

2010-11-26

Standard Setting – Requirements



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Document name: Standard Setting – Requirements

Document title: PEFC ST 1001:2010

Approved by: PEFC General Assembly

Date: 2010-11-12

Issue date: 2010-11-26

Date of entry into force: 2011-05-12

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Foreword

The PEFC Council (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) is a worldwide organisation promoting sustainable forest management through forest certification and labelling of forest-based products. Products with a PEFC claim and/or label offer assurances that raw material used in the manufacture of products originates in sustainably managed forests.

The PEFC Council endorses national forest certification schemes that comply with the PEFC Council requirements. Schemes are regularly evaluated.

This document has been developed using an open, transparent, consultative and consensus-based process and including a broad range of stakeholders.

This document cancels and replaces Annex 2 of PEFC Council Technical Document (Standard setting procedures) and GL 5/2006 (Interpretation of PEFC Council Requirements for Consensus in the Standard Setting Process).

Introduction

The PEFC Council endorses national forest certification schemes for sustainable forest management. Forest conditions, their environmental, social, economical, and historical aspects vary amongst different regions and countries. The PEFC Council reflects this fact by incorporating in its standards national forest certification schemes and standards which are suitable to local situations.

Sustainable forest management is a holistic approach that takes into account ecological, social and economic criteria. Open, transparent and consensus-based participation of local and national stakeholders who are affected by forest management is an essential element in the development of a forest certification scheme and the definition of sustainable forest management.

This document is based on ISO/IEC Guide 59. In addition, the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards was taken into consideration.

1 Scope

This document describes the requirements for standardising bodies in the development and revision of forest management and scheme-specific chain of custody standards.

2 Normative references

The documents referenced below 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.

ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994, *Code of good practice for standardisation*

ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, *Standardisation and related activities – General vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996 apply in addition to the definitions set out in this section.

3.1 Consensus

General agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interest and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.

Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)

3.2 Disadvantaged stakeholder

A **stakeholder** who might be financially or otherwise disadvantaged in participating in the standard-setting work.

3.3 Enquiry draft

Proposed document that is available for public consultation.

3.4 Final draft

A proposed document that is available for formal approval.

3.5 Key stakeholder

A **stakeholder** whose participation is critical to the results of the standard-setting work.

3.6 Normative document

A document that provides rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results.

Note 1: The term “normative document” is a generic term that covers such documents as standards, technical specifications, codes of practice and regulations.

Note 2: “A document” is to be understood as any medium with information recorded on or in it.

Note 3: The terms for different kinds of normative documents are defined considering the document and its content as a single entity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)

3.7 Revision

Introduction of all necessary changes to the substance and presentation of a normative document.

Note: The results of the revision are presented by issuing a new edition of the normative document (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.8 Review

Activity of checking a normative document to determine whether it is to be reaffirmed, changed or withdrawn.

3.9 Stakeholder

A person, group or organisation with an interest in the subject of the standardisation.

Note: The nine major groups that have been defined by Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 provides an example of stakeholders involved in/concerned by sustainable forest management: (i) business and industry, (ii) children and youth, (iii) forest owners, (iv) indigenous people, (v) local authorities, (vi) NGOs, (vii) scientific and technological community, (viii) women, and (ix) workers and trade unions.

3.10 Standard

A document, established by consensus and approved by a recognised body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree or order in a given context.

Note: Standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, and aimed at the promotion of optimum benefits (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.11 Standardising body

Body that has recognised activities in standardisation (ISO Guide 2).

Note: A standardising body for a forest management scheme/standard is a body which is responsible for the development and maintenance of standards for the forest certification scheme. The standardising body can be a PEFC national governing body or the standardising body can be separate from the governance of the forest certification scheme.

3.12 Working draft

Proposed document that is available generally for comments or voting within a working group/committee.

4 Standardising body

4.1 The standardising body shall have written procedures for standard-setting activities describing:

- (a) its status and structure, including a body responsible for consensus building (see 4.4) and for formal adoption of the standard (see 5.11),
- (b) the record-keeping procedures,
- (c) the procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,
- (d) the standard-setting process,
- (e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and

Note: Where a vote is used as a part of decision-making procedures, the standard-setting procedures include decision-making thresholds that are considered to achieve the consensus and that are consistent with the consensus definition.

(f) revision of standards/normative documents.

4.2 The standardising body shall make its standard-setting procedures publicly available and shall regularly review its standard-setting procedures including consideration of comments from stakeholders.

4.3 The standardising body shall keep records relating to the standard-setting process providing evidence of compliance with the requirements of this document and the standardising body's own procedures. The records shall be kept for a minimum of five years and shall be available to interested parties upon request.

4.4 The standardising body shall establish a permanent or temporary working group/committee responsible for standard-setting activities. The working group/committee shall:

- (a) be accessible to materially and directly affected stakeholders,
- (b) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard where single concerned interests shall not dominate nor be dominated in the process, and
- (c) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that are materially affected by the standard, and those that can influence the implementation of the standard. The materially affected stakeholders shall represent a meaningful segment of the participants.

4.5 The standardising body shall establish procedures for dealing with any substantive and procedural complaints relating to the standardising activities which are accessible to stakeholders. Upon receipt of the complaint, the standard-setting body shall:

- (a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant,
- (b) gather and verify all necessary information to validate the complaint, impartially and objectively evaluate the subject matter of the complaint, and make a decision upon the complaint, and
- (c) formally communicate the decision on the complaint and of the complaint handling process to the complainant.

4.6 The standardising body shall establish at least one contact point for enquiries and complaints relating to its standard-setting activities. The contact point shall be made easily available.

5 Standard-setting process

5.1 The standardising body shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work.

Note: A stakeholder mapping exercise that includes defining which interest sectors are relevant and why, and for each sector what are likely to be the key issues, who are the key stakeholders, and what means of communication will best reach them, is a recognised means of meeting the requirement.

5.2 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged and key stakeholders. The standardising body shall address the constraints of their participation and proactively seek their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities.

5.3 The standardising body shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and in suitable media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions. The announcement and invitation shall include:

- (a) information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable,

- (b) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,
- (c) an invitation to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is understandable,
- (d) an invitation to comment on the scope and the standard-setting process, and
- (e) reference to publicly available standard-setting procedures.

5.4 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on comments received from the public announcement and establish a working group/committee or adjust the composition of an already existing working group/committee based on received nominations. The acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group/committee and resources available for the standard-setting.

5.5 The work of the working group/committee shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where:

- (a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group/committee,
- (b) all members of the working group shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and submit comments to the working drafts, and
- (c) comments and views submitted by any member of the working group/committee shall be considered in an open and transparent way and their resolution and proposed changes shall be recorded.

5.6 The standardising body shall organise a public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that:

- (a) the start and the end of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in suitable media,
- (b) the invitation of disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made by means that ensure that the information reaches its recipient and is understandable,
- (c) the enquiry draft is publicly available and accessible,
- (d) the public consultation is for at least 60 days,
- (e) all comments received are considered by the working group/committee in an objective manner,
- (f) a synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration, is publicly available, for example on a website.

5.7 The standardising body shall organise pilot testing of the new standards and the results of the pilot testing shall be considered by the working group/committee.

Note: Pilot testing is not required in case of revision of a standard where experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.

5.8 The decision of the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of a consensus. In order to reach a consensus the working group/committee can utilise the following alternative processes to establish whether there is opposition:

- (a) a face-to face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, show of hands for a yes/no vote; a statement on consensus from the Chair where there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal balloting process, etc.,
- (b) a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote,
- (c) an e-mail meeting where a request for agreement or objection is provided to members with the members providing a written response (a proxy for a vote), or
- (d) combinations thereof.

5.9 In the case of a negative vote which represents sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests surrounding a substantive issue, the issue shall be resolved using the following mechanism(s):

- (a) discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group/committee in order to find a compromise,
- (b) direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise,
- (c) dispute resolution process.

5.10 Documentation on the implementation of the standard-setting process shall be made publicly available.

5.11 The standardising body shall formally approve the standards/normative documents based on evidence of consensus reached by the working group/committee.

5.12 The formally approved standards/normative documents shall be published in a timely manner and made publicly available.

6 Revision of standards/normative documents

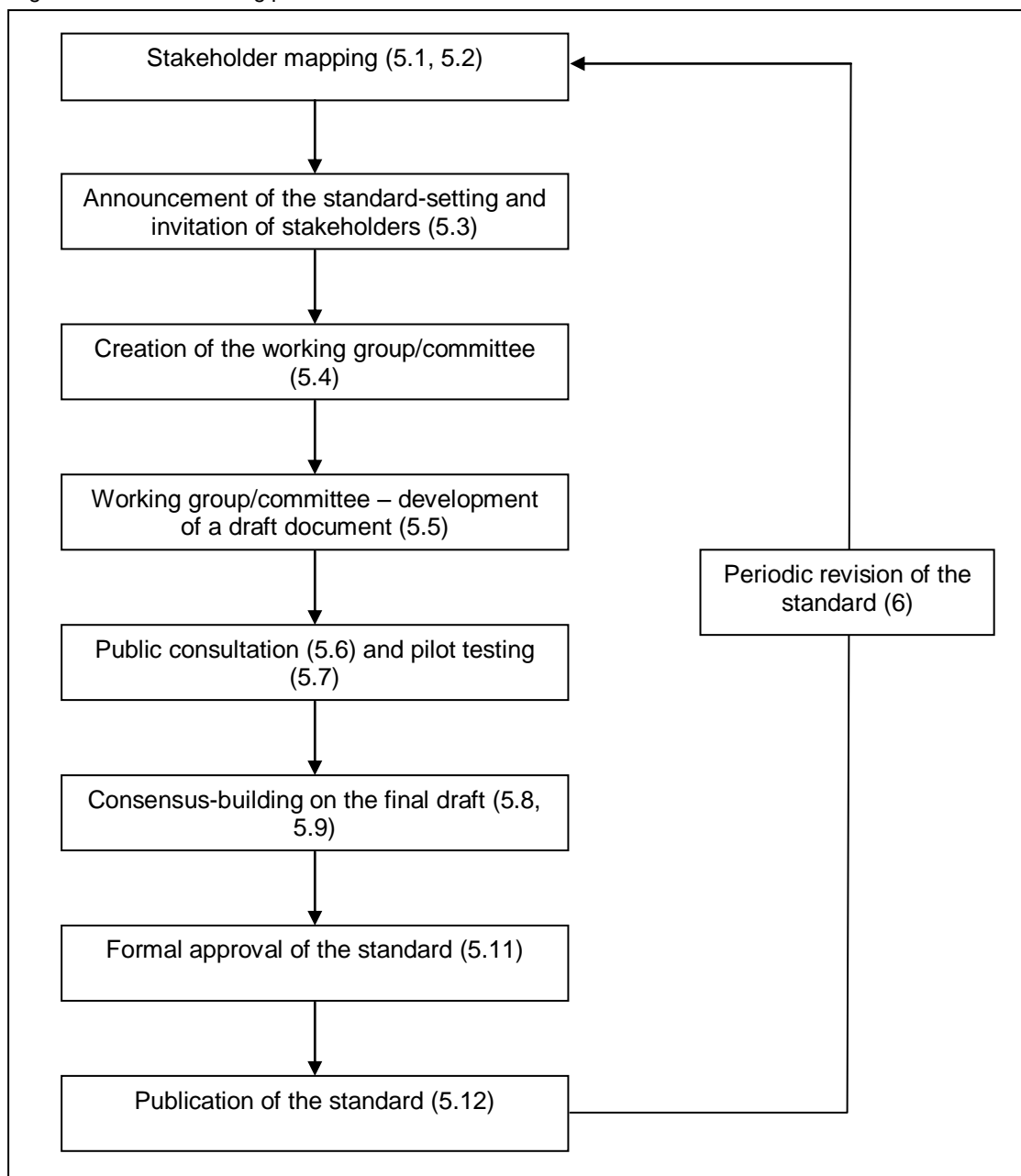
6.1 The standards/normative documents shall be reviewed and revised at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period. The procedures for the revision of the standards/normative documents shall follow those set out in chapter 5.

6.2 The revision shall define the application date and transition date of the revised standards/normative documents.

6.3 The application date shall not exceed a period of one year from the publication of the standard. This is needed for the endorsement of the revised standards/normative documents, introducing the changes, information dissemination and training.

6.4 The transition date shall not exceed a period of one year except in justified exceptional circumstances where the implementation of the revised standards/normative documents requires a longer period.

Figure 1: Standard-setting process



Bibliography

ISEAL (International Social and Environmental Alliance), *ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards*, P005 – version 5.0 – January, 2010