

<i>Normative Document</i> Certification and Accreditation	PEFC BG ST 1004:
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Bulgarian forest certification scheme

Certification and Accreditation Procedures for SFM



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FOREWORD

Council for Sustainable Forest Management and Certification in Bulgaria (CSFMCB / PEFC Bulgaria) is a national organization with the purpose is to facilitating sustainable forest management through forest certification and labelling of wood products. Consumers can trust that products carrying the PEFC label are made of raw material from sustainably managed forests, from recycling and/or non-controversial sources.

CSFMCB / PEFC Bulgaria is a registered association and responsible for the standard setting and the administration of the Bulgarian PEFC scheme. The PEFC standards are developed through an open and transparent procedure on the basis of consensus and consultations with a variety of stakeholders.

Since 2017, PEFC Bulgaria is full member of PEFC International whose strict endorsement procedure guarantees international recognition.

PEFC - Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes

INTRODUCTION

Certification of sustainable forest management provides assurance that the organization has effectively implemented practices conforming to specified requirements of a standard for sustainable forest management.

This document specifies requirements for certification bodies and for their accreditation. Observance of these requirements is intended to ensure that certification bodies operate forest management certification in a competent, consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of such body and the acceptance of their certifications on a national and international basis.

This document is based on ISO/IEC 17021:2011 and IAF (International Accreditation Forum) documents relating to the application of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015. It provides additional requirements necessary for certification and auditing of sustainable forest management within the Bulgarian PEFC scheme.

This document does not include the text of ISO/IEC 17021:2011 and IAF documents which can be obtained from ISO, national standardisation organisations or the IAF.

ISO/IEC 19011:2011 provides additional guidance for the auditing of management systems.

The term "shall" is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions that, reflecting the requirements that are mandatory. The term "should" is used to indicate guidance that, although not mandatory, is provided as a recognized means of meeting the requirements. The

term “may” used throughout this standard indicates permission expressed by this standard whereas “can” refers to the ability of a user of this standard or to a possibility open to the user.

1. SCOPE

This document provides requirements, additional to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 and relating IAF documents for certification bodies operating certification according to the Bulgarian standards of sustainable forest management (PEFC BG ST 1002:).

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

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

- PEFC BG ST 1002: Bulgarian PEFC standard for sustainable forest management
- PEFC BG 1002-1: Bulgarian Criteria & Indicators for SFM – Operational level Guide
- PEFC BG ST 1003: Group forest management certification – Requirements
- ISO/IEC 17021-1: “Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems”
- ISO 19011: “Guidelines for auditing management systems”
- ISO/IEC 17011: “Conformity assessment -- General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies”

3. CERTIFICATION BODIES

3.1. Competence of Certification Bodies

Bulgarian PEFC certifications shall be carried out by impartial, independent third parties that cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making bodies, or in the forest management and are independent of the certified entity. Certification bodies considered competent by the PEFC Bulgaria to carry out forest certification and monitoring of forest management, shall fulfil the following qualifications:

- 1) The certification body carrying out forest management certification, shall fulfil requirements defined in:

- a) ISO 17021-1: if the certification is carried out as management system certification,
 - b) Other requirements for certification bodies defined by the PEFC Bulgaria.
- 2) The certification body carrying out forest certification shall have the technical competence in forest management, on its economic, social and environmental impacts, and on the forest certification criteria, according PEFC BG ST 1002: , PEFC BG 1002-1: и PEFC BG 1003: .
- 3) The certification body shall have a good understanding of the national PEFC forest certification system.

Compliance of the certification body with the above requirements shall be verified by an accreditation as described in chapter 6.

- 4) In addition to above requirements the certification body inform the PEFC Bulgaria about all issued forest management certificates and changes concerning validity and scope of these certificates,

3.2. Audit team

- 1) Certification bodies have the responsibility to use competent auditors that have adequate technical knowledge on the certification process and issues related to forest management certification, according Bulgarian standard for SFM.
- 2) The auditors shall fulfil general criteria for quality and environmental management systems auditors as defined in ISO 19011⁽³⁾.
- 3) The audit team shall possess the following competences:
- a) Terminology, terms and definitions concerning forest management in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian PEFC scheme.
 - b) Knowledge of the Bulgarian PEFC scheme and its requirements as well as controversial economic, ecological and social factors of forest management in Bulgaria
 - c) Knowledge of relevant national legislation and other regulations relevant to the Bulgarian PEFC scheme to enable the auditor to comply with the same and to understand the legal framework in which the forest owners operate.
- 4) Minimum one member of the audit team shall have **particular knowledge and competences** in the following:
- a) Forest inventories, forest management planning.
 - b) Silviculture, particularly with regard to methods of rejuvenation, forest tending and harvest.

- c) Forest protection, particularly with regards to methods of integrated forest protection and the application of plant protective agents.
 - d) Water and soil protection, particularly the impact of forest operations on water resources and soil, nutrient balance as well as impacts of liming and fertilisation.
 - e) Biodiversity in forest ecosystems, particularly protection of rare species and biotopes and the encouragement of biotope trees.
 - f) Wildlife management.
 - g) Forest operations and technical knowledge, particularly safety and occupational health, accident prevention, labour rights and the deployment of forest service enterprises and private cutters.
 - h) Socio-economic functions, such as the contribution of forestry to the regional economy and recreation.
- 5) **Additional qualification requirements** for minimum one member of the audit team carrying out forest management (SFM) audits against a Bulgarian PEFC scheme documentation are:
- a) have documented knowledge about forest management (for SFM).
 - b) at least five years, incl. at least one in the last two years of full-time working experience in forestry in Bulgaria as Forestingenieur (the preparation course for the state forest service will be recognised);
 - c) participated in a forest certification training course provided by PEFC Bulgaria within the last two years;
 - d) have conducted as a first qualification at least four audit days (of which three audit days were on-site) within the last three years in PEFC forest certification under guidance of an experienced auditor.
 - e) have knowledge and competences about organizational conditions of the Bulgarian forest sector, with particular regard to the various types of forest ownership and property sizes, to the role of forest owners associations, to the relationship between forest enterprises, service enterprises and other societal groups in order to properly understand the terms of co-operation with the forest owners.
 - f) are competent in the Bulgarian language in speaking and writing.

The certification body shall particularly evaluate the competence and performance of the personnel in order to assess specific training required.

Note: The requirements under items (d) and (e) above, apply from the third year after the beginning of the certification under the Bulgarian PEFC scheme, incl. for group certification. In these cases, the audit team to attract one or more external experts who cover these requirements. In order to

maintain this qualification, auditors must conduct at least five audit days in the field of PEFC forest certification and regularly participate in the courses conducted by PEFC-Bulgaria. To keep this qualification valid, the auditors shall conduct at least five audit days in PEFC forest certification. Requirements under items "d" and "e", incl. for group certification, may be covered by an expert / experts involved in the audit team, with its role explicitly stated in the audit report.

3.3. Information requirements

- 1) All requirements given in clause 8 of ISO/IEC 17021-1:.
- 2) The certification body shall inform the client organisation that it is obliged to provide information to PEFC Bulgaria and the PEFC Council. In order to comply with the ISO/IEC 17021-1: chapter 8.4, the certification body shall have the written consent of the client organisation for the information disclosed to PEFC Bulgaria and The PEFC Council.
- 3) The certification body shall make publicly available a summary of the surveillance audit report, including a summary of findings on the client organisation's conformity with the forest management standard.
- 4) The public summary of the surveillance audit report shall include:
 - a) Identification of the forest property and owner/s, the certified forest area as well as the number and structure (types and sizes of forest properties) of the participants (in case of group certification);
 - b) Identification of the certification body and audit team performing the audit;
 - c) summary description of the conformity with the certification requirements;
 - d) summary description of non-conformities found;
 - e) recommendations for certification decision.

4. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

- 1) The certification body shall have established internal procedures for forest management certification against a Bulgarian PEFC forest certification scheme.
- 2) The applied certification procedures for forest management certification shall fulfil be compatible with the requirements defined in: ISO/IEC 17021-1: if the certification is carried out as management system certification,
- 3) The applied auditing procedures shall fulfill be compatible with the requirements of ISO 19011⁽³⁾.
- 4) Carries out control of PEFC logo usage.

- 5) The maximum period for surveillance audits is one year and maximum period for renewal audit is five years.
- 6) The audit evidence to determine the conformity with the forest management standard shall include relevant information from external parties - sufficient consultation with external stakeholders to ensure that all relevant issues relating to compliance with the standard have been identified.
- 7) A summary of the certification report, including a summary of findings on the auditee's conformity with the forest management standard, shall be made available to the public in accordance with any applicable requirements defined by the [Bulgarian](#) forest certification scheme.
- 8) Additional specific requirements for certification procedures the ones listed above might be defined by the Bulgarian PEFC certification scheme (i.e. forest management certification).
- 9) Compliance of the certification body's procedures with the above requirements shall be verified by accreditation body according to Chapter 6.
- 10) Basic elements/phases of the process of the forest certification are as follows:
 - (a) application for certification;
 - (b) preparation for an audit;
 - (c) voluntary pre-audit;
 - (d) certification audit;
 - (e) on site assessment;
 - (f) certification report;
 - (g) certification decision;
 - (h) surveillance audit;
 - (i) certification renewal.

4.1 Application for certification

- 1) The certification process is commissioned on the basis of the application for certification which should be duly completed and signed by an authorized agent of the applicant and sent to the certification body.
- 2) Participation has to cover the entire forest area of a forest owner, or the forest owners, in the case of group certification. Each forest owner also has to ensure that all the forestry work commissioned by him complies with the certification criteria.
- 3) The tasks of the applicant include the following areas:

- a) arranging for the preparation of a sustainability report for the particular forest enterprise or for a group of companies, which also includes measures, or a plan of measures, for achieving the set sustainability goals
 - b) drawing up and implementing regulations for stability of the system
 - c) filing the application
 - d) financing
 - e) managing the list of participating forest owners (in the case of group certification) including the forest area of each participant
 - f) acceptance or exclusion of participants and dissemination of relevant information to the certification body (in the case of group certification)
 - g) conducting internal controlling
 - h) dealing with complaints
 - i) information on the results of certification and changes in the requirements of the certification scheme for the participating forest owners (in the case of group certification)
 - j) upon request, making available a summary of the auditing results
 - k) responsibility for organizational issues and contact for PEFC Bulgaria.
- 4) The applicant for the group/regional certification has to provide to the certification body at least the following information:
- (a) general information on the applicant, his/her organization form, name and address;
 - (b) authorization to the application for the regional certification which has to be carried out by forest owners representing at least 50 % of the region area;
 - (c) the list of forest owners participating in the regional certification including their identification, commitment to certification criteria;
 - (d) definition of the extent of the certification;
 - (e) sustainability report on the condition of forest management in the region including information necessary for verification and evaluation the criteria of sustainable forest management on the regional level.

4.2 Preparation for an audit

4.2.1. Documentation review

- 1) Before assessment commissioning, the application for certification is checked by the certification body which:

- (a) requirements for the certification are clearly stated, documented and understood;
 - (b) any misunderstanding between the certification body and the applicant is solved;
 - (c) the certification body is able to provide certification services in the corresponding range of required certification.
- 2) At the beginning of the process concerning the assessment, the audit team should review Report on the condition of forest management in the forest property (MFU) or in the region. Within the activity all important related information on the applicant and the condition of forestry in the region is to be obtained in order to be able to identify organizations and functional units responsible for fulfilling criteria of sustainable management and data collection where the assessment is to be carried out directly on site.

4.2.2. Audit plan

- 1) The certification body has to prepare based on preliminary documentation review a plan of its evaluation activities to make possible to carry out necessary preliminary measures.
- 2) The plan should include:
 - (a) objectives and scope of evaluation;
 - (b) identification of organizational and functional units of the applicant and organizations ensuring the fulfilment of criteria and data collection where the assessment is to be carried out directly on site;
 - (c) identification of assessing the internal audits of individual owners participating in the group certification and related corrective and preventive measures;
 - (d) identification of criteria and elements of sustainable forest management and data sources which are to be verified on site;
 - (e) identification of background documentation;
 - (f) expected time and length of main activities of assessing;
 - (g) terms and places where the audit is to be done;
 - (h) identification of audit-team members;
 - (i) the schedule of meetings to be held with applicant representative;
 - (j) requirements for confidentiality;
 - (k) the content and structure of the report, expected terms of its publication and the distribution list.
- 3) The applicant for regional certification and the audit team are to be acquainted with the plan of assessment.

- 4) If the applicant does not agree with some steps proposed in the audit plan he should notify his/her objections to the lead auditor. The objections should be resolved between the lead auditor and the applicant before conducting the audit. All corrected audit plans are to be approved by parties involved either before the audit or in the course of the audit.

4.3 Voluntary pre-audit

Based on the applicant decision, a voluntary pre-audit can be carried out by the certification body or by the authorized auditor – consultant.

4.4 Certification audit

4.4.1. Extent of the audit

- 1) Objectives of the audit are defined by the applicant. The subject and limits of the audit are defined by the lead auditor to achieve objectives of the audit.
- 2) The purpose of the audit is to assess if information collected by the applicant and evidence obtained in the course of audit fulfil criteria of sustainable forest management (according PEFC BG ST 1002: and PEFC BG ST 1002-1: and PEFC BG ST 1003: for group certification).
- 3) Basic documents for audit include:
 - (a) analyses of gathered information;
 - (b) field inspection.
- 4) On the ground of financial effectiveness and elimination of duplicities in data and evidence collection, existing information of independent bodies (e.g. Regional Forestry Directorate, Executive Agency for Forests, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water, Regional Inspectorate of Environmental Protection and Control, Basin Directorate, etc.) relating to the subject of the audit is used as much as possible during the audit.

4.4.2. Audit stages

- 1) The audit consists of the following stages:
 - (a) opening meeting;
 - (b) collection of information and evidence: Certification Body evaluates the certification applicant management activities (planning, management and documents) conformity with the Bulgarian PEFC Forest management standard. If certification applicant management activities do not comply with requirements

of the certification standards, the Certification Body raises out the nonconformities. Guidance for indicating non conformities in PEFC Forest Management certification are given in point 9.

- (c) the Certification Body defines the verification sample area based on the scale and intensity of the certification applicant management activities.
- (d) assessment of information and evidence;
- (e) the closing meeting when audit team gives an oral summary about audit findings.

4.5 On-site assessment

- 1) On site assessment is carried out for the purpose of verifying information and evidence presented by the applicant in the Report on the condition of forest management and should be planned in such a way to provide to the auditor the required rate of confidence as for the reliability of findings from the audit and all conclusions of the audit.
- 2) The audit is carried out during a limited time period and with limited financial means and this is therefore one of the reasons why audit findings will be necessarily only a selected sample of available information.
- 3) Within the onsite assessment, the auditor team evaluates:
 - (a) implementation and functionality of system tools for guaranteeing sustainable forest management (Criteria & Indicators for SFM – Operational level Guide – PEFC BG 1002-1:);
 - (b) the rate of confidence and reliability of data sources and their interpretation;
 - (c) application and functionality of procedures for guaranteeing the participation of individual owners in the system of group/regional certification;
 - (d) application and functionality of internal audits performance and related corrective and preventive actions.
- 4) Within the audit, the certification body evaluates the Criteria and Indicators SFM (PEFC BG ST 1002: /1002-1:) also on an individual level. The assessment is carried out on a representative sample with proportional inclusion of individual subjects participating in regional certification.
- 5) The size of the representative sample is determined based on the number of assessed subjects („x“). For total number of 100 assessed subjects, the sample size corresponds to 10 % of „x“, for more than 100 assessed subjects the sample size is \sqrt{x} (considering the area of subjects, type of ownership and allocation within the region). „X“= number

of individual subjects examined within the scope of internal audits. Number of assessed subjects is doubled in case of certification audit.

- 6) The size of the representative sample can be reduced or increased based on:
 - (a) effectiveness, reliability and content of available information;
 - (b) results of field inspections of previous period of time and efficiency of corrective and preventive actions.

4.6 Audit /Certification report

- 1) Assessing conformity of the system of forest management is carried out on the basis of information and evidence included in the Report on the condition of forestry in the region.
- 2) The certification body assesses whether:
 - (a) an organization structure exists for guaranteeing the fulfilment of criteria of sustainable forest management and responsibilities of given organizations are defined;
 - (b) the description of guaranteeing the criteria of sustainable forest management and their indicators are in conformity with criteria of sustainable forest management;
 - (c) objectives for particular criteria are clearly and simply formulated and if the objectives are achieved (only in repeated or supervised audits).
- 3) If the auditor team finds based on the documentation review the necessity to verify the credibility and reliability of presented data some organizations ensuring the fulfilment of criteria of sustainable forest management and data collection can be incorporated into the subject of assessment on site.
- 4) The certification report shall contain as minimum the following elements:
 - (a) description of the audit team
 - (b) the scope of the certification
 - (c) description of certification applicant management activities
 - (d) the certification applicant conformity with the certification requirements (according PEFC BG 1002-1 *Criteria & Indicators for SFM – Operational level Guide*), documenting all audit findings and specifying the time period for corrective activities implementing
- 5) Within the final results of the audit have to be presented in writing to the applicant, in such a way the applicant is able to ask questions concerning discrepancies and nonconformities and their substantiation. Results of the audit including all nonconformities and faults are part of the audit report.

- 6) The summary of certification report shall be available for public in Certification Body homepage.

4.7 Certification decision

- 1) The decision whether or not to issue a certificate to the certification applicant will be taken by the Certification Body, based on audit team prepared certification report.
- 2) The certificate can be issued to certification applicant when a positive decision on certification has been made – they are not raised out the major nonconformities, or relevant corrective actions are taken to prevent the major nonconformities. It should also be taken into account the features described in the PEFC BG ST 1002 for SFM and also in BG 1002-1 PEFC BG 1002-1 *Criteria & Indicators for SFM – Operational level Guide*.
- 3) The validity period of the certificate can be till five years

4.8 Supervision audit

- 1) At least once a year, during the validity of the issued certificate the Certification Body shall carry out the surveillance audits, ensuring that certificate holder comply with Bulgarian PEFC SFM Requirements.
- 2) In surveillance audits are:
 - a) collected and assessed information about changes in management activities, planning and/or documents in the certificate holder property/company, which can affect conformity with PEFC Forest management standard for Bulgaria .
 - b) evaluated the measures taken for preventing the nonconformities from previous audits

4.9 Recertification

Recertification shall be carried out after expiry of issued certificate following points 4.1. – 4.8.

5. CERTIFICATE

- 1) A certificate for forest management and certification in group (umbrella organizations /group entity) is valid for five years at the most. A direct/individual forest management certificate, is valid for five years at the most.
- 2) The certification body may withdraw a granted certificate permanently or temporarily. A decision to withdraw a certificate, including a justification for doing so, shall be sent in

written form to the owner or responsible person for the management. Cancellation of the certificate by the owner or responsible person for the forest management shall be made in accordance with what have been agreed with the certification body concerned.

- 3) The following types of certificates may be issued according to the Bulgarian PEFC standard for sustainable forest management:

Type of certificate	Issued to
PEFC BG SFM /Forestry certificate -	Forest owners / forest manager
PEFC BG SFM Group certificate –	Group body / Umbrella organizations

5.1. Information in issued certificates

Issued certificates shall include the following information:

5.1.1. At individual certification for sustainable forest management:

1. Name and address of forest owner/ /forest manager
2. Identification of the certified business
 - a. Forestry (FMU)
3. Reference to the standard,
4. Identification of the certification body's certification system
5. The above shall be specified as:
 - a. Forest Management certificate;
6. Date of issuance
7. Expiration date
8. Certificate number
9. Name, accreditation reference and number of the certification body
10. Identification of all sites of operation that are encompassed by the certificate, as well as the kind of operation certified at each site.

5.1.2. At group certification for group certificates (group entity /umbrella organization)

1. Name and address of the group entity
2. Identification of the group-certified business with reference to the standard,
 - a. Forestry /MFU for forest owners
3. Date of issuance
4. Expiration date
5. Certificate number
6. Name, accreditation reference and number of the certification body

6. ACCREDITATION

- 1) Certification bodies carrying out forest management shall be accredited by National accreditation body so as to ensure the credibility of the certification work and to facilitate mutual recognition. An accredited certificate shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body.
- 2) Accreditation bodies shall be a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), and/or the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA), and implements procedures described in ISO/IEC 17011: and other documents recognized by the above organizations.
- 3) The certification body shall undertake forest management certification as "accredited certifications".
- 4) The certification body carrying out forest management certification shall be accredited based on 17021: for quality management and to have a trained team for implementation of the Bulgarian PEFC scheme for sustainable forest management (PEFC BG ST 1002: and group certification BG ST 1003:) which shall be cover the accreditation scope.
- 5) Non-conformance with the accreditation requirements, results in the certification bodies not being regarded as having met PEFC Bulgaria requirements and their certifications not be considered as certified for PEFC purposes.

7. NOTIFICATION OF CERTIFICATION BODIES by PEFC BULGARIA

- 1) Certification bodies performing forest management certification according to the approved Bulgarian PEFC standards BG ST 1002: , PEFC BG ST 1002-1: ; PEFC BG ST 1003: , must be notified by PEFC Bulgaria.
- 2) The certification body applying for PEFC notification from PEFC Bulgaria shall:
 - a) be a legal entity;
 - b) agree to be listed on the publicly available PEFC Bulgaria's Internet database including the certification body's identification data;
 - c) compliance with requirements for certification bodies verified through accreditation as described in chapter 5;
 - d) to perform financial conditions (fees imposed on certified entities);
 - e) sign a PEFC notification contract with the PEFC Bulgaria (see Annex 1 in Standard PEFC BG 1006: *Notification of Certification Bodies*).

⁽¹⁾ **ISO/IEC 17021:2006** Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

⁽³⁾ **ISO 19011:2002** Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing

⁽⁴⁾ **ISO/IEC 17011:2004** Conformity assessment -- General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies