organisation's written consent to do so.

1.1. Normative reference documents

The Chain of Custody standard includes the following documents:

- PEFC Chain of Custody of forest and wood products – Requirements [this document is a translation of document PEFC ST 2002: 2013 of the PEFC international technical standard];
- Regulations for use and protection of the PEFC trademark;

2. Requirements to be met by the certifying body (CB)

Only requirements specific to this field are stipulated here, it being understood that the general requirements of the accreditation standards and procedures currently in force are applicable (ISO and IAF).

Any CB, whether accredited or making a new application, must keep reference documents updated and take account of applicable regulations currently in force.

Scope of the certification

The scope of the certification is defined by the PEFC Chain of Custody standard. The CB's standard must, as a minimum, include all requirements contained in this standard.

2.1. Body responsible for certification decisions

The body responsible for certification decisions made by the CB must include one or more person(s) with timber industry qualifications and an in-depth knowledge of the PEFC Chain of Custody standard, together with staff who are all qualified to undertake core activities (contracting procedures, audit, surveillance, etc.)

2.1.1. Documented body

The documented body, guaranteeing the impartiality of the CB, must, as a minimum, include the following stakeholders

- a representative nominated by PAFC Gabon,
- two representatives who hold PEFC Chain of Custody certification,
- two representatives of wood product users and /or specifiers

2.1.2. Certification body personnel

The certifying body must ensure that all members of the audit team:

- have knowledge corresponding to at least a secondary education;
- have attended specific courses related to timber and related industries or have professional experience in the field;
- have, in the last two years, participated in PEFC Council or PAFC Gabon Forest Product Chain of Custody training;
- have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011;
- for the initial qualification of an auditor, have a minimum of three years' professional experience in the forest-timber sector or one year, if the auditor has university-level or equivalent training in this field;
- has within the last three years performed Chain of Custody audits for at least four organisations under the supervision of a qualified auditor, or two audits for auditors qualified for ISO 9001 or 14001 auditing in the forest-timber sector;
- have knowledge and skills of audit techniques, procedures and principles;
- have knowledge and skills enabling them to understand the client organisation's operational context;
- have knowledge and skills of applicable national and international legislation governing the forest-timber sector;
- have an in-depth understanding of the Chain of Custody standard and certification process;
- have an in-depth understanding of terminology, knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:
 - Chain of Custody principles and requirements,
 - products, processes and practices specific to the sector, raw material flows / measurements and control measures;
 - the application of management systems to the timber industries;
 - information systems and technologies for authorisation, safety, distribution and control of documents, data and records;
 - Application of PEFC and other labels and claims;
 - Application of measures to avoid supplies of raw material from controversial sources, including relevant risk assessment methodology and indicators.

In some cases experts may be brought in to support audit teams in a particular field if required.

In order to keep their qualification valid, auditors must perform a minimum of five audits, including at least two Chain of Custody audits, where the sum of these audits should cover at least seven man-days of audit work.

The certifying body shall have a documented procedure for selecting and appointing the audit team, in particular the audit team leader.

The certifying body shall have a documented process in place to ensure that auditors fulfil the requirements outlined above. Every year, it shall evaluate its auditors in their application of methods such as observation, document review etc. in order to identify training needs.

2.2. Suspension/withdrawal of certification

The CD may not proceed to suspend Chain of Custody certificate at the request of the organisation, except in the case of a documented force majeure event.

Once revoked, an organisation whose Chain of Custody certification has been withdrawn, must undergo a new initial certification procedure in order to recover its certificate.

The CB shall immediately inform PAFC Gabon about any organisation whose certification has been suspended or withdrawn, indicating:

- the reasons for the withdrawal or suspension;
- in the case of suspension, its duration (less than one year).

3. Requirements for certification

3.1. Certification applications

The client organisation must provide the following information as a part of their application for Chain of Custody certification:

- The name, address and legal status of the legal entity;
- Its documented Chain of Custody procedures;
- A description of the products covered by the Chain of Custody (per site and per product): in particular the Chain of Custody method, the method of calculating the percentage of certified products, the transfer of this percentage to products, the definition applied to the origin and the intended application of PEFC/PAFC logo usage rules;
- The sites covered by the Chain of Custody in the case of multi-site certification.

3.2. CB internal procedures

3.2.1. Certification procedures

Certifying bodies must establish internal procedures for PEFC Chain of Custody certification compatible with the requirements laid down in ISO Guide 65 and the requirements contained in document PEFC ST 2003:2012 relating to requirements for certifying bodies providing Chain of Custody certification in accordance with the PEFC International standard.

3.2.2. Audit procedures

Certifying bodies must establish audit procedures compatible with the requirements specified in ISO 19011.

3.3. Preparing for the audit

The audit schedule shall be drawn up for every audit. It shall specify:

- the conduct and planning of the audit
- a list of sites for sampling (in the case of multi-site certification).

This schedule shall be notified to the client organisation and dates set in advance in consultation with the client organisation.

Prior to the site audit, the certifying body must perform a review of the client organisation's Chain of custody documentation in order to determine its compliance with audit criteria.

3.4. Evaluating the client organisation's Chain of Custody

The initial evaluation must be carried out in accordance with recommendations in paragraph 6.5 of ISO 19011.

The certifying body shall check that:

- internal procedures comply with the requirements of the national Chain of Custody standard;
- procedures are known and implemented;
- documents required for tracking the origin of the timber received by the client organisation and the consistency of input/output products are kept up to date;
- corresponding records are archived. It shall check the consistency and accuracy of this information by sampling documents linked to input/output products.
- the system put in place to avoid supplies of timber from controversial sources is fully compliant with the standard and is implemented effectively;
- rules for the use of the PEFC logo are compliant with the procedure and are implemented effectively.

The audit must also make it possible to identify areas for potential improvement of the client organisation's Chain of Custody.

3.4.1. Length of initial audits

The length of certification audits shall take into account the nature of the client organisation's business and complexity of its Chain of Custody and must be duly justified.

The minimum audit length is half a day per client organisation excluding travelling time.

3.4.2. Multi-site certification

If some of the sites in question are involved in different activities, the first step is to identify each type of activity and the sites involved in this activity.

Secondly, in addition to the central office, \sqrt{n} of the total number of sites involved must also be audited.

The minimum audit length is half a day per client organisation excluding travelling time.

3.5. Evaluation report and inclusion of items in the report

The evaluation report shall comply with clause 11 of ISO Guide 65 and clauses 6.6.1 and 6.6.2 of ISO 19011.

The documents examined and audited shall be referred to explicitly in the audit report.

The report shall include:

- The identification of organisations, processes, groups of products and products covered by the audit;
- The definition of certification criteria applicable to the client organisation's Chain of Custody (per products or groups of products if these differ).

3.6. Certification decision

3.6.1. Non-conformities

Audit findings shall be classified as major non-conformities, minor non-conformities and observations.

Any major and minor non-conformities must be corrected and the corrective actions verified before issuing the certification.

A corrective action plan, including a time frame, must be drawn up. This shall be reviewed and accepted by the certifying body. The client organisation is allowed a maximum of three months to correct a major non-conformity and until the next audit for any minor non-conformities.

The certifying body shall check all corrective actions identified during audits.

3.6.2. Certification document

The certificate must as a minimum include the following elements:

- name or company name and address of the certified entity;
- in the case of a group of businesses, a list of sites involved, along with their business activities and monitoring mechanisms selected;
- certification validity start and end dates (5 years after date of certification or renewal);
- Chain of Custody number;
- reference to the PAFC Gabon standard in respect of the Chain of Custody currently in force together with reference to the corresponding international documents, PEFC ST 2002:2010 and PEFC ST 2001:2010;
- products covered by the Chain of Custody;
- for each activity, the Chain of Custody procedure selected;
- the accrediting body's logo together with the accreditation number in compliance with the rules for its usage, making it clear that this is an accredited certification;
- the PAFC Gabon and PEFC logos.

3.6.3. Frequency of surveillance and renewal procedures

The maximum period between the conduct of two surveillance audits is one year.

A renewal audit shall take place every 5 years.

A documentation audit may be considered at the request of the certifying body 6 months after the initial audit to check that certain documents are being kept up to date.

Surveillance and renewal audits are identical in length to initial audits.

In the case of multi-site certification audits, the size of the sample shall remain unchanged for surveillance and renewal audits and shall be equal to \sqrt{n} per site in addition to the central office.