

# **ARGENTINE FOREST CERTIFICATION SYSTEM – cerfoar**

## **Technical Document**

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<b>AFoA</b>	Argentine Forest Association
<b>AFCP</b>	Cellulose and Paper Manufacturers Association
<b>BID</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>cerfoar</b>	Argentine Forest Certification System
<b>CERTFOR</b>	Chilean System for Sustainable Forest Management Certification
<b>FAIGA</b>	Argentine Federation of the Graphic Industry
<b>FAIMA</b>	Argentine Federation of Wood Industry and Allied
<b>FOMIN</b>	Multilateral Investment Fund
<b>FSC</b>	Forest Stewardship Council
<b>IGJ</b>	General Inspectorate of Justice
<b>INTA</b>	National Institute of Agricultural Technology
<b>IRAM</b>	Argentine Standardization Body
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>MAGyP</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
<b>OAA</b>	Argentine Accreditation Body
<b>PEFC</b>	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
<b>PYMES</b>	Small and Medium size Enterprise (SMEs)
<b>SAyDS</b>	Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Nation
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>WG2</b>	IRAM Working Group 2: Forest Management

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Argentine Forest Certification System – cerfoar is a voluntary initiative of the Argentine forest sector which establishes the forest certification requirements for native and implanted forest and also, the requirements to track related industries located in Argentine territory.

cerfoar offers a trustworthy and transparent framework for forest certification as it deals with the following criteria globally agreed to conformity assessment (certification) of forest management and its associated chain of custody:

- conformity with international frameworks for the, certification, accreditation and standardization ;
- compatibility with recognized international principles which balance the economical, ecological and social dimensions of forest management;
- meaningful and balanced participation of main interested parties in the processes of standards development and system administration;
- avoid unnecessary obstacles to trade;
- based on objective and measurable standards adapted to local conditions;
- certification decisions made without conflicts between interested parties;
- transparency in decision making and public reports;
- independent and trustworthy evaluation of forest management and chain of custody;
- developed addressing the particular characteristics of the forest sector in the country and following strict guidelines for conformity assessment for the forest sector which allow the international recognition of the system.

cerfoar was designed and elaborated respecting and dealing with the technical and procedural requirements which allow international recognition through a mutual recognition agreement with the international scheme – PEFC – *Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes* and which will thus grant international projection and validity.

In the year 2010, in the 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of PEFC in Río de Janeiro, Brazil, the Civil Association which manages the Argentine Forest Certification System – cerfoar Association, was accepted as National Governing Body by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council.

cerfoar was completed and adopted by cerfoar Association on August 2013 and is hereby submitted to the PEFC Council for endorsement and revised by the cerfoar Board of Directors and approved by cerfoar Assembly on April 2014.

## 2. ARGENTINE FOREST CERTIFICATION SYSTEM - cerfoar

### 2.1 Guiding Principles of the Argentine Forest Certification System

cerfoar adopts the following definition of sustainable forest management: *"stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that it maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to serve now and in the future , the ecological, economic and social aspects at local, national and global scale, and that do not cause damage to other ecosystems "* issued by Resolution 1: General guidelines for sustainable forest management of Europe forest of the Second Ministerial Conference for the protection of forests in Europe, Helsinki, June 1993. This definition takes account of the Authorized Declaration - not legally binding - of Principles for a World Consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (Forest Principles Declaration) adopted in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992

Consequently, cerfoar establishes as basis for its definition of the requirements of sustainable forest management certification, the criteria of the Montreal Process of which the Argentine Republic is a part since 1995, together with the internationally recognized forest management principles:

- compliance with all relevant laws,
- recognition and respect for the rights of possession and use of land, legally documented or customary,
- effective planning of forest management,
- respect and contribution to the development of local communities,
- measures to maintain or enhance sound and effective community relations,
- knowledge and respect for the rights of workers,
- use of the multiple benefits of forests and adoption of measurements to maintain or improve their production (goods and services),
- conservation of biological diversity and ecological functions,
- preventing or minimizing the adverse environmental impacts of forest management,
- maintenance of critical forest areas and critical natural habitats affected by forest management,
- maintenance of areas of cultural, religious, economic and social value for the communities,
- forest plantation establishment unrelated to the conversion of critical natural habitats,
- effective follow-up and assessment (monitoring) of forest management.

At the same time cerfoar Association is committed to support its governance and application in the following guiding principles:

- Quality: accuracy in the definition and assessment of the fulfilment of the requirements of technical and professional competence to operate with cerfoar;

- Continuous improvement: incorporation of new knowledge and technological advance and a proper response to changes in the demands of the interested parties;
- Consistency: adoption of principles and criteria for sustainable forest management internationally accepted, adapted to local conditions and with internationally established criteria for conformity assessment and related activities (standardization, accreditation and certification);
- Credibility: sustainable forest management and chain of custody audits performed by independent, competent, authorized and accredited bodies by the national accreditation body or other accreditation bodies operating in accordance with the internationally accepted International Organization for Standardization – ISO standards and guidelines, and the International Accreditation Forum guidance and mandatory documents;
- Transparency: records of standardization and certification processes available to interested parties;
- Cost effectiveness: minimize financial and administrative cost for cerfoar users;
- Open to the interested parties: meaningful and balanced participation of the main interested parties in the processes of system administration, standards development and certification of forest management and chain of custody;
- Accessible: it allows access to certification of different types and scales of forest and industry forest producers.

## **2.2 Administration of the Argentine Forest Certification System, cerfoar Association**

cerfoar is a key initiative of the Argentine forest sector, the product of collaboration between national chambers representing every link in the value chain of forest-based products and the group of interested parties that make up the forest sector in Argentina.

In September 2009, the national forest chambers join to grant institutionalism to the forest certification system, agreeing to create a civil non-profit association in order to manage and periodically update the standards and procedures of cerfoar.

On September 1st, 2009 the Argentine Forest Association - AFoA, Argentine Federation of Wood Industry and Allied - FAIMA and the Cellulose and Paper Manufacturers Association- AFCP formed the civil non-profit association for the Argentine Forest Certification System committing to:

- Promote and disseminate Sustainable Forest Management, through the implementation in the Argentine Republic of the Argentine Forest certification system;
- Promote the implementation in the country of the forest certification scheme accredited internationally, such as the PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes - a programme for mutual recognition, schemes and forest certification systems approval), a voluntary initiative from the private international forest sector that provides the framework for developing common principles for forest certification, provides the mechanisms for mutual recognition of certification systems developed by the various participating countries and provides

a collective brand, the PEFC logo, which certifies that a particular forest product comes from a forest managed with sustainability criteria;

- Ensure the credibility of the system at a national and international level, participating in developing standards and ensuring its acceptance by the interested parties;
- Facilitate and coordinate advice processes for the elaboration and updating of the rules of the System;
- Ensure compliance with and enforcement of the rules of cerfoar and ensure compliance with the certification processes with internationally agreed rules (accreditation);
- Acting on the resolution of conflicts inherent to cerfoar and providing mechanisms to solve disputes and appeals;
- Acting as a link between public and non-commercial partnerships, at a national and international level, in cerfoar;
- Support the strengthening of institutional capacities of the public and private sectors related to sustainable forest management and forest certification.
- Provide information about cerfoar and national and international markets for those products;
- Make their activities known through regular publications, specialized events and publishing technical documents and books.

The Association which administers cerfoar as a civil non-profit entity got its legal status granted by the General Inspectorate of Justice - IGJ Resolution No. 000429 in the May, 2010

Once the administrative structure was consolidated an invitation was sent to the National Implementation Bodies and their Technological Institutes and related social and environmental NGOs, to join cerfoar administration and its development and implementation.

Nowadays the following entities are part of cerfoar Association:

- AFoA
- FAIMA
- AFCP
- National Industry Secretariat
- National Institute of Agricultural Technology
- Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
- Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Province of Misiones
- Ministry of Work, Production and Tourism of the Province of Corrientes

The standardization process was finished in June, 2010.

cerfoar Association is responsible for developing the rules, general and internal procedures and management structure for the operation of the different areas of the Argentine system:



- Standards of the system: coordinates with the Argentine Institute of Standardization - IRAM, the development of voluntary technical standards that are the basis of cerfoar;
- Accreditation protocols: coordinates with the Argentine Accreditation Body - OAA the elaboration of the accreditation protocols to assess the competence of the certification bodies to develop specific tasks of conformity assessment (sustainable forest management certification and chain of custody);
- Administrative procedures of the system: publication and administration of all the documents related to the administration and application of cerfoar;
- Promotion: it promotes sustainable forest management, the use of the Argentine forest certification standards and the international scheme PEFC including chain of custody certification in accordance with the international standard PEFC ST 2002: in force;
- International approval: responsible of the validation of cerfoar with PEFC scheme;
- Notification of certification bodies: definition of the requirements and procedures for notification of the certification bodies operating in the Argentine Republic with cerfoar;
- Registration of notified certification bodies: maintaining a register of Accredited and Notified Certification Bodies and monitoring these bodies to ensure continued compliance with eligibility criteria;
- Registration: establish and maintain records of all forest areas and organisations certified under the cerfoar;
- PEFC logo use rules: establishes the procedures for granting licenses of PEFC Logo and Trademark usage;
- PEFC logo use control and tracking: responsible for the proper use of the PEFC Logo and Trademark by holders of licenses to use the PEFC logo;
- Appeals, complaints and dispute settlement: attention to complaints and dispute settlements concerning the application of cerfoar or the certification procedure of sustainable forest management and/or chain of custody, which can not be resolved through the dispute settlement procedures of the authorized Certification Body or the Accreditation Body as appropriate.
- Education and training: defines the training requirements and the contents of the programs of system auditors training (main principles of sustainable forest management, PEFC Certification Scheme and IRAM standards of sustainable forest management);
- Communication: spreads its activities through academic and outreach events;
- Revision: cerfoar Association takes the responsibility of the development, administration and maintenance of the cerfoar, including a total review of the system, in the light of new scientific knowledge and practical experience, at least every 5 years.

The organizational structure of cerfoar association consists of the following organisms that have specific functions:

- General Assembly of the Association: it is the governing body of regency with regards to cerfoar, taking the powers assigned to it in the bylaws of the association;

- Board of Directors: its composition and functions are set out in the statutes of the association, it directs cerfoar administration and, in that sense, assumes the functions of interpretation, supervision and control of the system and the establishment of working committees, deciding on consultations and resources that arise concerning the procedure for certification or about the System;
- Supervision Body: its composition and functions are set out in the statutes of the association, contributing to the proper administration of the association and compliance with laws, statutes, regulations and commitments taken by the association;
- Executive Secretariat: It constitutes the technical and administrative cerfoar department, in front of it is the Executive Secretary, whose appointment and duties are assigned in the bylaws of the association. The Secretariat will be the repository of the record of forest management certification and chain of custody of certification bodies accredited and authorized as well as provisions, official texts and internal and external Communications.

## 2.3 cerfoar's documentary basis

cerfoar is based on the PEFC Scheme's normative documentation approved by the PEFC Council and its corresponding guidelines.

cerfoar establishes the requirements for forest management certification of native and implanted forest and also, the requirements to track the related industries located in the Argentine Republic. The documentary basis of the system is composed of cerfoar's Technical Document (this document), IRAM standards of sustainable forest management, normative documentation of the PEFC Council and cerfoar's General Procedures.

The technical standards of voluntary application which constitute the normative base of the Argentine Forest Certification System are the following IRAM Standards *Series 39800 of Sustainable Forest Management*,

- IRAM 39801: in force, *Sustainable Forest Management. Principles, criteria and indicators for the management units.*
- IRAM 39805: in force, *Sustainable Forest Management. Group certification*

cerfoar Association adopts as cerfoar standards the internationally established PEFC standards for chain of custody certification and logo usage:

- PEFC ST 2002: in force, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements
- PEFC ST 2001: in force, PEFC Logo Usage Rules - Requirements

At the same time, through its general and internal procedures approved by the Board of Directors, cerfoar Association details the rules for different areas of cerfoar, such as requirements and procedures for the authorization of certification bodies, the arrangement to apply for the PEFC logo and trademark, tariff schedules, sampling ratio structure, etc.

cerfoar's General Procedures are the following:

- PG01: in force. cerfoar notification of certification bodies operating forest management and/or chain of custody certification in Argentina.

- PG02: in force. Procedure to be implemented by certification bodies to carry out forest management audits and certifications.
- PG03: in force. Consultation procedure to the interested parties that shall implement certification bodies during forest management audits.
- PG04: in force. Peers review procedure of the forest management certification report that shall implement the certification bodies.
- PG05: in force. Procedures to elaborate forest management audits reports that shall be implemented by the certification bodies.
- PG06 in force. Procedure for the resolution of disputes that the Association cerfoar shall implement
- PG07 in force. Procedure of issuance of PEFC logo use licenses by cerfoar Association

In addition to the requirements explicitly established by cerfoar, applicant certification entities must meet national and local regulations and laws apply to them including those relating to fundamental ILO conventions, and other international conventions ratified by the country and that have a relationship and direct impact on sustainable forest management principles, or the traceability of forest-based products. Any apparent violation to the legislation must be considered in the certification and audit processes.

With regards to the conversion of timberlands to other land uses, including the conversion of native forests to plantations, such conversion should not take place except in justified circumstances in which conversion:

- complies with national or provincial policies and relevant legislation on land use and forest management and is the result of state or regional territorial organization undertaken by the competent authority or another authority that includes consultation of people and organizations with a material and direct stake, and
- involves a small proportion of the type of forest, and
- has no negative effects on endangered forest ecosystems (including vulnerable, rare or endangered ecosystems), in culturally and socially significant areas, in the main habitats of endangered species or in other protected nature reserves, and
- represents a long-term contribution to conservation, the economy or social benefit.

## 2.4 cerfoar scope

The purpose of cerfoar is to document and promote sustainable management of the forests and to ensure the traceability of the certified timber through the entire product chain, from the forest to the end-user:

- Certification of sustainable forest management in native and implanted forests of the Argentine Republic in conformity with IRAM Standards series 39800: in force, of sustainable forest management.
- Certification of the chain of custody of forest-based products in conformity with the international standard PEFC 2002: in force, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements

- Management and control within Argentine Republic of the PEFC logo licensing requirements as set out in PEFC International Standard ST 2001: in force, PEFC Logo Usage Rules - Requirements

### 3. STANDARDIZATION

The technical standards of voluntary application which constitute the normative base of the Argentine Forest Certification System are the following IRAM Standards *Series 39800 of Sustainable Forest Management*, developed by IRAM.

#### 3.1 Standardization Body

In the Argentine Republic the Standardization, Certification and Accreditation activities are framed within the regulatory Presidential Decree. *1474/1994 National System of Standards, Quality And Certification. Creation. Organization. National Council. Functions. Integration. Standard Bodies. Accreditation Body.*

IRAM is recognized as the National Standardization Body by successive national laws, and in 1994 was confirmed in his role by Presidential Decree. No. 1474/94, which gives IRAM the power of single agency developing technical standards of voluntary application, under the National Standards, Quality and Certification System.

IRAM is a private non-profit body founded in 1935 by representatives of the different sectors of the economy, the government, and the technical and scientific institution. It is responsible for the preparation and issuance of standards, for keeping a constantly updated record of them, to contribute to its spread and to implement procedures that promote the full participation of all interests and sectors involved in the standardization process.

IRAM represents Argentina in the regional standardization bodies: AMN (Standardization Mercosur Association), COPANT (Pan American Standards Commission) and in the international bodies ISO and International Electrotechnical Commission – IEC, in this last case together with the Argentine Electrotechnical Association –AEA. IRAM coordinates the national technical committees that analyze the documents under study, channelled national proposals, fixes Argentine position against these organisms and is present in conducting various international technical committees.

#### 3.2 Standard Setting Process

The process of elaboration of the sustainable forest management standards of cerfoar was coordinated by IRAM through its Standard Setting Forum: Standardization Forum WG2: Forest Management- WG2, following the guidelines laid down in IRAM Rules of Standards Setting and of the Functioning of their Technical Forums – REN, under the Regional Technical Cooperation Project ATN/ME-8532.RG Multilateral Investment Fund - FOMIN of the Inter-American Development Bank – BID.

The IRAM procedure for standard setting is based on ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994 Code of good practice for standardization requirements.

The ATN/ME-8532.RG Project on Market Access and Integration through Technical Standards aimed to improve the competitiveness of forest SMEs through the use of technical standards that facilitate the production and marketing of goods and forest services and their integration into a regional and global context. In addition, this project allowed to complete and support standardization work with awareness and training activities.

All stakeholders with interests in the sustainability of forest management were invited to participate in the standardization forum (IRAM WG2), which in its final configuration maintained a balanced and highly representative structure made up of representatives, amongst others, forest owners, trade unions, professional colleges, industrial associations, public research institutes, forest-based enterprises, consultants, public organisms, universities, and end consumers, and also invited the main environmental organizations in the Argentinean forestry sector to participate. (See Annex 6 IRAM WG2 Members). The IRAM WG2 is organized to provide a balanced representation of interest categories such as producers, consumers, and neutrals.

The process of developing IRAM standards for sustainable forest management began in 2003 and ended in 2010 with the approval and Edition of the standards after completing the corresponding steps defined in the REN, including widespread national public consultation on the same and three pilot tests of IRAM 39801. (See records of WG2 - standardization forum in Annex 5)

All of the materials related to the process for developing the IRAM standards for sustainable forest management standard were approved by consensus by the IRAM WG2. Formal approvals of standards are based on evidence of consensus.

Since the beginning of ATN/ME-8532.RG Project and IRAM WG2's work, there was an extensive and specific process to publicize it to the different stakeholders categories through electronic means, and the publication of minutes and newsletters. There was also a participative process in several events related to the topic (meetings, seminars, congresses, etc.) to divulge the standards draft.

IRAM standards, including those that are part of cerfoar are copyright of IRAM and its marketing and disclosure are governed by the relevant legislation.

The certification standards and implementation arrangements shall be reviewed every 5 years to take into consideration new scientific knowledge and practical experience for continuous improvement.

The standardization process on IRAM follows the international rules established by the ISO Supplement – Procedures, specific to ISO 2001- item 2.9 – Maintenance of standards (and other ISO deliverables), which establishes a maximum period of 5 years for standards revision.

cerfoar will require IRAM to begin the process of revision of the standard every 5 years or whenever PEFC Council revises the general PEFC requirements for the standard setting and implementation.

All considerations for the revisions and changes made will be communicated to PEFC Council by cerfoar Association.

### 3.3 IRAM Standard 39801 Pilot Test

As main requirement for the establishment of the standard allowing certification of sustainable forest management (IRAM 39801) pilot test were performed during its manufacturing process and prior to the stage of public discussion. These tests, in audit process, allowed validation of the standard in the field. The conclusions obtained from the tests were used to make adjustments and incorporate improvements to the standards and to the system.

The first pilot test in plantations took place in a facility that operates on planted forest resources (forest plantations) in the Delta del Paraná, located in the district of Campana, province of Buenos Aires, in March 2007

The audit team was led by a Finnish forest engineer, lead forest auditor of the Finnish forest certification system certified by PEFC and participant in the development of the same. Also in this team participated technical experts from the Forest Direction of the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development - SAYDS and the Forest Production Direction of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries - MAGyP, local technical experts and IRAM environmental auditors.

The second field test was conducted in plantations in all management units, belonging to a single forest producer, located in the northeast of the province of Corrientes and south of the province of Misiones.

In this case, the audit team was led by a Chilean forest engineer, lead auditor of the Chilean System for Sustainable Forest Management Certification – CERTFOR and the Forest Stewardship Council – FSC for Chile and who also acted in the application of these systems in little producers in the south of her country and in the development of CERTFOR (endorsed by PEFC). The rest of the team was completed by local technical experts from the Forestry Extension Core - NEF North Corrientes of the Forest Production Direction of the MAGyP, technical experts from the Forest Direction of SAYDS, technical experts and auditors from AFoA and IRAM.

To finish the required test and aiming at the objective of IRAM 39801 (Sustainable Forest Management in native and implanted forest in the Argentine territory) a third pilot test was performed in native forest in Nahuel Huapi National Park.

The development of this test in a national park allowed the evaluation of the behaviour of the standards against the situation of the state as principal (not private producer) and the multiple management objectives, taking into consideration forest goods and services and the existence of local and indigenous communities living in relation to the management units.

For this test the auditor team was led by an Argentinean forest engineer and lead auditor of ISO standards 14001 and 9001, PEFC Chain of Custody auditor and the FSC certification system with wide experience in forest management certification in Argentina and countries of the region. The rest of the team was completed by local technical experts of the NEF Patagonia and technical experts of the Forest Production Direction of MAGyP and technical experts of the Forest Direction of SAYDS and IRAM auditors.

### **3.4 Public Discussion of cerfoar standards**

During the stage of Public Discussion (public consultation) of the Standards under study the standard projects and the forms were sent to present the observations to all the members of IRAM Standard Setting Forum: Strategic Environmental Committee, Environmental Management sub-committee and Forest Management – Standardization Forum WG2 and to the interested parties specified in each case. At the same time, the beginning of the Process of Public Discussion and the way to access information and the methodology to present the observations was informed through IRAM web page and other means of communication of the forest sector.

cerfoar standards were under the process of Public Discussion during the following periods:

- IRAM 39801: From March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to May 25<sup>th</sup> 2009;
- IRAM 39805: From October 13<sup>th</sup> to December 13<sup>th</sup> 2009.

The observations and comments received during the stages of public discussion were analyzed and discussed by the WG2 and the modifications to the standard projects were approved by consensus. All the individuals and organization who submitted observations and comments were invited to defend them during the WG2 meetings after the closure of the public discussion stage and the authors from observations and comments presented were notified on their acceptance or not, and the decisions to incorporate these comments were taken by consensus.

The IRAM WG2 provided general information on the changes made as result of the consultation process

## **4. CERTIFICATION**

### **4.1 Levels of application of the certification**

The cerfoar has the same levels of application for forest certification as those laid down in the PEFC Council's technical documents.

Forest Certification consists of two clearly differentiated parts, details of which are given below:

- Forest management certification: is that in which the forest management implemented in the forests of the entity applying for certification is the object of an audit by an independent third party to certify that such forest management is performed in accordance with IRAM 39801 and/or IRAM 39805 standards on Sustainable Forest Management and all relevant legislation.

Forest management shall include programmed inventories and planning, monitoring and assessment activities, as well as giving proper consideration to the social, environmental and economic impacts of the forest management. That is the basis of a continuous improvement process to minimize or prevent negative impacts.

The standard IRAM 39801 gives details of the Principles, Criteria and Indicators underlying sustainable forest management relevant fulfillment of which is mandatory and which are listed in the management plan, thus enabling the sustainable management of the forest management unit to be guaranteed.

The standard IRAM 39805 establishes the requirements to be fulfilled by the management structure of a forest certification group to ensure that all requirements in IRAM 39801 are fulfilled in each forest management unit part of the group.

The entity applying for forest management certification may be individual or a group.

In the case of a group applicant entity, forest producers (certification group member) voluntarily participate and pledge in writing to fulfill the certification requirements.

Except for specific cases authorised by cerfoar, the same forestland may not be included in more than one Sustainable Forest Management certificate. For those forests that are so authorised, in the event that a non compliance is detected in one certificate, the corresponding certification body shall be responsible for giving adequate notification thereof to the other certification bodies and to cerfoar Association.

- Chain of Custody certification: is that in which the traceability of forest based raw materials and their derivatives is the object of audit throughout the different transformation processes as far as the certified end product authorised to bear the PEFC logo and registered trademark.

The entity applying for chain of custody certification may be individual or the representative of a set of installations, known as 'multisite' or 'multiple' certification.

Audited companies pledge in writing and voluntarily to fulfill the requirements of certification.

Each of these modalities is detailed in the following points.

## **4.2 Individual Forest Management Certification**

Individual forest certification is possible when such certification is requested explicitly by a person or legal entity (forest producer), who acts as "the entity applying for forest management certification", for forestlands that the forest producer manages and voluntarily wishes to include in the process.

It is recommended that the applicant entity for Individual Forest Certification includes all the forests managements unit that the forest producer owns or manages in the area.

The applicant entity for sustainable forest management certification has the following rights:

- obtain the Individual Certificate for sustainable forest management with regard to the forests that the forest producer has committed to the process, issued by the Certification body once the certification process has been successfully completed. The certificate shall indicate the registration number and its validity period, together with the information about the applicant entity of certification and the



certification body that issued it. This document does not grant the holder the right to use PEFC logo, such right is only granted by cerfoar Association through a PEFC Trademark and Logo usage License,

- present before the cerfoar Association any claims related to the certification process or operation of the scheme.

The applicant entity for sustainable forest management certification has the following obligations and shall:

- specifically compromise to fulfil the obligations imposed by cerfoar,
- verify that the forest operations performed by a contractor within the forest management units and which are under the scope of a sustainable forest management certificate are performed in conformity with cerfoar,
- make available to the certification bodies the documents and reports required by cerfoar and allow access to different areas in the management unit to perform certification audits,
- request to cerfoar Association the PEFC Trademark and Logo usage license once the sustainable forest management certification is obtained in conformity with cerfoar;
- take responsibility for the correct usage of the certificate and the PEFC Trademark and Logo usage license.

#### **4.3 Group forest management certification**

Group forest management certification represents the most cost effective form of forest certification that allows participation of all forest producers regardless of legal form and size of forest property.

Group forest management certification requires the association of forest producer interested in the process through an associative entity legally constituted to be designated as the entity applying for certification, or through a legally documented agreement which will determine who will exercise as applying entity.

The applying entity for the group forest management certification shall represent the group certification members and shall be responsible for requesting and guarding the sustainable forest management group certificate.

The group forest management certificate constitutes the documents which ensure that the group fulfils the requirements of the sustainable forest management standards and any other corresponding requirement established by cerfoar.

The scope of the group forest management certificate is the addition of all the areas of the forest management units participating in the certification group.

The entity applying for group forest management certification shall request cerfoar Association the PEFC Trademark and Logo usage license once the sustainable forest management certification is obtained in conformity with cerfoar. Also, it shall give each member of the group a copy of the sustainable forest management certificate including a list of the members of the group and its managements units included in the scope of the certificate.

The certificate shall indicate the registration number and its validity period, together with the information about the applicant entity of certification and the certification body that

issued it. This document does not grant the holder the right to use PEFC logo, such right is only granted by cerfoar Association through a PEFC Trademark and Logo usage License.

The entity applying for group forest management certification shall take responsibility for the correct usage of the certificate and the PEFC Trademark and Logo usage license and sub-licenses.

The requirements for the creation, organization and management of a group certification, including the obligations and rights of the entity applying for certification and certification group members as well as requirements for dismissal or expulsion of members of the group or admission of new members are established in IRAM 39805: in force.

#### **4.4 Chain of Custody Certification**

Chain of Custody Certification represents the subsequent stage to Forest Management Certification, in which the monitoring and traceability of forest products and derivatives is guaranteed throughout the different stages of the production and subsequent marketing process.

The cerfoar, as far as Chain of Custody Certification is concerned, adopts and assumes all the provisions of the PEFC Council's technical document, especially the reference document PEFC ST 2002: in force.

#### **4.5 Certification Body**

Certification bodies operating under the cerfoar, shall be impartial third parties independent both of the forest management and of the certified entity, and shall not be an organ of decision in the standards drafting process; shall have appropriate technical competence in certification procedures, adequate know-how in forest management and forest products procurement and processing in general, respectively, and shall have a good understanding of the certification criteria of PEFC Council and cerfoar. Only those certificates are recognized by cerfoar Association which are issued by accredited certification bodies notified by cerfoar Association.

When certifying forests, the certification body assesses conformity of forest management with the principles, criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management in the Argentinean standard IRAM 39801: in force, and issues a certificate after the conformity has been confirmed. In the case of group forest management certification, it evaluates conformity of forest management of the members and the management of the group of forest management certification with the requirements in IRAM 39805: In force, and issues a certificate after conformity has been confirmed.

When certifying chain of custody, the certification body assesses credibility in tracing the origin of forest based products against the requirements of international standard PEFC ST 2002: in force, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements.

The tasks of the certification body include:

- conducting independent audits;

- issuance, suspension and withdrawal of certificates referring to the appropriate standards recognized by PEFC Council and informing to cerfoar about them;
- control of the use of forest management and chain of custody certificates and PEFC Logo and trademark.

## 4.6 Certification Procedure

Certification and audit procedures applied within the cerfoar are based on the international standard of system management (SFM) and product certification (CoC):

- cerfoar requirements for certification and competences of certification bodies operating forest management certification are defined in the document cerfoar General Procedure PG02: in force. Procedures to be implemented by certification bodies to carry out forest management audits and certifications;
- cerfoar requirements for certification and competences of certification bodies operating chain of custody certification are defined in the international standard PEFC ST 2003: in force, Requirements of certification bodies operating certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard.

## 5. ACCREDITATION AND NOTIFICATION

Only those certificates of forest management and chain of custody issued by accredited OAA and cerfoar or PEFC notified certification bodies are recognized by cerfoar:

- the cerfoar requirements for notifications are defined in the cerfoar General Procedures PG01: in force. *cerfoar Notification for certification bodies to work in Argentina in sustainable forest management certification and/or chain of custody.*
- the cerfoar requirements for accreditation are defined in the OAA CE-CP-02.in force *Specific criteria for the evaluation and accreditation of bodies that certify sustainable forest management and chain of custody under the Argentine Forest Certification System.*

Accredited forest management and chain of custody certificates shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body.

### 5.1 Criteria for the accreditation of sustainable forest management

Accreditation of certification bodies operating cerfoar forest management certification shall be based on *ISO/IEC 17021: in force, Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems* within the scope defined by *the Argentinean standards IRAM 39801 and IRAM 39805 in force*, together with the specific requirements defined by the following cerfoar General Procedures:

- PG02: in force. *Procedures to be implemented by certification bodies to carry out forest management audits and certifications.*
- PG03: in force. *Consultation procedure to the interested parties that shall implement certification bodies during forest management audits.*
- PG04: in force. *Peers review procedure of the forest management certification report that shall implement the certification bodies.*
- PG05: in force. *Procedures to elaborate forest management audits reports that shall be implemented by the certification bodies.*

## 5.2 Criteria for accreditation of chain of custody

Accreditation of certification bodies operating chain of custody certification shall be based on *ISO/IEC 17065: in force, Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services* within the scope defined by *international standard PEFC ST 2001: in force, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements*, together with specific requirements defined by PEFC Council in its international standard *PEFC ST 2003: in force, Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard.*

## 5.3 Accreditation Body

OAA is the body designated by the Presidential Decree 1474/1994 to establish and maintain the accreditation system to a national level in accordance to international standards and following policies and recommendations established by the Argentine State.

OAA is a body declared of public good, independent, non-profit, sponsored and supervised by the Ministry of Industry (enforcement authority), which carries out its mission with a clear commitment to public service, aimed at both the public and the general market, ensuring that all its actions are based on principles of impartiality, independence and transparency, with a strong technical character, adding value to all stakeholders with interests in different aspects of accreditation.

Its mission is to assess the technical competence of assessment bodies of conformity (laboratories, inspection and certification entities) to generate confidence in its activities to the state, the market and society in general.

OAA is member of the following International bodies: Interamerican Accreditation Cooperation -IAAC, International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation - ILAC, and IAF.

OAA is signatory with IAF in mutual recognition agreement in the following fields:

- Quality Management Systems since September 17th, 2005
- Environmental Management Systems since September 17th, 2005
- Product Certification Body since September 17th, 2005

OAA applies the procedures described in standard ISO/IEC 17011: in force, Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting assessment bodies of conformity and other documents provided by the IAF.

## **6. PEFC LOGO AND TRADEMARK USAGE**

A common PEFC trademark and PEFC trademark logo have been registered and are owned by the PEFC Council.

The trademark and logo shall only be used under contract in accordance with the PEFC rules, as communication tools including the labeling of products, that come from forests certified under certification schemes recognized as meeting the PEFC requirements.

Based on the contract with PEFC Council, cerfoar Association is a license holder entitled to use the PEFC trademark in Argentine Republic and, on behalf of PEFC Council, it is authorised to issue licenses to the holders of forest management or chain of custody certificates.

PEFC logo usage rules are defined in the PEFC international standard *PEFC ST 2001: in force PEFC Logo Usage rules – Requirements*, which is a part of cerfoar. This document covers requirements for users of the PEFC logo relating to ensure accurate, verifiable, relevant and non misleading usage of the PEFC logo and related claims.

The requirements established by cerfoar for the issuance of PEFC Logo and Trademark license are established in cerfoar General Procedure PG07: *Procedures for the issuance of PEFC Logo and Trademark Usage by cerfoar Association*.

## **7. APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES**

cerfoar Association has developed and documented the General Procedure PG06 which applies to the process of dealing with complaints and dispute resolution on the implementation of the Argentine Forest Certification System or to the sustainable forest certification procedure and/or chain of custody, which can not be solved through the dispute resolution procedures of accredited Certification Body or the appropriate Certification Body.

## **8. SYSTEM'S REVISIONS**

Whenever changes are made to the cerfoar as a result of the periodic revision or any initiative prior to the periodic revision, the documentation is obliged to define a transition period for implementation of those changes.

The length of the transition period shall take into account the time required for the changes to be implemented, information circulated and training provided, as well as for endorsement of those changes by the PEFC Council.