

South African Forestry Assurance Scheme

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Certification and Accreditation Procedures

SAFAS

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1. Scope

This standard is part of the SAFAS Scheme Standards. It outlines the accreditation and certification procedures for Certification Bodies for forest management certification under SAFAS 4: 2017 - Forest Management Standard. Chain of Custody certification procedures for Certification Bodies are included in the PEFC ST 2003.

2. Normative references

- 2.1 **ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015** Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and management systems
- 2.2 **ISO 19011:2011** Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing
- 2.3 **ISO/IEC 17011:2004** Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

2.4 The SAFAS Scheme comprises the following documents:

- 3.1 SAFAS 1:2017 SAFAS Council Statutes
- 3.2 SAFAS 2:2018 Standard Setting Procedure
- 3.3 SAFAS 3:2018 Standard Development Report
- 3.4 SAFAS 4:2018 Forest Management Standard
- 3.5 SAFAS 5:2018 Group Certification Procedures
- 3.6 SAFAS 6:2018 Certification and Accreditation Procedures
- 3.7 SAFAS 7:2018 Notification of Certification
- 3.8 SAFAS 8:2018 Issuance of PEFC Logo use licenses by SAFAS
- 3.9 SAFAS 9:2018 Dispute resolution procedures
- 3.10 PEFC ST 2002:2013 Chain of Custody Standard
- 3.11 PEFC ST 2003:2012 CB Requirements for Chain of Custody
- 3.12 PEFC ST 2001:2008 Logo Usage

3. Certification bodies

Competence of certification bodies:

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 Council to carry out forest and/or chain of custody verification, shall fulfil the following qualifications:

- a) The certification body carrying out forest management certification against SAFAS 4:2018- Forest Management Standard, shall fulfil requirements defined in;
 - i) ISO 17021:2015
 - ii) Other requirements for certification bodies defined by the national accreditation body

b) The certification body carrying out forest certification shall have the technical competence in forest management and on its economic, social and environmental impacts and benefits to society.

c) The certification body shall have a thorough understanding of the SAFAS system including all standards and documents. (refer to chapter 2.4 for list) Compliance of the certification body with the above requirements shall be verified by an accreditation as described in chapter 6.

4. Auditors

Competence of auditors:

- 4.1 Certification bodies have the responsibility to use competent auditors that have adequate technical know-how on the certification process and issues related to forest management.
- 4.2 The auditors shall fulfil general criteria for quality and environmental management systems auditors as defined in ISO 19 011:2011.
- 4.3 The preferred requirement is a Bachelor of Technology in Forestry or a National Diploma in Forestry and at least 3 years' experience in Forest Management. Equivalent qualifications in agricultural or life sciences fields can be acceptable if forestry experience can be demonstrated.
- 4.4 The certification body can fulfil the technical competence defined for auditors by the presence of technical expert(s) in a group of auditors carrying out forest management audits.
- 4.5 The compliance of auditors with the above requirements is verified by an accreditation body as described in chapter 6.

5. Certification procedures

The certification body has the following responsibilities and obligations:

- 5.1 The certification body shall have established internal procedures for forest management certification against SAFAS 4:2018 – Forest Management Standard.
- 5.2 The applied certification procedures for forest management certification shall be compatible with the requirements defined in any of ISO 17021:2015.
- 5.3 The applied auditing procedures shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements of ISO 19011:2011.
- 5.4 The certification body shall inform the SAFAS National Governing Body about all issued forest management certificates and changes concerning validity and scope of these certificates.
- 5.5 The certification body shall control of PEFC logo usage if the certified entity is a PEFC logo user.
- 5.6 The maximum period for surveillance audits shall be one year and maximum period for reassessment audit is five years.
- 5.7 The audit evidence to determine the conformity with SAFAS 4:2018: Forest Management Standard shall amongst other relevant information, include sufficient consultation with external stakeholders to ensure that all relevant issues are identified relating to compliance with the requirements of the standard.

- 5.8 A summary of the certification report, including a summary of findings on the auditee's conformity with the forest management standard, written by the certification body, shall be made available to the public by SAFAS NGB within 90 days of completion of the audit.
- 5.9 Compliance of the certification body's procedures with the above requirements shall be verified by accreditation according to chapter 6.

6. Accreditation

- 6.1 Certification bodies carrying out forest management certification, shall be accredited by a 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.
- 6.2 Accreditation bodies shall be a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) or a member of IAF's special recognition regional groups and implement procedures described in ISO/IEC 17011:2004 and other documents recognised by the above organisations.
- 6.3 The certification body shall undertake forest management certification as "accredited certifications".
- 6.4 The certification body carrying out forest management certification shall be accredited based on 17021:2015.
- 6.5 Non-conformance with the accreditation requirements, results in the certification bodies not being regarded as having met PEFC Council requirements and their certifications not be considered as certified for PEFC purposes.
- 6.6 In exceptional circumstances, the PEFC Council General Assembly can approve a time limited exemption from the above requirements based on a written application from the SAFAS Governing Body. The application shall state (i) reasons for requesting the exemption, (ii) description of how the credibility of the certification process will be assured including a list of measures currently undertaken to ensure the credibility.

7. PEFC notification of certification bodies

Certification bodies operating forest management certification against SAFAS 4:2018 Forest Management Standard shall be notified by the SAFAS National Governing Body.

In order to ensure the independence of certification bodies the PEFC notification conditions decided by the the SAFAS NGB.

- (a) administrative conditions (e.g. communication of the certification body with the SAFAS NGB, transfer of information, etc.),
- (b) financial conditions (fees imposed on certified entities),
- (c) compliance with requirements for certification bodies verified through accreditation as described in chapter 5.

The PEFC notification conditions shall not discriminate against certification bodies or create trade obstacles.