
Scheme Description – The Polish PEFC Scheme

The first revision



PEFC Polska

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1. Introduction

Sustainable forest management is a holistic approach defined as the responsible management of forests and forest areas and their use in the manner and to the extent, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and potential to fulfill, now and in the future, their relevant ecological, economic and social at the local, national and global, without damage to other ecosystems.

PEFC (Programme for the Recognition of Forest Certification Systems) is an international, non-governmental non-profit organization, founded in 1999, whose main objective is to promote sustainable forest management through forest certification and labelling of forest products carried out by independent bodies. PEFC is an "umbrella" organization - recognizes national forest certification schemes developed jointly by all stakeholders and tailored to local priorities and conditions.

PEFC promotes sustainable forest management through a system of forest certification and products derived from them. This is accomplished by two distinct, though interrelated processes:

Forest certification ensures that forests are managed in accordance with the requirements of environmental, social and economic - balancing the needs of people, wildlife and economy.

Chain of Custody Certification (CoC) system allows following the path, covering the wood from the forest to the final product. Sustainable forest management, although important for the preservation of the functions of the forest, in itself, does not create a relationship between the forest and the market. To ensure that timber and wood products come from well-managed forests, PEFC promotes certification of the wood supply chain. It specifies requirements for the processing of wood from the forest through to the final product.

PEFC Polska was founded in 2003. The first Polish PEFC scheme was endorsed in 2008.

2. Scope

This document describes the structures of the Polish PEFC certification scheme.

The PEFC Polska's objective is to promote the principles of sustainable development in the forestry sector through the Polish forest certification system and review on a regular basis the Polish forest certification system operating in accordance with the legal system of the Republic of Poland and the rules laid down by the PEFC Council based in Geneva.

3. Normative references

The Polish PEFC scheme is based on the standards and guidelines established by PEFC International. These normative references are listed hereafter. For dated and undated references the latest edition of the publication referred to applies (including amendments).

PEFC ST 1002: 2010, *Group Forest Management Certification - requirements*

PEFC ST 1003:2010, *Sustainable forest management - requirements*

PEFC ST 2001:2008 v2, *PEFC Logo Usage Rules*

4. Forestry in Poland

4.1. Statistical figures

At present, the total area of forests in Poland is 9163.8 thousand hectares (the Central Statistical Office figure as of 31 December 2012), which puts forest cover at 29.3% (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Forest cover in Poland by province (Central Statistical Office)

Forests in Poland are mainly publicly owned accounting for 81.2 percent, of which forests managed under the National Forest Holding represent 77.3 percent of the total forest area (Fig. 2, Table 1). Another 2.0 percent of the forest area is administered by the National Parks, 0.4 percent is under management of the Agricultural Agency of the State Treasury, and 0.7 percent is occupied mainly by municipal and urban forests. The ownership structure of forests in the post-war period remained almost unchanged. Small changes in forest ownership in post-war period result from afforestation.

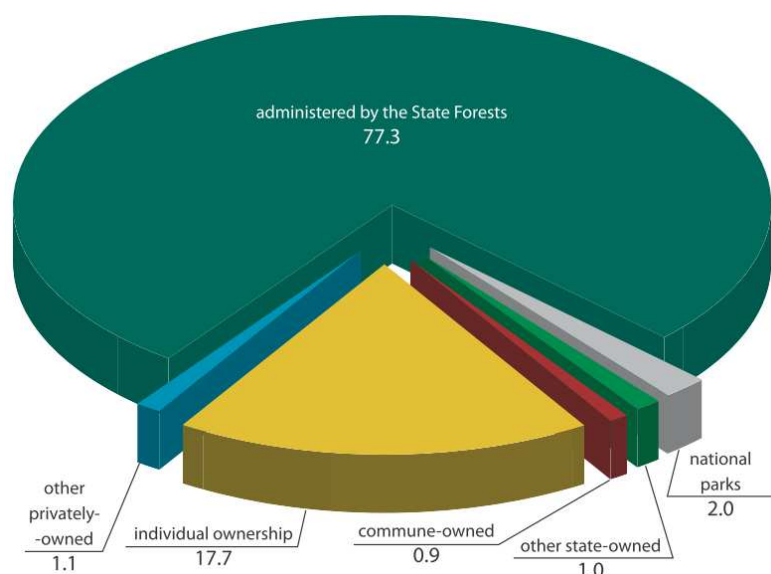


Fig. 2. Ownership structure of forests in Poland (Central Statistical Office)

Table 1. Description of forest resources of all forms of ownerships in Poland and its changes in 1995-2012 (as of 31 XII of indicated years)

<i>SPECIFICATION</i>	1995	2000	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<i>TOTAL in thousand ha</i>	8946	9059	9200	9273	9296	9329	9351	9370
<i>Forests</i>	8756	8865	9000	9066	9089	9121	9143	9164
<i>Public</i>	7262	7341	7410	7431	7434	7435	7438	7439
<i>owned by State Treasury</i>	7186	7262	7328	7347	7350	7351	7354	7355
<i>of which:</i>								
<i>managed by the State Forests</i>	6868	6953	7042	7064	7068	7072	7077	7079
<i>national parks</i>	162	181	183	184	184	184	184	185
<i>stock of the Treasury Agricultural Property</i>	59	59	44	40	39	36	34	32
<i>commune owned</i>	76	79	82	84	84	84	84	84
<i>Private</i>	1494	1524	1590	1635	1655	1686	1706	1724
<i>of which:</i>								
<i>natural persons</i>	1397	1428	1492	1537	1557	1587	1606	1623
<i>land co-operatives (commons)</i>	68	69	68	68	68	67	67	67
<i>cooperatives ownership</i>	14	9	7	6	6	6	5	5
<i>Land connected with silviculture</i>	190	194	200	207	207	208	207	206
<i>of which managed by the State Forests</i>	187	189	194	200	200	201	200	200
<i>STRUCTURE OF FOREST OWNERSHIP in %:</i>								
<i>Public</i>	82.9	82.8	82.3	82.0	81.8	81.5	81.3	81.2
<i>of which in TOTAL:</i>								
<i>managed by the State Forests</i>	78.4	78.4	78.2	77.9	77.8	77.5	77.4	77.3
<i>Private</i>	17.1	17.2	17.7	18.0	18.2	18.5	18.7	18.8
<i>FOREST AREA PER CAPITA in ha</i>	0.227	0.232	0.236	0.238	0.238	0.237	0.237	0.238
<i>FOREST COVER in %</i>	28.0	28.4	28.8	29.0	29.1	29.2	29.2	29.3
<i>SHARE OF FOREST LAND IN LAND AREA in %</i>	29.4	29.8	30.0	30.3	30.4	30.5	30.5	30.6

Source: Central Statistical Office

4.2. State Forests

The State Forests National Forest Holding is an organization protecting, utilizing, and shaping Poland's forests for over eighty years. It manages publicly owned forests on behalf of the Polish State Treasury. Their area exceeds 7.5 million hectares.

State Forests represent Treasury extent of the property. State Forests operate on the principle of financial independence and are managed by the Director General of the National Forests with the directors of the Regional Directorates of State Forests. As of 31.12.2011, the State Forests consisted of the following units:

- Directorate General of State Forests - 1
- Regional Directorates of State Forests - 17
- Forest Districts - 430

4.3. Private Forests

The share of private ownership has slightly increased during last three decades which was caused by afforestation of private owned lands. In 1981 the share of private forests was 16.9 %, whereas in 2012 this share increased to 18.4 %.

The share of privately-owned forests in Poland varies among the regions (Fig. 3) – the greatest is in the Mazowieckie province – 44.1% of its total forest area (359.2 thousand hectares) and the lowest in the Lubuskie province – 1.7% (11.4 thousand hectares).



Fig. 3. Share of private forests in the total forest area by province (Central Statistical Office)

In Poland there are about 900,000 private forest owners. This is the cause of high fragmentation - average size of the private forest is at the level of 1.2.ha. .

4.4. Legal framework

Conditions and the scope of activities within the State Forests National Forest Holding, as well as management of forestry economy in Poland, are based on regulations contained in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (articles 5, 74, 86), in Polish legal acts such as the Act on Forests, the Polish Forest Policy, Act on protection of rural and forest grounds, Act on nature protection, and on all international conventions ratified by Poland, such as Ramsar (1971), Paris (1972), Washington (1973), Bonn (1979), Rio de Janeiro (1992), Bern (1979), Espoo (1991), and Aarhus (1998) conventions.

The Act on Forests is also the legal basis for management in privately owned forests. According to this Act, a district governor (district is a second level of local government administration in Poland) is responsible for supervising forest management in privately owned forests. Over 70 % of districts governors have signed a contract with the State Forests and according to this contract local forest district managers were appointed to supervise forest management in private forests located on their administration area. Details concerning this supervision are described in respective agreement.

According to the Act on Forests the State Forests are obligated to give an advice and assistance for private forest owners in forest management.

5. Structure of documents

PEFC system is composed of a number of documents and guidelines defining the requirements for certification under the system. The structure of the documents is as follows:

Normative documents:

PEFC PL 1002: Certification and accreditation procedures

PEFC PL 1003: Sustainable forest management – Requirements

PEFC PL 1004: Group forest management certification – Requirements

Notification Procedure for Certification Bodies Conducting PEFC certification of forest management and / or supply chain in Poland

PEFC ST 2001:2008 v2: PEFC Logo Usage Rules - requirements PEFC ST 2002:2013: Chain of custody - requirements

Organizational documents

Bylaws of PEFC Polska

PEFC PL 1001: Standard setting – Requirements

6. Organisation of the Polish PEFC Scheme

6.1. PEFC Polska Council

The PEFC Polska Council is an initiatory, opinion-giving and advisory body with regard to management of the Polish forest certification scheme within the framework of the PEFC. The PEFC Polska Council is a decision-making body with regard to definition and review of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management and supply chain certification. With regard to definition of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management and supply chain certification, the PEFC Polska Council is standalone and independent of its members and third parties.

The PEFC Polska Council may include organisations dealing with broadly understood forestry, woodworking or environmental protection, as well as forest managers and owners. Membership in the PEFC Polska Council is voluntary. Members of the Council receive no compensation for their involvement in the Council.

The PEFC Polska Council's governing bodies are:

- General Meeting of members, divided into three chambers: forest management, woodworking and non-wood material processing industry and socio-scientific chambers.
- Board of Directors.

The PEFC Polska Council may set up standing or ad hoc Working Groups, depending on the need to address various tasks and issues.

The PEFC Polska Council accomplishes its objectives and performs its tasks in accordance with these Bylaws and relevant provisions of the PEFC as an international organisation.

The PEFC Polska Council's objectives are as follows:

- promote the principles of sustainable development in the forestry sector through the Polish forest certification system;
- support and improve the Polish forest certification system;
- support the implementation of the Polish forest certification system;

- support the rational use of timber and other forest resources as green renewable resources;
- promote products certified under the PEFC scheme,
- promote the Polish model of forest management in the international arena.

The PEFC Polska Council's tasks are as follows:

- review on a regular basis the Polish forest certification system operating in accordance with the legal system of the Republic of Poland and the rules laid down by the PEFC Council based in Geneva.
- review on a regular basis criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management;
- approve training programmes for certification bodies and make sure these are implemented to a suitable level;
- co-operate with the Polish Centre for Accreditation (PCA) in evaluating competencies of certification bodies operating in the area of the Polish forest certification system;
- promote the PEFC forest certification system;
- provide certification bodies with binding interpretations of indicators and criteria of sustainable forest management;
- co-operate with other members of the PEFC Council and similar Polish and international organisations.

6.2. Accreditation and certification body

The PEFC Polska Council recognizes that certifications of forest management and chain of custody rely on international certification and accreditation procedures as defined in the documentation of the International Standardization Organisation (ISO) and the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) as well as in the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

Accreditation bodies are a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) or a member of IAF's special recognition regional groups and implement procedures described in ISO/IEC 17011 and other documents recognised by the above organisations.

PEFC certifications are carried out by impartial, independent third parties that are not involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making bodies or in forest management and are independent of the entity being certified.

Certification bodies operating forest management and/or chain of custody certification within the framework of the PEFC Polska Council Forest Certification Scheme are recognised by the PEFC Polska Council.

Procedures and requirements accreditation and notification of certification bodies involved in certification of forest management or chain of custody is given in following documents:

- PEFC PL 1002: Certification and accreditation procedures
- Notification Procedure for Certification Bodies Conducting PEFC certification of forest management and / or supply chain in Poland

7. Types of certification

7.1. Forest management

Two types of forest certification are available under the Polish PEFC Scheme:

- individual certification - carried out according to PEFC PL 103 *Sustainable forest management – Requirements*, or
- group certification carried out according to PEFC PL 103 *Sustainable forest management – Requirements* and PEFC PL 1004: *Group forest management certification – Requirements*.

In Poland, the only The State Forests National Holding has PEFC certificate of sustainable forest management. Due to the organizational structure, The State Forests National Holding is a subject of group certification.

7.2. Chain of Custody

Chain of custody certification is carried out according to international normative PEFC ST 2002:2013: *Chain of custody – requirements*.

8. Use of PEFC logo

Companies that have been certified according to PEFC ST 2002:2013: *Chain of custody – requirements* may apply for a license to use the PEFC logo from PEFC Polska Council. All matters relating to the use of the PEFC logo in Poland are regulated under provisions of the PEFC ST 2001:2008 v2: *PEFC Logo Usage Rules – requirements*.

9. Appeals, complaints and disputes

The certification body is obliged to consider all complaints, motions and disputes in connection with certification process that are submitted by the applicant.

The appeal commission of the PEFC Polska Council should deal with deal with other appeals, complaints and disputes that cannot be addressed in respective procedures of certification or accreditation body – 9.2 of *PEFC PL 1002*.

10. Implementation of changes – transition period

Unless specified otherwise in the standards under the Polish scheme, the transition period for implementation of changes to standards under the Polish scheme is one year from the time the standard has been approved by PEFC Council.

New certificates issued after the [*insert date of endorsement by PEFC Council*] should be issued according to the revised standards.