

CK SERVICES

**Assessment of the revised Swiss PEFC System
against PEFC Sustainability Benchmark Standards**

FINAL REPORT, 3rd October 2021

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1 Introduction

This document is the final report on the assessment of the revised Swiss PEFC System against PEFC International's Sustainability Benchmark Standards, which was carried out by CK Services in May-June 2021.

The assessment was conducted as a desk study following PEFC International's procedures for the assessment of revised forest certification systems, which are defined in PEFC GD 1007:2017, *Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of Certification Systems and their Revision*.

The structure of this report is based on PEFC GD 1007, Appendix 2, *The assessment report*.

1.1 Assessment Scope

The scope of the assessment covers the evaluation of system documentation and reference documentation as submitted by PEFC Switzerland against the PEFC International Sustainability Benchmark Standards specified as being applicable for this assessment by PEFC International in a *tender dossier*. In addition, responses to an international stakeholder consultation and a stakeholder involvement survey were taken into consideration.

The system documentation submitted by PEFC Switzerland comprises the documents listed in Table 1.

Table 1, System documentation, PEFC Switzerland

Document title	Document name
ND 001	Requirements for group certification
ND 002	Requirement of individual certification
ND 003	Standards for Forest Management
ND 004	Chain of Custody requirements
ND 005	Trademark Rules
VL 001	Principles of the Certification System PEFC Switzerland
VL 002-1	Requirements for certification bodies – FM
VL 002-2	Requirements for certification bodies - CoC
VL 003	Dispute settlement procedures
VL 004	Standard revision procedures
VL 005	Notification of Certification Bodies Issuance of Logo Usage Licenses
SD 001	Terms and Definitions
SD 002	Scale of fees
SD 003	Statutes

The following reference documentation was provided by PEFC Switzerland in relation to the standard review and revision process:

- Korrigiert_Development_Report_PEFC CH
- (0) Save the Date and answer for first Stakeholder meeting Re Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf
- (2) Stakeholder
- (3.1) Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working Group_Reendorsement_200120
- (3.2) Dok_Mailing_Reminder Invitation Working GroupReendorsement_200128
- (4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de

- (5.1) full GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_de
- (5.2) critical paragraphs Dok mit abschnitten zur bearbeitung runder tisch 18feb Englisch
- (5.3) GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_engl
- (6.1) Einladung PEFC FINAL_end-MB 12.9.2019
- (6.2) Einladung PEFC Franzo_FINAL_end_1209
- (7.1) document page with drafts of forest management standard downloaded 08july2020
- (7.2) 200120_ND_003_Standards für die Waldbewirtschaftung_Vorschlag1
- (7.3) standard_revision_2020_draft_2_nd_003_standards_for_forest_management_draft_neu
- (7.4.1) revision_2020_draft_1_vl_001_principles_of_the_certification_system
- (7.4.2) revision_2020_entwurf_1_vl_001_grundlagen_des_zertifizierungssystems_pefc_200423
- (8) informations on revision from website downloaded 140720
- (9) Comments page download 08july2020
- (10) Revision Feedback Sheet
- (11) Mailing_Announcement public consultation_200424
- (12) Mailing_End Public Consultation_200630
- (13) Peter Schmider Confirmation Support Gap Analysis Nov 2019
- (13.1) Translation of (13)
- (14) Internal Mail Correspondence Contact of Key Stakeholder
- (14.1) Translation of (14)
- (15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020
- (15.1) Translation of (15)
- (16) Peter Schmider Confirmation Working Group Jan 2020
- (16.1) Translation of (16)
- (17) Confirmation Christina Giesch Jan 2020
- (17.1) Translation of (17)
- (18) Confirmation Urban Brutsch Working group Feb 2020
- (18.1) Translation of (18)
- (19) key stakeholder participation
- (20) Cancellation Urban Brutsch and C Gietsch
- (21) Keel_Certification committee_Accepted corrections 250521
- (22) Theo Kern approval of Standards corrections
- (23) Furrer VSSM abstains from voting on corrections
- (24) Julie Garnero Certification committee _abstains from voting 250521
- (I) Verabschiedung VL004 AW Standardrevision PEFC Schweiz Überprüfung und Verabschieden von Dokumenten durch Zertifizierungskommission
- (II) Verabschiedung Draft 1 ND 003 und VL 001 _ AW Standardrevision PEFC Schweiz Überprüfung und Verabschieden von Dok... (40.0 KB)
- (III) Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf
- (IV) Upload Working group Draft WG Upload für pefc.ch Webseite möglich (1.22 MB)
- (V) Ihr Input zur PEFC Standardrevision (22.9 KB)
- (VI) RE Nouveau standard PEFC
- (VII) AW Verabschieden vom ND 003 Standard für Waldbewirtschaftung und Protokoll
- (VIII) RE PEFC Standardrevision. Verabschiedung der Systemdokumente. (54.9 KB)

The following legislation was specifically referenced and provided by PEFC Switzerland:

- Federal Act on Forest
- ChemRRV 814.81

The system documentation of PEFC Switzerland was assessed against the PEFC International Sustainability Benchmark Standards defined to be applicable for this assessment in PEFC International's *tender dossier*, which are listed in **Table 2**

Table 2, PEFC International Sustainability Benchmark Standards

Document title	Document name
PEFC ST 1001:2017	<i>Standard Setting – Requirements</i>
PEFC ST 1002:2018	<i>Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements</i>
PEFC ST 1003:2018	<i>Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements</i>
Annex 6, PEFC TD	<i>Certification and Accreditation Procedures Forest Management</i>
PEFC ST 2003:2020	<i>Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard</i>

A detailed evaluation of the system's chain of custody standard and its trademark use rules were not requested to be covered by the scope of this assessment, due to the adoption of the PEFC International Benchmark Standards for chain of custody and trademark use by the Swiss PEFC system. Procedures for scheme administration, such as for complaint resolution, are also not covered by this assessment in detail and are expected to be evaluated by PEFC International internally.

1.2 Methodology

The assessment was carried out as a desk study. A field visit was not part of this assessment, as this is not required by PEFC GD 1007 for previously PEFC endorsed systems, nor had a field visit been explicitly requested by PEFC International or PEFC Switzerland.

1.2.1 Assessment of the standard setting procedures and process

The assessment of the Swiss PEFC system's standard setting procedures and of the standard review and revision process was carried out against PEFC ST 1001:2017. The system documentation assessed consisted of VL 004, *Standard revision procedures*. Also considered were PEFC Switzerland's development report, the provided reference documentation (0)-(24) and (I)-(VIII), and responses from the international stakeholder consultation and the stakeholder involvement survey.

The "PEFC Checklist - Standard Setting Procedures and Process (PEFC ST 1001:2017)" as provided by PEFC International was used for this assessment. The completed checklist is found in Annex A of this report. Details on responses to international stakeholder consultation and stakeholder survey can be found in Annex C and Annex D respectively.

1.2.2 Assessment of the forest management standard

The assessment of the Swiss PEFC system's forest management standard was carried out against PEFC ST 1003:2018. The system documentation assessed consisted mainly of ND 003, *Standards for Forest Management*. Additional requirements for individually certified forest owners/managers defined in ND 002, *Requirement of individual certification* were also taken into account.

The "PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018)" as provided by PEFC International was used for this assessment. The completed checklist is found in Annex A of this report.

1.2.3 Assessment of the group certification model

The assessment of the Swiss PEFC system's group certification model was carried out against PEFC ST 1002:2018. The system documentation assessed consisted of ND 001, *Requirements for group certification*.

The “PEFC Checklist - Group Forest Management Certification (PEFC ST 1002:2018)” as provided by PEFC International was used for this assessment. The completed checklist is found in Annex A of this report.

1.2.4 Assessment of the certification and accreditation procedures

The assessment of the Swiss PEFC system’s certification and accreditation procedures for forest management certification was carried out against Annex 6 of the PEFC Technical Document. The system documentation assessed consisted of VL 002-1, *Requirements for certification bodies – FM, Requirements for group certification*.

The “PEFC Checklist - Certification and Accreditation Procedures (Annex 6, PEFC TD)” as provided by PEFC International was used for this assessment. The completed checklist is found in Annex A of this report.

The Swiss PEFC system’s certification and accreditation procedures for chain of custody certification had not to be assessed in detail, as the system has adopted PEFC ST 2003 as part of its own technical documentation, namely VL 002-2, *Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard*.

1.2.5 Assessment decisions

Based on PEFC GD 1007, 6.2.2, three types of decisions were made with regard to the conformity of the Swiss PEFC System with the relevant PEFC Benchmark requirements:

- a) **Conformity:** The system documentation fully meets a particular PEFC Benchmark requirement.
- b) **Minor nonconformity:** A nonconformity against a specific PEFC Benchmark requirement that has a low impact on achieving the intended outcome of the PEFC International Benchmark Standard. According to PEFC GD 1007, 6.2.3 a minor nonconformity should be corrected within 6 months of a potential endorsement by PEFC. The assessor may recommend a longer period where justified by particular circumstances. Multiple minor nonconformities can result in a recommendation that minor nonconformities shall be corrected before the endorsement of the applicant system.
- c) **Major nonconformity:** A nonconformity against a specific PEFC Benchmark requirement that has a high impact on achieving the intended outcome of the PEFC International Benchmark Standard. According to PEFC GD 1007, 6.2.3 a major nonconformity does not allow the PEFC endorsement of a system and needs to be corrected before an endorsement can take place.

Where a benchmark requirement was deemed not to be applicable, the requirement was marked with “N/A” and a justification for the non-applicability was provided.

1.3 Assessment Process

1.3.1 Assessment schedule

The assessment process followed a schedule based on PEFC GD 1007. The dates for the individual steps of the assessment had been agreed between PEFC Switzerland, PEFC International and CK Services prior to the start of the assessment as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3, Assessment schedule

Assessment event	Date	By
Int. stakeholder consultation	24 th February – 9 th April 2021	PEFC International
Assessment start	10 th April 2021	CK Services
Stakeholder survey	26 th April – 6 th May 2021	CK Services
Draft assessment report	By 14 th May 2021	CK Services
Commenting period	By 6 th June 2021	PEFC Switzerland
Final draft assessment report	By 27 th June	CK Services
Internal Review	By 11 th July 2021	PEFC International
Final report	By 25 th July 2021	CK Services

1.3.2 Assessment steps

The assessment consisted of the following steps:

a) Public consultation

An international public stakeholder consultation organized by PEFC International was held from 24th February to 9th April 2021. PEFC informed CK Services on 12th April 2021 that no comments had been received during this consultation (see Annex C).

A stakeholder involvement survey on national level was organized by CK Services. On 26th April 2021 invitations to respond to an online questionnaire were sent to 99 stakeholders by email. The survey was accessible to stakeholders until 6th May 2021. Eight stakeholders responded to the survey and their feedback was taken into account for the preparation of the draft and final draft reports (see Annex B).

b) Desk study and preparation of draft assessment report

The initial desk study took place during the period 10th April to 14th May 2021. It comprised an evaluation of the submitted system documentation against the relevant PEFC International Benchmark Standards covered by the scope of the assessment, as well as a consideration of PEFC Switzerland's development report, the provided reference documentation (0)-(24) and (I)-(VIII), and the responses to international stakeholder consultation and stakeholder involvement survey.

On 16th May 2021 a draft report identifying 44 minor and 2 major nonconformities was sent to PEFC Switzerland and PEFC International, with a preliminary recommendation to PEFC International not to maintain the endorsement of the system until the identified nonconformities are sufficiently resolved.

c) Commenting period

The commenting period during which PEFC Switzerland could respond to the findings of the draft report was open between 17th May and 6th June 2021. On 27th May 2021 PEFC Switzerland provided CK Services with an updated system documentation and development report, and additional evidence concerning the standard setting process.

d) Preparation of final draft assessment report

The updated system documentation and development report as well as additional evidence concerning the standard setting process provided by PEFC Switzerland were evaluated during the period 7th to 27th June 2021 and considered in the preparation of the final draft assessment report.

On 27th June 2021 the final draft assessment report identifying 4 minor nonconformities and no major nonconformity was sent to PEFC International for review, with the recommendation to PEFC International to maintain the endorsement of the system on the condition that the identified documentation related nonconformities are sufficiently resolved within 6 months from the confirmation of maintained endorsement.

e) PEFC International internal review

PEFC International provided comments to CK Services following a review of the final draft report on 27th July 2021. PEFC International also indicated that additional comments might follow, as it had been identified by PEFC International that documents of the system Documentation (SD 001, *Terms and definitions* and SD 003, Statutes of PEFC Switzerland) still required translation from German into English.

f) Preparation of the final assessment report.

Following the provision of SD 001 and SD 003 in English language by PEFC Switzerland on 17th August 2021 and a phone call between PEFC International and CK Services on 30th August 2021 to discuss the comments provided by PEFC International on the final draft report, a final report was prepared by CK Services. Taking into consideration the comments provided by PEFC International, the assessment decision regarding the conformity with PEFC ST 1003:2018, 8.1.4b was changed from “conformity” to “minor nonconformity” in the final report, which was submitted to PEFC International on 8th September 2021. Following an additional review by PEFC International on 29th September, the report was finalised on 3rd October 2021.

1.4 Assessment Personnel

The assessment was carried out by Mr. Christian Kämmer at CK Services. Contact person at PEFC International was Mr. Hubert Inhaizer. Contact person at PEFC Switzerland was Mrs. Dimitra Vlaskou until 30th May 2021 and Mr. Guenther Ratsch from 1st June 2021 onwards.

2 Recommendation

CK Services recommends to PEFC International to maintain the endorsement of the revised Swiss PEFC System on the condition that, within six months from the confirmation of maintained endorsement, PEFC Switzerland:

- 1) addresses the minor nonconformities with PEFC ST 1003:2018, 8.1.4b and 9.3.1¹ and implements corrective actions,
- 2) develops an action plan on how to ensure that the three minor nonconformities identified in the standard setting process² are not going to be repeated in the next revision process, and

¹ PEFC ST 1003, 8.1.4b, No size limitation of conversions
PEFC ST 1003, 9.3.1: Management reviews not required to be conducted annually

3) reviews and where necessary updates the checklists and guidance contained in Annex A to ND 003 in order to take into account amendments made by PEFC Switzerland in the main body of ND 003 during the assessment.

3 Summary of findings

3.1 Overall

The assessment of the revised Swiss PEFC System against the PEFC International Benchmark Standards covered under the scope of this assessment by CK Services determined that the system largely meets PEFC International's requirements.

Three minor nonconformities in the standard revision process and two minor nonconformities in the forest management standard have been identified.

44 minor and two major nonconformities previously identified by CK Services in the draft assessment report could be largely resolved through an amendment of system documentation by PEFC Switzerland in the commenting period of this assessment.

While two of the minor nonconformities that were identified in the revision process are related to a very unbalanced representation of stakeholders in the system revision, overall these nonconformities are not deemed by CK Services to have such a high negative impact that they would prevent the revised Swiss PEFC System from predominantly achieving the intended outcome of the PEFC International Benchmark Standards.

3.2 Structure of the System

The role of organisations involved as actors in the system, the structure of the system's technical documentation and the basic elements of the system are defined in VL 001, *Principles of the certification system PEFC Switzerland*.

No aspects of the system's structure that would inhibit its functioning as a PEFC endorsed forest certification system have been identified in the assessment.

3.3 Standard Setting Procedures

The standard setting procedures of the revised Swiss PEFC system defined in VL 004, *Standard revision procedures* meet the requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017. No nonconformity has been identified.

14 minor and one major nonconformity that were previously identified in the standard setting procedures in the draft assessment report could all be resolved by PEFC Switzerland through an amendment of the standard setting procedures during the commenting period of the assessment.

² 1) PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.2.1, process: Lack of identification of likely key issues of stakeholders identified in the stakeholder mapping exercise

2) PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.4.2a, process: Lack of balanced representation of stakeholders on the working group

3) PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.4.2b, process: Lack of balanced representation of expertise and affected stakeholders on the working group

3.4 Standard Setting Process

The standard setting process was largely in conformity with the requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017. Three minor nonconformities were identified.

The standard revision process was characterized by a lack of interest from stakeholders to participate in the process. This led to PEFC Switzerland not being able to fill the seats allocated for all stakeholder categories on the working group carrying out the revision work, despite proactive efforts to involve representatives from all defined stakeholder categories. Major ENGOs and trade unions, for example, were not directly represented on the working group and a representative of certification body, while being a member of the working group, did not participate in the working group meeting.

Two minor nonconformities, namely those with PEFC ST 1001:2017 6.4.2a and 6.4.2b, are due to this lack of balanced representation of stakeholders and expertise on the working group.

One minor nonconformity is related to 6.2.1, which requires that likely key issues of stakeholders are identified in the stakeholder mapping exercise. PEFC Switzerland has not been able to demonstrate that this has been done in the standard revision process.

Two additional minor nonconformities and one major nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017 in the standard setting process that were previously identified in the draft assessment report could be resolved by PEFC Switzerland through the provision of additional documentation and evidence on the process during the commenting period of this assessment.

3.5 Forest Management Standard

The forest management standard of the revised Swiss PEFC System, ND 003, *Standards for Forest Management* and ND 002, *Requirement of individual certification*, which defines additional requirements for individually certified forest owners/managers, are largely in conformity with PEFC ST 1003:2018. Two minor nonconformities were identified in ND 003.

One minor nonconformity is related to PEFC ST 1003, 8.1.4b, which requires that forest conversions entail only “a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area”. While the conversion of forest to non-forest land is strictly limited by the Swiss Forest Act, a size limitation for conversions of not greater than 5% of forest type within the certified area as required by the PEFC International Benchmark Standard is neither defined by legislation, nor by ND 003. Therefore, the benchmark requirement cannot be considered as met.

One minor nonconformity concerns PEFC ST 1003, 9.3.1, which requires that management reviews are conducted “annually” and not only “regularly” and “at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem” as defined in the system’s forest management standard.

23 other minor nonconformities that were previously identified in the draft report were resolved by PEFC Switzerland through an amendment of the forest management standard during the commenting period of the assessment.

3.6 Group Certification Model

The requirements for group forest management certification of the revised Swiss PEFC System defined in ND 001, *Requirements for group certification* are in conformity PEFC ST 1002:2018. No nonconformities were identified.

One minor nonconformity that was previously identified in the draft report was resolved by PEFC Switzerland through an amendment of the group certification standard during the commenting period of the assessment.

3.7 Chain of Custody Standard and Trademark Use

The Swiss PEFC system has adopted PEFC International's chain of custody standard, PEFC ST 2002:2020, and trademark rules, PEFC ST 2001:2020, as normative elements of its system documentation, namely as ND 004, *Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products – Requirements* and as ND005, *Trademark Rules - Requirements*. The system therefore meets PEFC International's requirements for chain of custody standards and PEFC trademark rules.

3.8 Certification and Accreditation Procedures

PEFC Switzerland has adopted PEFC ST 2003:2020 as “mandatory guideline” of its system documentation, namely as VL 002-2, *Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard*. The system therefore meets PEFC International's requirements on certification and accreditation procedures for chain of custody certification.

The Swiss PEFC System's requirements for certification bodies conducting forest management defined in the mandatory guideline VL 002-1, *Requirements for certification bodies – forest management* meet the requirements of Annex 6, PEFC TD. No nonconformities were identified.

3.9 Other Aspects

No comments were submitted in the 60-day public international stakeholder consultation organised by PEFC International.

Feedback received from eight out of 99 stakeholders in Switzerland invited by CK Services to participate in a stakeholder involvement survey supported the information provided by PEFC Switzerland on the standard review and revision process and confirmed a low level of interest by stakeholders in the revision process.

4 Structure of the System

The role of organisations involved as actors in the system, the structure of the system's technical documentation and the basic elements of the system are defined in VL 001, *Principles of the certification system PEFC Switzerland*. The purpose and functioning of PEFC Switzerland itself is outlined in SD 003, *Statutes of PEFC Switzerland*. Further requirements on the structure and functioning of group certification in forest management are laid down in ND 001, *Requirements for group certification*.

4.1 Organisational structure

Table 4 provides an overview about entities and their functions in the Swiss PEFC System.

Table 4, Entities and their functions in the Swiss PEFC System

Body	Function	Reference document
Secretariat of PEFC Switzerland	Functions as the PEFC National Governing Body in Switzerland, tasked with the operational management of the system, including the implementation of board decisions, organisational work, preparation of board meetings and papers	SD 003, <i>Statutes of PEFC Switzerland</i>
PEFC Switzerland's "Revisionsstelle"	Decides on the extent and organisation of revisions through voting of the members of PEFC Switzerland	SD 003, <i>Statutes of PEFC Switzerland</i>
PEFC Switzerland's "Lenkungsgrremium" (steering committee)	Tasked, amongst other things, with the review and revision of certification requirements, the engagement with stakeholders, recommending the establishment of and establishing working groups	SD 003, <i>Statutes of PEFC Switzerland</i>
Accreditation bodies	Accreditation bodies meeting the system's requirements for PEFC certification are defined as body for the accreditation of certification bodies	VL 002-1, <i>Requirements for certification bodies – forest management</i> ; VL 002-2, <i>Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard</i>
Certification bodies	Independent, accredited certification bodies are defined as bodies responsible for assessing the conformity of entities with the system's certification requirements	VL 001, <i>Principles of the certification system PEFC Switzerland</i> ; VL 002-1, <i>Requirements for certification bodies – forest management</i> ; VL 002-2, <i>Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard</i>
Groups (in forest management certification)	Association of forest owners and managers and associations of these, implementing the system's forest management requirements	ND 001, <i>Requirements for group certification</i>
Group representations (in forest management certification)	Responsible for implementing a group management system for a <i>group</i> , meeting system's requirements	ND 001, <i>Requirements for group certification</i>
Group organisations (in forest management)	Entity consisting of members of a <i>group</i> and its <i>group representation</i> to which a certificate against the system's forest management standard	ND 001, <i>Requirements for group certification</i>

certification)	ND 003 may be issued	
Individual forest owners	Forest owners wishing to be certified against and implementing the system's forest management standards ND 002 and ND 003 individually, for example due to organisational or corporate policy reasons	VL 001, <i>Principles of the certification system PEFC Switzerland</i> ; ND 002, <i>Requirement of individual certification</i>

The role of entities in chain of custody certification is not further highlighted, as the system has adopted PEFC ST 2002:2020 and PEFC ST 2003:2020 without modification.

4.2 Structure of technical documentation

An overview of the system's technical documentation specified in VL 001 is provided in **Table 5**.

Table 5, Overview of the system's technical documentation

Status	No.	Title
Normative Documents		
ND	001	<i>Requirements for group certification</i>
ND	002	<i>Requirement for the certification of individual enterprises</i>
ND	003	<i>Standards for forest management</i>
ND	004	<i>Chain of Custody requirements</i>
ND	005	<i>Logo rules</i>
Mandatory Guidelines		
VL	001	<i>Principles of the certification scheme PEFC Switzerland</i>
VL	002-1	<i>Requirements for certification bodies - FM</i>
VL	002-2	<i>Requirements for certification bodies - COC</i>
VL	003	<i>Dispute settlement procedures</i>
VL	004	<i>Standard revision procedures</i>
VL	005	<i>Notification of Certification Bodies Issuance of Logo Usage Licenses</i>
Other Documents		
SD	001	<i>Terms and definitions</i>
SD	002	<i>Scale of fees</i>
SD	003	<i>Statutes</i>

It should be noted, that the system's certification and accreditation procedures for forest management certification, VL 002-1, *Requirements for certification bodies – forest management* and for chain of custody certification, VL002-2, *Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard*, do not have the status of a "normative document", unlike the system's standards for forest management, group certification or chain of custody, for example.

Instead, the system's certification and accreditation procedures have the status of a "mandatory guideline". This is owed to the fact that normative documents are defined in VL 001 as those standards that are used as direct basis for the certification of organisations, while mandatory guidelines "regulate the operating mode of the whole system or certain procedures". However, this has already been the case with the previous, PEFC endorsed version of the Swiss PEFC System, and is not highlighted as an area of serious concern in this report.

4.3 Major changes and improvements during the revision process

No major changes to the organisational structure of the Swiss PEFC System in the system's revision were identified in the assessment.

Table 6 provides an overview about major changes that were made to the technical documentation of the Swiss PEFC System during the revision process, based on the information provided by PEFC Switzerland in the development report submitted in the application for system assessment. These major changes were all conducted to align the system with revised PEFC International Benchmark Standards and can be considered an improvement to the system.

Table 6, Major changes to technical documentation during the revision

Title	Name	Changes
ND 001	Requirements for group certification	The standard for group certification ND 001, had to be brought in line with the international benchmark 1002:2018. Multiple passages as well as an introductory overview of the system were added for clarity.
ND 003	Standards for Forest Management	The changes in ND 003 were applied to bring the national standard in line with the international benchmark ST 1003:2018 document. Thereby, some passages were extracted and deleted from the mandatory guideline VL 001 and inserted to ND 003. Further, a new paragraph was added to specify soil and ground water protection.
VL 004	Standard revision procedures	The mandatory guideline VL 004 Standard revision procedures was adapted to the Standard setting benchmark at the start of the revision process, to provide for an understandable, complete and straightforward guideline to the process.

4.4 Assessment result

PEFC International defines no specific requirements for the structure of a system against which an assessment could be carried out in detail. However, no aspects of the system's structure that would inhibit its functioning as a PEFC endorsed forest certification system have been identified in the assessment.

5 Standard setting procedures

5.1 Analysis and conclusion

The standard setting/revision procedures for the forest management standard(s) of the Swiss PEFC system are defined in the mandatory guideline VL 004, *Standard revision procedures*. The scope of VL 004 does not include standards for chain of custody certification, as the chain of custody standard of PEFC International is adopted by the system without any modifications.

VL 004 was revised by PEFC Switzerland following the periodic review of its forest management standard which took place in the second half of 2019, in order to align it with the requirements of the

latest version of PEFC International's Benchmark Standard for standard setting and revision, PEFC ST 1001:2017. The revised VL 004 was approved by PEFC Switzerland's steering committee ("Lenkungsgremium"), which is the body within PEFC Switzerland responsible for the development and approval of technical documentation, in January 2020. The subsequent revision of the forest management standard followed these revised procedures.

VL 004 was assessed by CK Services against PEFC ST 1001:2017. The draft assessment report identified 14 minor and one major nonconformity, all of which, however, were sufficiently resolved by PEFC Switzerland through an amendment of VL 004 during the commenting period of this assessment.

The updated version of VL 004 was assessed by CK services following the commenting period and determined to fully meet the requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017.

5.2 Assessment result – Nonconformities

No nonconformity has been identified in the version of VL 004 as submitted by PEFC Switzerland to CK Services on 27th May 2021.

5.3 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities

This section comprises selected examples of how the system's standard setting procedures meet the requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017. For the complete checklist containing the assessment against all requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017 see Annex A of this report.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 5.1.1

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 5.1.1 The standardising body shall have written procedures for standard-setting activities describing: (...) c) procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,</p>
<p>Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)</p> <p>VL 004, 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups</p> <p>A working group shall be installed to manage the revision process. This working group shall be concerned with the management requirements on the operational level and shall revise the procedures as defined in the description of the system and its appendices. The working group will be appointed by the steering committee at the start of the revision process.</p> <p>Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland through a stakeholder mapping activity, where it is defined, which stakeholder groups are relevant for the standard setting activities and scope, and why. For each stakeholder group the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them, shall be identified. Additionally, disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be identified and constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities shall be addressed. They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process:</p> <p>a) Representatives of the private forest b) Representatives of the state forest (canton-owned forest) c) Representatives of the communal forest d) Wood industry, pulp and paper industry including trade e) Environmental organisations f) Trade unions g) Other forest-related organisations (e.g. Swiss Forest Association, Forest Worker Association) h) Other interested parties (Consumer Associations, Tourism Associations) i) Forest contractors j) Scientists</p> <p>The acceptance and refusal of the delegate representatives shall be justified in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group, considerations of an appropriate gender</p>

balance, relevance of the organisation, an individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard-setting.

Considering all these eight stakeholder groups, a well-balanced line-up of the working group is aimed at. A target for the participation of key stakeholders shall be defined. Persons who hold a key position or who have not participated in the process before are identified and invited personally and their participation is sought proactively.

Assessment decision: Conformity

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 5.2.1

PEFC benchmark requirement

PEFC ST 1001, 5.2.1 The standardising body shall keep documented information relevant to the standard-setting and review process. Evidence of compliance with the requirements of this standard and the standardising body's own procedures includes: (...) (c) Contacted and/or invited stakeholders (...)

Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)

VL 004, 4.3 Documentation, (...) the following documents shall be collected: a) Contacted stakeholders and/or stakeholders invited to participate in the process (...)

Assessment decision: Conformity

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 6.2.1

PEFC benchmark requirement

PEFC ST 1001, 6.2.1 The standardising body shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting activities by means of a stakeholder identification mapping exercise. It shall define which stakeholder groups are relevant to the subject matter and why. For each stakeholder group the standardising body shall identify the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them.

Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)

VL 004 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups

(...) Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland through a stakeholder mapping activity, where it is defined, which stakeholder groups are relevant for the standard setting activities and scope, and why. For each stakeholder group the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them, shall be identified. Additionally, disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be identified and constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities shall be addressed. They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process (...)

Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 6.4.2

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC St 1001, 6.4.2 The working group shall: (a) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories, relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard, where no single concerned stakeholder group can dominate, nor be dominated in the process (...)</p>
<p>Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)</p> <p>VL 004 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups</p> <p>(...) The acceptance and refusal of the delegate representatives shall be justified in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group, considerations of an appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organisation, an individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard-setting.</p> <p>Considering all these eight stakeholder groups, a well-balanced line-up of the working group is aimed at. A target for the participation of key stakeholders shall be defined. Persons who hold a key position or who have not participated in the process before are identified and invited personally and their participation is sought proactively.</p> <p>And: 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>The working group has a quorum if at least half of the members are present. Decisions of the working group must be based on a three quarters majority of the present members. Each member has one vote. Each stakeholder group holds a maximum of four votes. If more than four members of one stakeholder group are present, they choose the ones who shall participate in the voting. None of the stakeholder groups shall dominate the decision-making process.</p>
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 6.4.4

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 6.4.4 Activities of the working group shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where:</p> <p>(a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group,</p> <p>(b) all members of the working group shall be given meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and to provide feedback on working drafts, and</p> <p>(c) feedback and views given by any member of the working group shall be considered in an open and transparent way where the outcome of these considerations is recorded.</p>
<p>Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)</p> <p>VL 004, 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p>

(...) The developed drafts are made available to all members. All members are given the chance to comment on the drafts. Any remarks are documented and discussed within the working group.

VL 004, 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group

The working group has a quorum if at least half of the members are present. Decisions of the working group must be based on a three quarters majority of the present members. Each member has one vote.

Each stakeholder group holds a maximum of four votes. If more than four members of one stakeholder group are present, they choose the ones who shall participate in the voting. None of the stakeholder groups shall dominate the decision-making process. The decisions of the working group to publish the draft document of the working group and to recommend the final draft to the steering committee/ the certification commission for formal approval shall be based on the principle of consensus. The chairperson of the working group is responsible for the judgement on whether the final draft is sufficiently supported by the whole working group. The judgement shall be based on the definition of consensus according to ISO/IEC guideline 2:1996. (...)

Assessment decision: Conformity

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 6.5.1

PEFC benchmark requirement

PEFC ST 1001, 6.5.1 The standardising body shall organise public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that:

(a) the start and the end dates of public consultation are announced in a timely manner through suitable media,

NOTE In a timely manner means (at the latest) the day before the start of public consultation.

(b) a direct invitation to comment on the enquiry draft is sent to each stakeholder identified by stakeholder identification mapping (refer to 6.2) aiming for a balanced participation of stakeholder groups,

(c) invitations are sent to disadvantaged and key stakeholders by methods that ensure they reach recipients and are easy to understand,

(d) the enquiry draft is made publicly available,

(e) public consultation is for at least 60 days,

(f) all feedback is considered by the working group in an objective manner, and

(g) a synopsis of feedback is compiled for each material issue, including the outcome of considering the issue. The synopsis is made publicly available (e.g. on a website) and is sent to each stakeholder/party that gave feedback.

NOTE For clarity the standardising body's synopsis may aggregate responses on material issues where there was similar feedback from different stakeholders. However, best practice would be to publish each piece of original feedback and the response, to allow each stakeholder to identify its own feedback.

Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)

VL 004, 4.24, (...) After this round table the working groups will meet again to develop a new draft based on the comments received and to make it available for the subsequent public consultation. This consultation period shall last 60 days at least. Usually, the documents for the consultation process are provided on the website of PEFC Switzerland. Start and end dates of the consultation period as well as the necessary documents shall be published via adequate media at latest one day before the start of the public consultation. Stakeholders shall be invited to comment on the draft. The remarks suggested during the consultation period will be documented, verified by the working group and if applicable included in the documents. Critical remarks will be discussed between a representative of the working group and the

submitting member and a realisable solution will be developed. Each party who gave feedback shall receive a report on the comments received and the outcome of the working group discussion with regard to that matter. (...)
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: Objectivity (6.5.1.f) is not literally required for the consideration of consultation comments. However, the wording “ <i>verified by the working group and if applicable included</i> ” can be similarly understood as requiring an objective approach. Considering this, and based on the understanding that both disadvantaged stakeholders, of which none were identified, and key stakeholders in Switzerland have access to the internet and email correspondence (6.5.1.c), the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.

6 Standard setting process

The standard revision process of the Swiss PEFC System took place in the period June 2019 to September 2020 and aimed to meet the requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017, *Standard Setting – Requirements*. During the revision process major changes were made to the system’s standard revision procedures, forest management standard and group certification standard.

As the scope of PEFC ST 1001:2017 applies to the standard setting and revision of forest management and chain of custody standards and as the system has adopted the PEFC International chain of custody standard without modification, only the revision process for the system’s forest management standard is covered by this assessment in detail.

6.1 Revision process overview

An overview on the major steps in the revision of the Swiss PEFC System’s forest management standard is provided in Table 7.

Table 7, Major steps in the revision process

Date/period	Event
June 2019	Stakeholder mapping by PEFC Switzerland to identify stakeholders, key stakeholders and disadvantaged stakeholders. The stakeholders identified in the mapping were categorized into forest owners; other forest related organisations; wood processing industry; environmental NGOs and trade unions; authorities, science and education; industry/trade and certification bodies. For all stakeholder categories key stakeholders were identified. No disadvantaged stakeholders were identified.
3 rd July 2019	PEFC Switzerland sent “save the Date invitations” to identified stakeholders for a stakeholder meeting (“PEFC Forum”) in October 2019, already requesting opinions on whether a revision of the system should be conducted or whether it should be re-affirmed. PEFC Switzerland received no feedback on this question from stakeholders before the PEFC Forum took place.
30 th October 2019	PEFC Forum stakeholder event organised by PEFC Switzerland. Feedback was again requested from stakeholders on whether a revision of the system should be conducted or whether it should be re-affirmed. PEFC Switzerland received no comments from stakeholders on this question during or after the event.
November 2019	A gap analysis between the forest management standard of the system and

	PEFC ST 1003:2018 carried out by PEFC Switzerland and supported by an external expert on environmental issues identified the need to revise the standard for it to meet the requirements of PEFC ST 1003:2018.
20 th January 2020	PEFC Switzerland invited stakeholders to nominate members for and participate in a working group for the revision of the forest management standard.
28 th January 2020	PEFC Switzerland sent out a reminder to stakeholders by email and started to contact key stakeholders identified in the stakeholder mapping by phone.
Early February 2020	<p>Establishment of the revision working group by PEFC Switzerland based on nominations received. The working group was established from stakeholders representing forest owners, other forest related organisations, environmental NGOs and science, wood processing industry and certification bodies.</p> <p>PEFC Switzerland considered the two stakeholder groups environmental NGOs and science to be represented by a consultant on environmental issues also holding lectures at universities. No nominations from major ENGOS in Switzerland were received.</p> <p>Trade unions did not nominate representatives for the working group, but were considered by PEFC Switzerland to be indirectly represented by a representative of the wood processing industry.</p> <p>Swiss authorities invited to nominate working group members declined the offer as private certification systems were considered a “political issue” they did not want to be involved in.</p>
18 th February 2020	<p>Meeting of the working group. The only representatives from the stakeholder categories for other forest related organisations and certification bodies which had been nominated for and accepted as members of the working group did not participate in the meeting.</p> <p>The working group considered the only piece of feedback received from stakeholders up to 18th February 2020 and reached consensus on a new draft of the Swiss PEFC System’s forest management standard, ND 003.</p>
18 th February 2020	PEFC Switzerland informed stakeholders identified in the stakeholder mapping by email about the approval of a new draft of ND 003 by the working group and invited them to participate in the subsequent public consultation on this draft.
21 st April 2020	PEFC Switzerland announced the public consultation on the new draft of ND 003 on its website.
27 th April – 30 th June 2020	60-day public stakeholder consultation organised by PEFC Switzerland. Comments could be submitted on a comment section newly established on PEFC Switzerland’s website.
July 2020	Analysis of comments submitted in the public consultation. No comments on the content of the draft standard were submitted in the public consultation. As no comments had been received in the public consultation, the draft standard was sent as a final draft for approval to PEFC Switzerland’s steering committee (“Lenkungsgremium”).
29 th July 2020	PEFC Switzerland’s steering committee approved the submitted final draft of the revised ND 003, <i>Standards for Forest Management</i> .
1 st October 2020	PEFC Switzerland submitted its complete revised system documentation for

6.2 Documentation and evidence

PEFC Switzerland provided well-structured and detailed information on the standard revision process in a development report. The development report was supported by evidence in the form of additional reference documents provided by PEFC Switzerland, such as emails, screenshots, notes of conversations, minutes and other documents, including stakeholder lists, a gap analysis and draft documents.

6.3 Stakeholder involvement survey

The stakeholder involvement survey conducted by CK Services amongst stakeholders of the Swiss PEFC System in Switzerland provided further evidence on the correctness of the information by PEFC Switzerland on the revision process.

While two respondents in the stakeholder survey stated not to have been invited to various steps of the revision process, it could be established in the follow-up to the survey that colleagues of these respondents in the same organisation had been contacted by PEFC Switzerland.

One respondent in the survey claimed that a comment that had been submitted by the stakeholder in the revision had not been “considered”. However, PEFC Switzerland could provide evidence that the comment had been officially taken into account and discussed by the working group in the revision process, but that the suggestion by the stakeholder had not been approved. Subsequently the stakeholder had been officially informed about how the comment submitted had been considered, but not accepted.

Further details on the stakeholder involvement survey conducted by CK Services can be found in Annex B of this assessment report.

6.4 Analysis and conclusion

Having assessed the documentation and evidence provided by PEFC Switzerland on the standard revision process and considering the outcome of the stakeholder involvement survey, it could be determined that the revision process was largely in conformity with the requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017. Three minor nonconformities were identified.

The standard revision process was characterized by a lack of interest from stakeholders to actively participate in the revision. This led to PEFC Switzerland not being able to fill the seats allocated for all stakeholder categories on the working group carrying out the revision work, despite proactive efforts in the form of phone calls in addition to emails to involve representatives from all defined stakeholder categories.

Major ENGOs and trade unions did not respond to PEFC Switzerland’s invitation and were therefore not directly represented on the working group. Representatives of authorities/governmental bodies declined to participate in the revision process in order to not get involved in “political issues”. The single representative for certification bodies on the working did not participate in the working group meeting.

Two minor nonconformities, namely those with PEFC ST 1001:2017 6.4.2a and 6.4.2b, are due to this lack of balanced representation of stakeholders and expertise on the working group.

One minor nonconformity is related to 6.2.1, which requires that likely key issues of stakeholders are identified in the stakeholder mapping exercise. PEFC Switzerland has not been able to demonstrate that this has been done in the standard revision process.

Overall, the assessor has come to the conclusion that while PEFC Switzerland fell short of its aim of balanced representation of stakeholders in the revision process, PEFC Switzerland has been able to provide evidence that it has taken the steps required by PEFC ST 1001:2017 for engagement with stakeholders with the objective to achieve such a balanced representation of stakeholders. That balanced representation could not be achieved regardless can be attributed to a lack of interest and even refusal by non-represented stakeholders to participate in the revision process. This view is supported by the outcome of both, the public stakeholder consultation organized by PEFC International and the stakeholder involvement survey conducted by CK Services.

Therefore, the three minor nonconformities in the standard revision process are not deemed an obstacle for the maintenance of the PEFC endorsement of the Swiss PEFC System in its revised form.

6.5 Assessment result – Nonconformities

6.5.1 Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.2.1, Process

For details on the minor nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.2.1 identified in the revision process, see Table 8.

Table 8, Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.2.1, Process

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 6.2.1 The standardising body shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting activities by means of a stakeholder identification mapping exercise. It shall define which stakeholder groups are relevant to the subject matter and why. For each stakeholder group the standardising body shall identify the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them.</p>
<p>Reference to process/evidence</p> <p>PEFC Switzerland carried out a stakeholder mapping exercise at the beginning of the revision process, based on which a list of stakeholders and key stakeholders was established.</p> <p>However, no information was provided that attempts were made to identify likely key issues of stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Reference documents (2) Stakeholder.pdf & (19) key stakeholder participation</i></p>
<p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p>
<p>Justification: From the evidence provided on the revision process it is not apparent that it was defined why stakeholder groups are relevant and what their key issues are.</p>

6.5.2 Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.4.2a, Process

For details on the minor nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.4.2a identified in the revision process, see Table 9.

Table 9, Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.4.2a, Process

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 6.4.2 The working group shall:</p> <p>a) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories, relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard, where no single concerned stakeholder group can dominate, nor be dominated in the process, and (...)</p>
<p>Reference to process/evidence</p> <p>“In this revision process, stakeholders did not show much interest in participating. Therefore, all interested parties were motivated to participate. A focus was also laid on individuals having participated in the last revision, industry and forest owners, who got further e-mails with emphasis on their value by contributing to the process.”</p> <p>“In the working group due to the limited number of interested participants, it was impossible to achieve participation of every stakeholder group.</p> <p>“However, representatives from different locations (Bern, Valais, Vaud, Zurich) were represented, and female and male people were present during the working group meeting.”</p> <p>Working group participants ((4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf) represented four of eight stakeholder groups.</p> <p>As it was a small group, the moderator aimed to have everyone equally involved. Unfortunately, four participants had to be excused.</p> <p>However, the following stakeholder groups had agreed on working on the working group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Science/ENGO: Peter Schmider was invited to the working group, as he had written the PEFC Switzerland Standards before, and as he represents the stakeholder group “scientists”. His organization BGU teaches at different applied universities in Switzerland. - Representatives of the private forest Gilbert Gubler, la forestiere. Stefanie Weindler, WaldAargau. <p>Although the private forest owners are slightly over represented, it is important to involve them, as there are 244'000 private forest owners in Switzerland. - Representation of communal forests: Christina Giesch, ForêtValais ForêtValais is the association for private and communal forests in Wallis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wood industry/trade union: Michael Gautschi, HIS, represented the wood industry. HIS works closely together with the trade unions unia and syna, who are contractual partners for the collective labor agreement GAV Holzindustrie”
<p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p>
<p>Justification: PEFC Switzerland did not achieve the balanced representation of all stakeholder categories in the working group. Forest owners were over-represented. ENGOs and trade unions were not directly represented in the working group, although PEFC Switzerland considered the former to have been represented through an environmental consultant also representing the stakeholder category science, and the latter to have been represented by a representative of the wood industry often consulting with trade unions. A certification body was on the group, but did not participate in the working group meeting. Government/authorities declined to participate. Therefore, the PEFC Benchmark requirement for balanced representation of stakeholders in the working group has not been met.</p>

6.5.3 Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.4.2b, Process

For details on the minor nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.4.2b identified in the revision process, see Table 10.

Table 10, Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1001:2017, 6.4.2b, Process

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 6.4.2 The working group shall:</p> <p>(b) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that affected by the standard, and those that can influence implementation of the standard. The affected stakeholders shall be represented in an appropriate proportion among participants.</p>
<p>Reference to process/evidence</p> <p>Same as for 6.4.2 a)</p>
<p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p>
<p>Justification: PEFC Switzerland did not achieve the balanced representation of expertise and effected stakeholders from all stakeholder categories in the working group. Forest owners were over-represented. ENGOs and trade unions were not directly represented in the working group, although PEFC Switzerland considered the former to have been represented through an environmental consultant also representing the stakeholder category science, and the latter to have been represented by a representative of the wood industry often consulting with trade unions. A certification body was on the group, but did not participate in the working group meeting. Government/authorities declined to participate. Therefore, the PEFC Benchmark requirement for balanced representation of expertise and affected stakeholders in the working group has not been met.</p>

6.6 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities

This section comprises selected examples of how the system's standard setting process meets the requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017. For the complete checklist containing the assessment against all requirements of PEFC ST 1001:2017 see Annex A of this report.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 5.2.1

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 5.2.1 The standardising body shall keep documented information relevant to the standard-setting and review process. Evidence of compliance with the requirements of this standard and the standardising body's own procedures includes: (...) (c) Contacted and/or invited stakeholders (...)</p>
<p>Reference to process/evidence</p> <p>PEFC Switzerland has provided records on the invitation of stakeholders in the form of emails and records on phone calls.</p> <p>(III) Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf.msg (3.1) Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working Group_Reendorsement_200120.pdf) (19) key stakeholder participation</p>
<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 6.2.3
<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 6.2.3 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders and address any constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities.</p> <p>NOTE A stakeholder can be both a disadvantaged and a key stakeholder at the same time.</p>
<p>Reference to process/evidence</p> <p>According to PEFC Switzerland, no disadvantaged stakeholders in Switzerland have been identified.</p> <p>PEFC Switzerland did identify key stakeholders for all stakeholder groups.</p> <p>PEFC Switzerland provided evidence that all stakeholders identified were contacted by email and key stakeholders were contacted by phone. To address potential constraints, participation in meetings via telecommunication and sending external representatives was offered to stakeholders.</p> <p><i>(3.1) Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working Group_Reendorsement_200120.pdf and</i></p> <p><i>(3.2) Dok_Mailing_Reminder Invitation Working GroupReendorsement_200128.pdf).</i></p> <p><i>(14) Internal Mail Correspondence – contacting of Key Stakeholder.pdf & (14.1) Translation of (14)</i></p> <p><i>(19) key stakeholder participation</i></p>
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 6.3.1

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 6.3.1 The standardising body shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation to stakeholders to participate in the process. The announcement shall be made in a timely manner through suitable media, as appropriate, to give stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions.</p> <p>NOTE 1 In a timely manner means (at the latest) four weeks before the first standard-setting activity is scheduled to occur.</p> <p>NOTE 2 Through suitable media means at least through the standardising body's website and by email and/or letter to identified stakeholders. Other media includes press releases, news articles, features in trade-press, information sent to branch organisations, social media, digital media, etc.</p>
<p>Reference to process/evidence</p> <p>A news article was published on PEFC Switzerland's website on 2nd July 2019.</p> <p>https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/erstes-schweizer-pefc-forum</p>

<p>First save-the-date invitations for participation in review were sent to stakeholders by email on 09.07.2019.</p> <p>(3.1) Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working Group_Reendorsement_200120</p> <p>(3.2) Dok_Mailing_Reminder Invitation Working GroupReendorsement_200128</p> <p>(III) Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf</p>
<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>
<p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

Conformity with PEFC ST 1001, 6.4.3

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1001, 6.4.3 In order to achieve balanced representation, the standardising body shall strive to have all identified stakeholder groups (refer to 6.2) represented. The standardising body shall set targets for the participation of key stakeholders and proactively seek their participation by using outreach such as (but not limited to) personal emails, phone calls, meeting invitations etc.</p> <p>NOTE When a stakeholder group is not represented and key stakeholders cannot be encouraged to participate, the standardising body may consider alternative options.</p>
<p>Reference to process/evidence</p> <p>According to PEFC Switzerland “the target that was internally defined was, to have a balanced representation of the stakeholder groups and at least four participants, at least representing forest owners, the group certification organization, scientists as well as environmental NGOs. After sending two e-mails as invitation and reminder to participate in the standard setting process, stakeholders who did not react and were considered key stakeholders (NGOs, Trade Unions, governmental organisations, and Scientist) were contacted by phone ((see e-mail “(14) Internal Mail Correspondence - contacting of Key Stakeholder” and translation 14.1 & (19) key stakeholder participation for working group.pdf) or in persona. Many of them were reached successfully (see details below). Some stakeholders could not be reached however, for different reasons such as holidays or no availability in general (see “(19) key stakeholder participation for working group.pdf”).</p> <p>The environmental NGOs such as ProNatura and WWF did not respond to our series of enquiries ((19) key stakeholder participation for working group.pdf).</p> <p>Trade unions such as Unia and syna, did not respond to our series of enquiries.</p> <p>Further key stakeholders are the members of the certification committee of Lignum. The PEFC Switzerland advisory board (Vorstand) were invited by phone and in persona after receiving the reminder invitation for participation in the working group ((19) key stakeholder participation for working group.pdf).</p> <p>All regional working groups under the Lignum umbrella organisation (RAG/CAR), (see stakeholder groups) were contacted in persona to represent the entirety of the forest and timber industry of different Swiss</p>

regions (cantons).

The above stakeholders represent a holistic view on the Swiss forest and industry and were aimed for to give input with regard to practical certification. Their key issues are increased complexity with regard to certification of forest owners and the CoC.

The reach out by phone yielded three acceptances for participation:

- Markus Bieli, Balteschwiler, could not physically participate but was asked to provide written input, send someone else or join through skype (see (15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020).
- Karl Büchel, Artus did not have time but sent a representative for Artus ((15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020).
- Niklaus Wirz, Pirmin Jung did not wish to get involved ((15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020).
- Christina Giesch cancelled shortly before the working group meeting as she felt represented by Gilbert Gubler (see (20) Cancellation Urban Brüttsch and C Gietsch.pdf). The Federal Office of Environment was contacted by phone, but the contacted stakeholders declined, as they are an executive body of the Swiss government, and therefore do not aim to get involved in political issues such as forest management standards, in order to not conflict with or undermine their own legislation.”

Reference documents:

Development report

“(14) Internal Mail Correspondence - contacting of Key Stakeholder” and translation (14.1)

15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020

(19) key stakeholder participation for working group

(20) Cancellation Urban Brüttsch and C Gietsch

Assessment decision: Conformity

Justification: While the objective of establishing a balanced representation of stakeholders in the working group was ultimately not met, PEFC Switzerland could demonstrate that targets for the participation of key stakeholders were set and that their participation was sought proactively through emails and phone calls. Therefore, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.

7 Forest Management Standard

7.1 Analysis and conclusion

The revised forest management requirements of the Swiss PEFC System are mainly defined in the system's normative document ND 003, *Standards for Forest Management*. In addition to ND 003, the requirements of which apply to all forest owners/managers certified under the Swiss PEFC System, both participants in group certification and individually certified entities, ND 002, *Requirement of individual certification* defines further requirements for individually certified forest owners/managers.

The previous version of ND 003 had been endorsed by the PEFC Council in 2014 as meeting the requirements of its PEFC International Benchmark Standard for sustainable forest management published in 2010, PEFC ST 1003:2010.

The revision of ND 003 that took place in 2019 and 2020 focused mainly on aligning the standard with the new and revised requirements of PEFC ST 2001:2018, which became PEFC International's Benchmark Standard for sustainable forest management in 2018. Additional aims in the revision were to adapt the standard to changed conditions and practices in Switzerland, to improve the transparency and clarity of the standard to facilitate its practical use and to avoid redundancies.

The structure of ND 003 was not significantly amended during the revision process. The revised ND 003 continues to consist of three main sections defining *objectives* and *indicators* for sustainable forest management in Switzerland, which are also individually referred to as "standards", namely *Standard 1 Local communities and employees*, *Standard 2 Forest ecosystem* and *Standard 3 Management*. *Standard 3 Management* is further divided into three parts: *Part A Benefits from the forest*, *Part B Operational planning* and *Part C Operational management*.

In addition to the requirements defined in the three *standards* contained within ND 003, the compliance with all applicable laws is required by ND 003, 4.2, which also highlights legislation of particular relevance for forest owners/managers.

Furthermore, three Annexes to ND 003 provide checklists for the three *standards* and applicable legislation (Annex A), an orientation guide linking the numbering of the previous standard's requirements with the numbering of the revised ND 003 (Annex B) and a glossary of terms (Annex C).

The checklists provided in Annex A are intended to "provide further explanation and facilitation for the implementation of the requirements of the national standards in practice" and to "help to interpret the indicators of the different standards and list the necessary evidence (documents, maps) and checks".

The orientation guide provided in Annex B is still linking requirements of the two previous versions of ND with each other and is expected to be either updated or removed after the revision and PEFC endorsement process is finalized.

The assessment of ND 003 and of ND 002 has determined that the forest management standards of the revised Swiss PEFC System are largely in conformity with PEFC ST 1003:2018. However, two minor nonconformities were identified in ND 003.

One minor nonconformity is related to PEFC ST 1003, 8.1.4b, which requires that forest conversions entail only "a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area". While the conversion of forest to non-forest land is strictly limited by the Swiss Forest Act, a size limitation

for conversions of not greater than 5% of forest type within the certified area as required by the PEFC International Benchmark Standard is neither defined by legislation, nor by ND 003.

One minor nonconformity concerns PEFC ST 1003, 9.3.1, which requires that management reviews are conducted “annually” and not only “regularly” and “at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem” as defined in the system’s forest management standard. 23 other minor nonconformities that were previously identified by CK Services in the draft report could be resolved by PEFC Switzerland through an amendment of the forest management standard during the commenting period of the assessment.

7.2 Assessment result – Nonconformities

7.2.1 Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1003:2018, 8.1.4b

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1003, 8.1.4b: The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: (...) entails a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area;</p>
<p>Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)</p> <p>a) ND 003, Checklist on laws G16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized.</p> <p>Federal Act on Forest Art. 4 Definition of deforestation</p> <p><i>Deforestation is the permanent or temporary change of use of forest land.</i></p> <p><i>Art. 5 Prohibition on deforestation and derogations</i></p> <p><i>1 Deforestation is prohibited.</i></p> <p><i>2 In exceptional cases a deforestation permit may be granted if the applicant proves that there are important reasons for the deforestation that outweigh the interest of forest conservation and, furthermore, the following conditions are fulfilled:</i></p> <p><i>a. the proposed site must be essential to the works for which the deforestation is to be carried out;</i></p> <p><i>b. the works must essentially fulfil the spatial planning requirements;</i></p> <p><i>c. the deforestation does not cause any serious threat to the environment.</i></p> <p><i>3 Important reasons do not include financial interests, such as the potentially profitable use of the land or the low-cost acquisition of land for non-forestry purposes.</i></p> <p><i>3bis If the authorities have to decide whether to grant permission for the construction of installations for the generation of renewable energies and for energy transportation and distribution, when weighing up interests the national interest in constructing such installations is to be considered equal to other national interests.</i></p> <p><i>4 The protection of nature and cultural heritage must be taken into account.</i></p> <p><i>5 A time limit shall be set for deforestation permits.</i></p>

Art. 16 Detrimental uses

1 Uses that do not constitute deforestation as defined in Article 4, but which endanger or interfere with the functions or management of the forest are unlawful.

Rights of use in such cases shall be revoked, if necessary by compulsory purchase. The cantons shall enact the necessary provisions. The competent authorities may authorise such uses for important reasons subject to certain conditions and requirements.

b) see reference/quotation for a)

c) see reference/quotation for a), specifically (...) *2 In exceptional cases a deforestation permit may be granted if the applicant proves that there are important reasons for the deforestation that outweigh the interest of forest conservation and, furthermore, the following conditions are fulfilled: (...) c. the deforestation does not cause any serious threat to the environment.*

d) see reference/quotation for a)

e) see reference/quotation for a), specifically (...) *2 In exceptional cases a deforestation permit may be granted if the applicant proves that there are important reasons for the deforestation that outweigh the interest of forest conservation (...), and*

(...) 3 Important reasons do not include financial interests, such as the potentially profitable use of the land or the low-cost acquisition of land for non-forestry purposes. (...) If the authorities have to decide whether to grant permission for the construction of installations for the generation of renewable energies and for energy transportation and distribution, when weighing up interests the national interest in constructing such installations is to be considered equal to other national interests.

Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity

Justification: While the conversion of forest to non-forest land is strictly limited by the Swiss Forest Act, a size limitation for conversions of not greater than 5% of forest type within the certified area as required by the PEFC International Benchmark Standard is neither defined by legislation, nor by ND 003. Therefore, this PEFC benchmark requirement cannot be considered as met.

7.2.2 Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1003:2018, 9.3.1

For details on the minor nonconformity with PEFC ST 1003:2018, 9.3.1 identified in ND 003, see Table 11.

Table 11, Nonconformity with PEFC ST 1003:2018, 9.3.1

PEFC benchmark requirement
PEFC ST 1003, 9.3.1 The standard requires that an annual management review shall at least include (...)
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)

ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 “Operational audits are carried out in a way and at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem. The audits are conducted regularly and in a transparent manner to ensure that periodic reviews of the results show possible changes.” (...)

Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity

Justification: While the requirements for internal operational auditing can be considered as requirements for a “management review, it is required that the internal audit/review is conducted only “regularly” and “at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem”.

As, however, the PEFC benchmark requires an “annual” review, not just a “regular” one, the PEFC benchmark is not fully met.

7.3 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities

This section comprises selected examples of how the system’s forest management standard meets the requirements of PEFC ST 1003:2018. For the complete checklist containing the assessment against all requirements of PEFC ST 1003:2018 see Annex A of this report.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 4.1 General a)

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1003, 4.1 General</p> <p>The requirements for sustainable forest management defined by regional, national or sub-national forest management standards shall:</p> <p>a) include management and performance requirements that are applicable at the forest management unit level, or at another level as appropriate, to ensure that the intent of all requirements is achieved at the forest management unit level;</p> <p>Note: An example of a situation where a requirement can be defined as being at another level (e.g. group/regional) is monitoring of forest health. Through monitoring of forest health at regional level, and communicating of results at the FMU level, the objective of the requirement is met without the necessity to carry out the individual monitoring of each forest management unit. (...)</p>
<p>Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)</p> <p>ND 003 2. Scope</p> <p>The National Standards refer exclusively to the sustainable management of forests. The standards are applicable to forest management at unit level and to the forest owner/ manager who is responsible for the forest management. The forest owner/ manager is responsible for ensuring that the activities and operations of all contractors meet the respective criteria of these National Standards.</p>
<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 4.1 General e)

PEFC benchmark requirement

PEFC ST 1003, 4.1 General

The requirements for sustainable forest management defined by regional, national or sub-national forest management standards shall: (...)

e) specify “100% PEFC certified”, or another system specific claim, as claim to be used to communicate the origin of products in an area covered by the standard to customers with a PEFC chain of custody;

Note: System specific claims of PEFC endorsed standards and PEFC Council approved abbreviations of such claims and the claim “100% PEFC certified”, and their translations into languages other than English, are published online on the PEFC website www.pefc.org.

Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)

ND 003, Standard 3 Management, Part C 3.9

“The chain of custody is consistent, documents (invoices, felling reports etc.) are available that enable traceability of each certified forest product to its origin. Products from the sustainably managed forest unit shall be specified as “100 % PEFC certified” or another system specific claim, as claim to be used to communicate the origin of these products in an area covered by the standard to customers with a PEFC chain of custody.”

Assessment decision: Conformity

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 4.2

PEFC benchmark requirement

PEFC ST 1003, 4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of affected stakeholders. The standard requires that the organisation shall determine:

- a) the affected stakeholders that are relevant to the sustainable forest management;
- b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders.

Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)

ND 003, Standard 3 Management, Part A 3.2

The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments.

ND 003, Standard 1 1.4

Findings on potential social impact of forest management are integrated in forest management planning and in the formulation of the respective measures. Consensus based solutions are developed with individuals or groups who are directly affected by management operations. This way, disputes can be avoided from the outset. In case of conflicts, appropriate dispute settlement procedures are employed.
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 4.3

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1003, 4.3 Determining the scope of the management system</p> <p>4.3.1 The standard requires that the organisation shall determine the boundaries and applicability of the management system to establish its scope.</p>
<p>Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)</p> <p>ND 003 Standard 3 Management Part A</p> <p>3.1 The quantity of harvested forest products is in accordance with permanently sustainable levels. The forest manager compiles a list of the certified forest products.</p> <p>Part B Operational planning</p> <p>Objective: The forest enterprise develops an appropriate management plan, keeps it up-to-date and applies it. The longterm objectives of management and the means for achieving them are clearly stated.</p> <p>3.4 The management plan and the associated documents contain details regarding: a) Management objectives; b) Description of the managed forests, ownership status and rights of use, limiting environmental factors, socioeconomic conditions, and adjacent lands c) Description of the silvicultural system based on inventory data and the ecological situation; d) Justification of the annual cut and the tree species selection (harvesting techniques, increment, tariffs, assessment of annual yield, site maps containing recommendations for species selection etc.).</p>
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: ND 003's requirements for forest management plans, determining amongst other things forest location, extent, products and activities can be considered as equivalent to determining the scope of a management system.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 6.3.1.1

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1003, 6.3.1.1 The standard requires that the organisation shall identify and have access to the legislation applicable to its forest management and determine how these compliance obligations apply to the organisation.</p> <p>Note: For a country which has signed a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the</p>

European Union and the producing country, the “legislation applicable to forest management” is defined by the VPA agreement.
<p>Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)</p> <p>ND 003, 2. Compliance with laws</p> <p>Forest management respects all applicable laws of Switzerland as well as international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and complies with all requirements of PEFC Switzerland.</p> <p>The forest manager complies with all national and local legislation and official regulations. He pays all applicable and legally prescribed fees, contributions, taxes and other public royalties.</p> <p>Laws of particular relevance are the Forest Act as well as the Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Natur- und Heimatschutzgesetz) and the Environmental Protection Act and the respective regulations (see Annex 1, G1: List of relevant legislation).</p> <p>A.1 Checklist on laws, Indicator G1:</p> <p>Forest owner and forest manager are aware of the sources of information, in order to access all relevant legal regulations.</p> <p>List of relevant legislation: • Forest Act (WaG) • Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act (NHG), • Environmental Protection Act (USG), • Water Protection Act (GSchG), • Spatial Planning Act (RPG), • Labour Protection Act (ArG), • Hunting Act (JSG), • Civil Code (ZBG, particularly because of landregister), • Others such as ChemG, KVG, UVG, BBG.</p> <p>Access to up-to-date legislation is guaranteed at any time.² (www.admin.ch/ch) Updates and information are provided by the group management or the cantonal forest service.</p> <p>ND 003, 1. Introduction Switzerland is signatory state of the following international agreements: The Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the agreements of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1993 in Rio). Provisions of these agreements are respected in forest management. The forest owner commits himself to manage the forest according to these National Standards of PEFC.</p>
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 6.3.4.3

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1003, 6.3.4.3 The standard requires that wages of local and migrant forest workers as well as of contractors and other operators operating in PEFC-certified areas shall meet or exceed at least legal, industry minimum standards or, where applicable, collective bargaining agreements.</p> <p>Note: Where wages are below the living wage of a country, steps should be taken to attain increased</p>

wages towards a living wage level over time in addition to increases for inflation.
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text) ND 003, Standard 1 (...) 1.5 Wages of local and migrant forest workers as well as of contractors and other operators operating in PEFCcertified areas shall meet or exceed at least the collective labour agreement of the wood industry Switzerland (Gesamtarbeitsvertrag GAV Holzindustrie). (...)
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 6.3.4.4

PEFC benchmark requirement PEFC ST 1003, 6.3.4.4 The standard requires that the organisation is committed to equal opportunities, non-discrimination and freedom from workplace harassment. Gender equality shall be promoted.
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text) ND 003, Standard 1 (...) 1.6 The organisation commits to equal opportunities, non-discrimination and freedom from workplace harassment. Gender equality shall be promoted.
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 8.1.3

PEFC benchmark requirement PEFC ST 1003, 8.1.3 The standard requires that climate positive practices in management operations, such as greenhouse gas emission reductions and efficient use of resources shall be encouraged.
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text) ND 003, Standard 3 3.2 The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments. This includes climate positive practices in management operations, such as greenhouse gas emission reductions and efficient use of resources.
Assessment decision: Conformity

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 8.2.8

PEFC benchmark requirement

PEFC ST 1003, 8.2.8 The standard requires that the WHO Class 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available. Any exception to the usage of WHO Class 1A and 1B pesticides shall be defined in the national/regional standard.

Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)

ND 003, Checklist on laws

(...) The areal use of pesticides is forbidden, especially the use of chemicals which are belonging to WHO types 1A or 1B. The only exceptions are on the one hand the punctual treatment of log piles outside groundwater protection zones if other economically reasonable measures are not possible, and on the other hand measures on official order. In this case, the user must possess a licence for use. Pesticides that are used must have permission by the Federal Office for the Environment (BAFU).

Assessment decision: Conformity

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met

Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 9.2.2

PEFC benchmark requirement

PEFC ST 1003, 9.2.2 Organisation

The standard requires that the organisation shall:

a) plan, establish, implement and maintain an audit programme(s) including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting, which shall take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous audits; (...)

Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)

ND 003, Part C 3.7 (...) "The organisation shall provide information on whether the management system is effectively implemented and maintained. These internal audits shall be carried out by the organisation itself the following shall be defined: a) the frequency of these internal operational audits b) the methods, c) responsibilities, d) planning requirements and reporting taking into account the processes required and the results of previous audits (...) The operational audit shall include • the results and status of actions from previous audits (internal and external by independent assessors) • changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system • information on the organisation's performance, including trends in: • nonconformities and corrective actions; • monitoring and measurement results; • audit results; • opportunities for continual improvement. The outputs of the operational audit shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the

management system and the results shall be documented.”

Assessment decision: Conformity

Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

8 Group Certification Model

8.1 Analysis and conclusion

The requirements for group forest management certification of the revised Swiss PEFC System are defined in ND 001, *Requirements for group certification*.

ND 001 underwent a major revision by PEFC Switzerland in 2019 to align it with the new and revised requirements for group certification in forest management of PEFC International defined in the PEFC International Benchmark Standard PEFC ST 1002:2018, *Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements* published in 2018.

Multiple passages and an introductory overview of the system were added to ND 001 in the revision. The structure of both, ND 001 and the group model itself, was not significantly changed, however.

Figure 1 shows an overview of the group certification model and its control mechanisms that is provided in ND 001, 4.1.

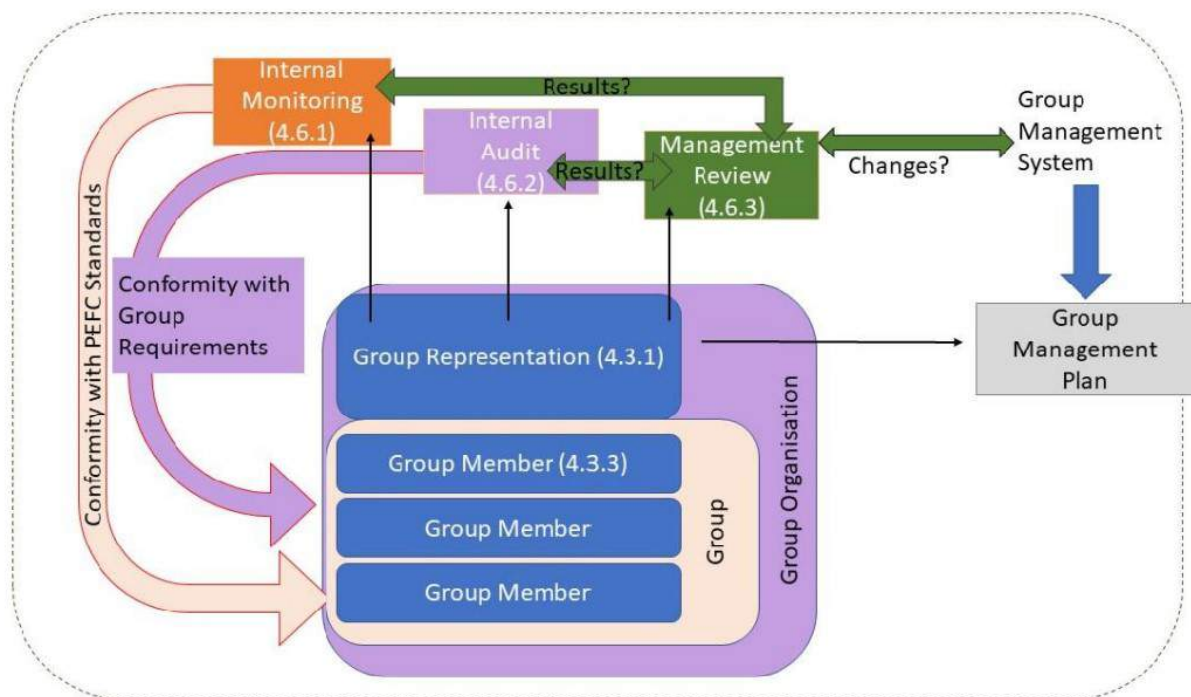


Figure 1, Overview of the Swiss PEFC System's group certification model

The assessment of ND has identified full conformity PEFC ST 1002:2018. No nonconformities were identified.

One minor nonconformity that was previously identified in the draft report could be resolved by PEFC Switzerland through an amendment of the group certification standard during the commenting period of the assessment.

8.2 Assessment result – Nonconformities

No nonconformity has been identified in the version of ND 001 submitted by PEFC Switzerland to CK Services on 27th May 2021.

8.3 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities

This section comprises selected examples of how the system's group certification model meets the requirements of PEFC ST 1002:20178. For the complete checklist containing the assessment against all requirements of PEFC ST 1002:2018 see Annex A of this report.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1002, 4.3.3

PEFC benchmark requirement
PEFC ST 1002, 4.3.3 The standard shall define which requirements of the sustainable forest management standard may be fulfilled on group level.
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
ND 001, 4.3.3.2 Tasks of the members a) Obligation to manage their forest in line with the sustainable forest management standards of PEFC Switzerland (ND 003 Standards for forest management)
ND003, Scope: The standards are applicable to forest management at unit level and to the forest owner/manager who is responsible for the forest management.
ND001, 4.1 (...) The group management system shall ensure and ease the implementation of the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management Standards on a group level. Therefore, the operational planning, operational management and the internal and external audits as well as corrective measures as defined in ND 003 Sustainable Forest Management can be carried out on a group level.
(...) Also, if a group organisation decides to fulfil requirements of the sustainable forest management standard on the group level, these requirements shall be considered in the group management plan.
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: ND 003 requirements on operational planning, operational management and the internal and external audits as well as corrective measures are specified as requirements that may be met on group level. All other requirements of ND003 apply by default on forest management unit level. The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1002, 4.4.1

PEFC benchmark requirement
PEFC ST 1002, 4.4.1 The standard requires that all participants shall be subject to the internal monitoring and the internal audit programme.
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
ND 001, 4.6 Performance evaluation

<p>Three types of performance evaluation shall be performed. An annual internal monitoring programme and an annual internal audit programme shall be planned and operated by the group representation.</p> <p>Furthermore, a management review shall be at least organised by the group representation. The internal monitoring programme serves as an evaluation of the group members' conformity with the certification requirements. All group members are subject to the internal monitoring programme. The internal audit programme covers both, group members and the group representation.</p>
<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>
<p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

Conformity with PEFC ST 1002, 4.4.2

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1002, 4.4.2 The standard requires that a certified PEFC chain of custody system shall be in place if a group entity acts as a trader of forest based material not covered by group certificate.</p>
<p>Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)</p> <p>ND 001, 4.3.1 Group representation (applicant) (...) In case the group representation acts as a trader of forest based material not covered by the group certificate, a certified PEFC chain of custody system shall be in place.</p>
<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>
<p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

Conformity with PEFC ST 1002, 5.1.2

<p>PEFC benchmark requirement</p> <p>PEFC ST 1002, 5.1.2 Function and responsibilities of participants</p> <p>The standard requires that the following functions and responsibilities of the participants shall be specified:</p> <p>a) To provide the group entity with a binding written agreement, including a commitment on conformity with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system; group participants excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within 12 months after exclusion.</p> <p>Note: The requirement for "written agreement" and participants' "commitment" is also satisfied by the commitment of and written agreement of a pre-existing organisation or group or the members participation, such as a forest owners'/managers' association, SFM programme and submission to tax programming, where the organisation can demonstrate that it has a legal mandate to represent the participants and where its commitment and the terms and conditions of the contract are enforceable. (...)</p>
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Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
ND 001, 4.3.3.2. Tasks of the members The members of the group are assigned to: a) Obligation to comply with the regulations of the group by signing contract with the group representation [...] 4.5 Procedures for the admittance of new members [...] Previous group participation shall be communicated to the group representation. Group members excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within 12 months after exclusion.
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1002, 9.3.2.1 and 9.3.2.2

PEFC benchmark requirement
PEFC ST 1002, 9.3.2 Determination of the sample size
9.3.2.1 The sample size shall be calculated for the participants of the group organisation.
9.3.2.2 The size of the sample generally should be the square root of the number of participants: ($y=\sqrt{x}$), rounded to the upper whole number.
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
ND 001, 4.6.2.4 Sample size For a surveillance audit, the number of participants is determined by the formula: \sqrt{n} , rounded to the upper whole number, where n is the number of certified enterprises. Applicants for membership shall be considered in the audit plan in the course of the application and shall be included in the audits at the earliest possible date.
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with PEFC ST 1002, 9.3.3

PEFC benchmark requirement
PEFC ST 1002, 9.3.3 Determination of sample categories
9.3.3.1 The sample categories shall be established based on the results of a risk assessment. The indicators used in the risk assessment shall reflect the geographical scope of the standard. The following non exhaustive list of indicators may be used for the risk assessment:
a) ownership type (e.g. state forest, communal forest, private forest);
b) size of management units (different size classes);
c) biogeographic region (e.g. lowlands, low mountain range, high mountain range);
d) operations, processes and products of potential group participants;
e) deforestation and forest conversion;

f) rotation period(s); g) richness of biological diversity; h) recreation and other socio-economic functions of the forest; i) dependence of and interaction with local communities and indigenous people; j) available resources for administration, operations, training and research; k) governance and law enforcement.
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text) ND 001, 4.6.2.5 The sample categories shall be established based on the results of a risk assessment. The indicators used in the risk assessment shall reflect the geographical scope of the standard. The following non exhaustive list of indicators may be used for the risk assessment: a) ownership type (e.g. state forest, communal forest, private forest); b) size of management units (different size classes); c) biogeographic region (e.g. lowlands, low mountain range, high mountain range); d) operations, processes and products of potential group participants; e) rotation period(s); f) richness of biological diversity; g) recreation and other socio-economic functions of the forest; h) dependence of and interaction with local communities; i) available resources for administration, operations, training and research; j) governance and law enforcement.
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

9 Chain of Custody Standard and Trademark Use

The Swiss PEFC system has adopted PEFC International's chain of custody standard, PEFC ST 2002:2020, and trademark rules, PEFC ST 2001:2020, as normative elements of its system documentation, namely as ND 004, Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products – Requirements and as ND005, Trademark Rules - Requirements.

The system therefore meets PEFC International's requirements for chain of custody standards and PEFC trademark rules.

9.1 Analysis and conclusion

9.2 Assessment result – Nonconformities

Not applicable

9.3 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities

Not applicable

10 Certification and Accreditation Procedures

10.1 Chain of custody certification

10.1.1 Analysis and conclusion

PEFC Switzerland has adopted PEFC ST 2003:2020 as “mandatory guideline” of its system documentation, namely as VL 002-2, *Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard*.

The system therefore meets PEFC International’s requirements on certification and accreditation procedures for chain of custody certification.

10.1.2 Assessment result – Nonconformities

Not applicable

10.1.3 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities

Not applicable

10.2 Forest management certification

10.2.1 Analysis and conclusion

The Swiss PEFC System’s requirements for certification bodies conducting forest management are defined in the mandatory guideline VL 002-1, *Requirements for certification bodies – forest management*.

The version of this document was revised by PEFC Switzerland in 2019. The amendments conducted, however, are minor and limited to a removal of references to ISO Guide 65, as PEFC forest management certification is currently to be carried out as management certification under ISO 17021.

The assessment of VL 002-1 determined full conformity with the requirements of Annex 6, PEFC TD. No nonconformities were identified.

10.2.2 Assessment result – Nonconformities

No nonconformity has been identified in the version of VL 002-1 submitted by PEFC Switzerland to CK Services on 27th May 2021.

10.2.3 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities

This section comprises selected examples of how the system’s certification and accreditation procedures for forest management certification meet the requirements of Annex 6, PEFC TD. For the complete checklist containing the assessment against all requirements of Annex 6, PEFC TD see Annex A of this report.

Conformity with Annex 6, PEFC TD, 6.3.1 (ISO 17021 accreditation)

PEFC benchmark requirement Annex 6, PEFC TD, 6.3.1 Does the scheme documentation require that certification body for forest management certification shall fulfil requirements defined in ISO 17021?
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text) VL 002-1 4.2. Requirements for certification bodies The certification bodies have to comply with the following PEFC requirements: (...) Accreditation according to ISO 17021 at an independent national accreditation body. The relevant forest management standards shall be covered by the accreditation scope. (...)
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with Annex 6, PEFC TD, 4 (provision of information to NGB)

PEFC benchmark requirement Annex 6, PEFC TD, 4 Does the scheme documentation require that certification body shall inform the relevant PEFC National Governing Body about all issued forest management certificates and changes concerning the validity and scope of these certificates?
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text) VL 002-1 Ch. 4.1 Tasks of the certification bodies (...) Inform the PEFC National Governing Body about all issued forest management certificates and changes concerning the validity and scope of these certificates
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

Conformity with Annex 6, PEFC TD, 6 (non-discriminatory procedures)

PEFC benchmark requirement
Annex 6, PEFC TD, 6
Are the procedures for PEFC notification of certification bodies non-discriminatory?
Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
VL 002-1 5 Appointment of certification bodies (admission) (...) The appointment of certification bodies is carried out by the PEFC secretariat of PEFC Switzerland based on a non-discriminatory process.
Assessment decision: Conformity
Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

11 Other Aspects

An assessment of the revised Swiss PEFC System's procedures for PEFC scheme administration against PEFC GD 1004, *Administration of PEFC scheme*, covering the notification of certification bodies, the issuance of PEFC trademark licenses as well as complaints and dispute resolution procedures, has not been included in the scope of this assessment and is expected to be carried out by PEFC International.

Annex A: PEFC Standard and System Requirements Checklist

PEFC Checklist - Standard Setting Procedures and Process (PEFC ST 1001:2017)

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
Standardising Body			
5.1.1 The standardising body shall have written procedures for standard-setting activities describing:			
(a) its legal status and organisational structure, including a body responsible for consensus-building (working group, refer to 6.4) and procedures for formal adoption of the standard (refer to 7.1),	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.1. Start</p> <p>According to the statutes of PEFC Switzerland the steering committee/ certification commission is the decision making body “deciding on certification criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as well as on the description of the system”. It also is responsible for appointing working groups and calling their members as well as determining the chairmen for the working groups. Consequently the steering committee certification commission also decides upon the start of the revision process which has to take part every five years.</p> <p>4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>The decisions of the working group to publish the draft document of the working group and to recommend the final draft to the steering committee/ the certification commission for formal approval shall be based on the principle of consensus. The chairperson of the working group is responsible for the judgement on whether the final draft is sufficiently supported by the whole working group. The judgement shall be based on the definition of consensus according to ISO/IEC guideline 2:1996.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(b) procedures for keeping documented information,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3. Documentation</p> <p>In order to guarantee transparency and public availability, all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC Switzerland.</p> <p>With respect to the endorsement process by the PEFC Council International the following documents shall be collected and stored for at least five years: a) Minutes of the steering committee meetings. b) Minutes of the working group meetings. c) Documentation of the round table. d) Documentation of the comments or complaints received. e) Relevant publication, e.g. on the start of the revision process, the round table or the consultation period.</p> <p>A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(c) procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups</p> <p>A working group shall be installed to manage the revision process. This working group shall be concerned with the management requirements on the operational level and shall revise the procedures as defined in the description of the system and its appendices. The working group will be appointed by the steering committee at the start of the revision process.</p> <p>Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland through a stakeholder mapping activity, where it is defined, which stakeholder groups are relevant for the standard setting activities and scope, and why. For each stakeholder group the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them, shall be identified. Additionally, disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be identified and constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities shall be addressed. They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process:</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>a) Representatives of the private forest b) Representatives of the state forest (canton-owned forest) c) Representatives of the communal forest d) Wood industry, pulp and paper industry including trade e) Environmental organisations f) Trade unions g) Other forest-related organisations (e.g. Swiss Forest Association, Forest Worker Association) h) Other interested parties (Consumer Associations, Tourism Associations) i) Forest contractors j) Scientists</p> <p>The acceptance and refusal of the delegate representatives shall be justified in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group, considerations of an appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organisation, an individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard-setting.</p> <p>Considering all these eight stakeholder groups, a well-balanced line-up of the working group is aimed at. A target for the participation of key stakeholders shall be defined. Persons who hold a key position or who have not participated in the process before are identified and invited personally and their participation is sought proactively.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(d) the standard-setting process,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, ch. 4.2. 4.2.1. Start 4.2.2 Identification of need for revision 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>[The complete wording is not quoted for the sake of brevity.]</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: VL 004 includes detailed procedures for the standard setting process. The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.4 ch. 4.2.2 (...) The chairperson of the working group is responsible for the judgement on whether the final draft is sufficiently supported by the whole working group. The judgement shall be based on the definition of consensus according to ISO/IEC guideline 2:1996.</p> <p>"Consensus: general approval, characterised by a non-existence of a sustained opposition of an important part of the affected interests against fundamental (controversial) issues; and</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>characterised by a process that includes the effort to regard the opinions of all affected parties and to resolve any contradicting arguments.</p> <p>Note: Consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity.”</p> <p>According to this definition of consensus, issues are deemed “fundamental” if they have been raised and well established by a stakeholder group at the beginning of the revision process. New issues that are introduced to the working group during the process can be declared “fundamental” at the beginning of the discussion.</p> <p>In order to reach a consensus, the working group can make use of the following processes to identify any opposition (according to the ISO definition) against the standard (draft): a) A conference for a verbal yes/ no voting (either face-to-face, by phone or in a combination of both), b) a conference for a yes/ no voting by a show of hands, c) a conference for a secret yes/ no voting, d) a determination of consensus by the chairperson on a conference where no dissenting vote is detected either verbal or by a show of hands, e) an exchange via e-mail to ask the members for their consent and the members reply in writing (one mandate per vote).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(f) review and revision of standard(s)/normative document(s).	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, ch. 4.2. 4.2.1. Start 4.2.2 Identification of need for revision 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>[The complete wording is not quoted for the sake of brevity.]</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
5.1.2 The standardising body shall make its standard-setting procedures publicly available and shall review its standard-setting procedures regularly. The review shall consider feedback from stakeholders.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.1 Start</p> <p>(...) The start of the revision process shall be communicated to the public at least 30 days before the start of activities at an appropriate time in an appropriate way (at least through the website and per email). The announcement shall inform about the goals, the scope, the time frame and the possibilities to participate. It points to these Standard revision procedures and encourages</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>the public to comment on their scope and contents. (...)</p> <p>VL 004, 4.2.2 Identification of need for revision</p> <p>To start the revision process, the existing standards shall be reviewed. This is done through feedback from stakeholders and a gap analysis, which examines the compliance of the Swiss PEFC standards with the latest international PEFC Standards published by the PEFC Council in Geneva, as well as other relevant standards and new scientific findings.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>The Standard setting procedures of PEFC Switzerland are available online at www.pefc.ch alongside all other technical documentation of the system.</p> <p>Development report</p> <p>(...) The re-endorsement process was started with sending out Save the Date invitations 2 on 3. July 2019 for a stakeholder meeting at the PEFC Forum on 30th October 2019, where all stakeholders identified in a stakeholder mapping activity in June 2019 (result: updated stakeholder list) were invited to discuss the need for a standard revision from their point of view. In the invitation, the stakeholders were explicitly asked to send their feedback and comments to Olin Bartlome, CEO of PEFC Switzerland. No feedback was received (...).</p> <p>(6.1) Einladung PEFC FINAL_end-MB 12.9.2019.pdf and (6.2) Einladung PEFC Franzo_FINAL_end_1209.pdf</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: System documentation, including standards as well as standard setting procedures themselves were reviewed and published for commenting, but no feedback was received that could be considered. The process can be considered to meet the PEFC benchmark requirement.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
5.2.1 The standardising body shall keep documented information relevant to the standard-setting and review process. Evidence of compliance with the requirements of this standard and the standardising body's own procedures includes:			
(a) Standard-setting procedures,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3. Documentation In order to guarantee transparency and public availability, all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC Switzerland. With respect to the endorsement process by the PEFC Council International the following documents shall be collected and stored for at least five years: a) Contacted stakeholders and/or stakeholders invited to participate in the process, b) Participation of stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting as well as outside of working group meetings, c) Minutes of the steering committee/ certification commission meetings, d) Minutes of the working group meetings, e) Documentation of the round table, f) Documentation of the comments or complaints received, g) Relevant publication, e.g. on the start of the revision process, the round table or the consultation period. A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international) within the following four weeks.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The procedures do not require explicitly that evidence on the conformity with all elements of PEFC ST 1001 and VL 004 is recorded. However, the documentation that is required to be kept as evidence specified in VL 004, 4.3 can be considered as covering most essential elements. This, in combination with the development report and supporting evidence required for the endorsement process, can be considered sufficient evidence to consider the intent of PEFC benchmark requirement to be met in practice.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland submitted a detailed development report as well as extensive reference documentation that was recorded during the standard revision process to serve as evidence of conformity with PEFC ST 1001 and VL 004.</p> <p><i>a) See e-mails: (I) and (II) for approval of (I) VL 004 and (II) for approval of VL001 and ND003 Drafts. The approval of the final document can be found in (VII) AW Verabschieden vom ND 003 Standard für Waldbewirtschaftung und Protokoll.msg. The proof for the approval of the final, definitive set of system documents is found in (VIII) RE PEFC Standardrevision. Verabschiedung</i></p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p><i>der Systemdokumente.msg) b) See “(4) 180220_runder Tisch_Protokoll.pdf» c) See start of revision process https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/PEFC-forum i. Overview on process and info on possibility to participate in working group: https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/standard-revision and invitation ((3.1) Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working_Group_Reendorsement_200120.pdf) and (3.2) Dok_Mailing_Reminder Invitation Working GroupReendorsement_200128.pdf) ii. Info on 1. Round table and invitation to participate by submitting feedback: https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/runder-tisch-zur-standardrevision or as pdf: ((8) informations on revision from website downloaded 140720.pdf) iii. Info on new CoC and trademark: https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/neuer-coc-standard iv. Info on start of public consultation https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/konsultationstandardrevision and e-mail: (11) Mailing_Announcement public consultation_200424.pdf v. Info on End of public consultation https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/konsultation-beendet and e-mail (12) Mailing_End Public Consultation_200630.pdf</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(b) Stakeholder identification mapping,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.2.3 Appointment of working groups</p> <p>Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland through a stakeholder mapping activity, where it is defined, which stakeholder groups are relevant for the standard setting activities and scope, and why. For each stakeholder group the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them, shall be identified. Additionally, disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be identified and constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities shall be addressed. They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process: (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: VL 004 does not explicitly require that records on the stakeholder mapping conducted are recorded. However, as this information is required for the assessment process and has indeed been submitted by PEFC Switzerland in the application documentation, it can be concluded that the intention of this PEFC benchmark requirement is sufficiently addressed in practice.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland has provided a stakeholder list which is based on a stakeholder mapping exercise and updated on a regular basis, as well as additional information on key stakeholders in the development report.</p> <p>(2) Stakeholder.pdf</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(c) Contacted and/or invited stakeholders,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3 Documentation</p> <p>(...) the following documents shall be collected:</p> <p>a) Contacted stakeholders and/or stakeholders invited to participate in the process,</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland has provided records on the invitation of stakeholders in the form of emails and records on phone calls.</p> <p>(III) Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf.msg (3.1) Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working Group_Reendorsement_200120.pdf)</p> <p>(19) key stakeholder participation</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(d) Stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3 Documentation "...the following documents shall be collected:</p> <p>(...) b) Participation of stakeholders involved in standard setting activities including participants in each working group meeting as well as outside of working group meetings, (...)</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	YES	Involvement by participation in working group is documented by working group protocol. (see (4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf) Involvement through feedback is documented in the Feedback sheet. (see (10) Revision Feedback Sheet.pdf) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
(e) Feedback received and a synopsis of how feedback was addressed,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.3 Documentation “...the following documents shall be collected: (...) d) Documentation of the comments or complaints received. (...) A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international)” Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	YES	PEFC Switzerland provided records on feedback received. (10) Revision Feedback Sheet.pdf Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
(f) All drafts and final versions of the standard,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.3. Documentation (...) In order to guarantee transparency and public availability all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>Switzerland. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Although ideally a clear timeframe would be specified instead of “promptly”, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>All drafts are uploaded to the cloud storage (dropbox).</p> <p>All drafts were uploaded to the website but exchanged with the most recent draft each time a new one came up.</p> <p>See https://pefc.ch/de/revision/dokumente/ and pdf version of the site (7.1) document page with drafts of forest management standard downloaded 08july2020.pdf Draft 1, 20. January 2020, after Gap analysis: (7.2) 200120_ND_003_Standards für die Waldbewirtschaftung_Vorschlag1.pdf Draft 2: Output of working group, approved by certification committee on 18.03.2020 (7.3) standard_revision_2020_draft_2_nd_003_standards_for_forest_management_draft_neu.pdf and the approved standard ND 003 Standards for forest management (ND_003_standards_for_forest_management_english_clean_29072020.pdf)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(g) Outcomes from working group considerations,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3., Documentation</p> <p>In order to guarantee transparency and public availability, all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC Switzerland.</p> <p>With respect to the endorsement process by the PEFC Council International the following documents shall be collected and stored for at least five years: a) Contacted stakeholders and/or stakeholders invited to participate in the process, b) Participation of stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting as well as outside of working group meetings, c) Minutes of the steering committee/ certification</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>commission meetings, d) Minutes of the working group meetings, e) Documentation of the round table, f) Documentation of the comments or complaints received, g) Relevant publication, e.g. on the start of the revision process, the round table or the consultation period.</p> <p>A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international) within the following four weeks.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Based on the understanding that all styles of (working group) minutes include information on the outcomes of a working group meeting, the PEFC benchmark requirement is met. Nevertheless, ideally this would be required by the procedures more specifically.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>See (4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf</p> <p>By keeping the protocols of the working group meetings, outcomes and evidence on consensus is kept.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(h) Evidence of consensus on the final version of the standard(s),	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3., Documentation</p> <p>In order to guarantee transparency and public availability, all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC Switzerland.</p> <p>With respect to the endorsement process by the PEFC Council International the following documents shall be collected and stored for at least five years: a) Contacted stakeholders and/or stakeholders invited to participate in the process, b) Participation of stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting as well as outside of working group meetings, c) Minutes of the steering committee/ certification commission meetings, d) Minutes of the working group meetings, e) Documentation of the round table, f) Documentation of the comments or complaints received, g) Relevant publication, e.g. on</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>the start of the revision process, the round table or the consultation period.</p> <p>A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international) within the following four weeks.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Based on the understanding that all styles of (working group) minutes include information on consensus found by a working group meeting, the PEFC benchmark requirement is met. Nevertheless, ideally this would be clearly required by the procedures.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland has provided minutes of the working group that provided evidence of consensus on a final draft standard.</p> <p><i>See (4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(i) Evidence relating to the review process, and	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3., Documentation</p> <p>In order to guarantee transparency and public availability, all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC Switzerland.</p> <p>With respect to the endorsement process by the PEFC Council International the following documents shall be collected and stored for at least five years: a) Contacted stakeholders and/or stakeholders invited to participate in the process, b) Participation of stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting as well as outside of working group meetings, c) Minutes of the steering committee/ certification commission meetings, d) Minutes of the working group meetings, e) Documentation of the round table, f) Documentation of the comments or complaints received, g) Relevant publication, e.g. on the start of the revision process, the round table or the consultation period.</p> <p>A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international) within the following four weeks</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland provided records with evidence on the review and revision process in the form of a development report supported by extensive reference documentation in the form of emails, screenshots, notes on phone calls, minutes, draft documents.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(j) Final approval by the standardising body.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.4 Formalities in the standard revision procedure (...) The standard shall include (...) the approval date (...).</p> <p>VL 004, 4.2. Internal procedure PEFC Switzerland, 4.2.1. Start,</p> <p>According to the statutes of PEFC Switzerland the steering committee/ certification commission is the decision making body “deciding on certification criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as well as on the description of the system”.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: While VL 004 does not specify explicitly that the decision of the steering committee/certification commission on the approval of a final standard is recorded, such decisions are in practice recorded in the minutes of the steering committee/certification commission. Therefore, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as sufficiently implemented.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland provided records in the form of emails and minutes on the approval of the final draft standard.</p> <p><i>To have evidence for the approval date, the approval is naturally kept. See e-mail ((VII) AW AW</i></p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p><i>Verabschieden vom ND 003 Standard für Waldbewirtschaftung und Protokoll.msg) with final approval for ND 003 and the round table protocol.</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
5.2.2 Documented information shall be kept until completion of the next review or revision of the standard to which they refer. Otherwise the documented information must be kept for a minimum of five years after publication of the standard.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3 documentation (...)With respect to the endorsement process by the PEFC Council International the following documents shall be collected and stored for at least five years:(...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>According to PEFC Switzerland, all documented information is saved in a cloud storage (dropbox).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
5.2.3 Documented information shall be available to interested parties upon request.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.3</p> <p>In order to guarantee transparency and public availability, all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC Switzerland.</p> <p>With respect to the endorsement process by the PEFC Council International the following documents shall be collected and stored for at least five years: f) Minutes of the steering committee meetings. g) Minutes of the working group meetings. h) Documentation of the round table. i) Documentation of the comments or complaints received. j) Relevant publication, e.g. on the start of the revision process, the round table or the consultation period.</p> <p>A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international) within the following four weeks.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	YES	<p>According to PEFC Switzerland only one stakeholder requested information on the draft of ND 003 on 11.june 2020. The mail was answered with the draft2 of nd 003 and links leading to the other new documents and the comment section on our website.</p> <p>(VI) RE Nouveau standard PEFC.msg</p> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
5.3.1 The standardising body shall establish procedure(s) for dealing with any substantial and process complaints and appeals relating to its standard-setting activities. It must make procedure(s) accessible to stakeholders. Upon receipt of a complaint or appeal, the standardising body shall:			
(a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint or appeal to the complainant,	Procedures	YES	VL003, 2. Scope, The procedure for dispute settlement described in the document is valid for all application levels of the certification system. 4.3, (...) The PEFC-secretariat will confirm the applicant the receipt of the application. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	N/A	<p>According to PEFC Switzerland, no party has placed complaints so far. Upon request, information will be shared.</p> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(b) gather and verify all necessary information to validate the complaint or appeal, evaluate the subject matter of the complaint or appeal impartially and objectively, and make a decision regarding the complaint or appeal,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 003, 4.3 and 4.2</p> <p>4.2. Dispute settlement body The members of the dispute settlement body are independent and impartial. It will be appointed and its members will be called in by the steering committee of PEFC Switzerland on an ad hoc basis. The dispute settlement body consists of one person representing forestry, one representing timber industry and one representing other stakeholders. One representative of the involved branch has to be member of this body. For each case the chair has to be newly elected among the members of dispute settlement body.</p> <p>4.3. Dispute settlement procedure The application for the initiation of a dispute settlement procedure has to be addressed to the PEFC secretariat (c/o LIGNUM, Zurich, see www.pefc.ch). The application shall include an informative documentation of the concrete case, statements of all parties involved and – if relevant – the result of the internal investigation of the certification body. The PEFC secretariat will confirm the applicant the receipt of the application. If within three months after the receipt of the application there is no regularly meeting of the GFCC, the appointment of the dispute settlement body and its members shall be organised based on written correspondence. Within this period the dispute settlement body shall meet for the first time. For more complicated cases an independent expert will be called in. The decision shall be made within three months after the first meeting of the dispute settlement body. For the decision making a simple majority will be sufficient. The PEFC-secretariat is responsible for the preparation of minutes of the meetings of the dispute settlement body and for informing the involved parties on the result of the of dispute settlement. The decision of the dispute settlement body is binding and terminates the dispute settlement of PEFC Switzerland. It covers, where appropriate, corrective and preventive actions and measures to verify their implementation. Up to the decision of the dispute settlement body all certificates and confirmations of participation remain valid.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	N/A	According to PEFC Switzerland, no party has placed complaints so far. Upon request, information will be shared.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
(c) formally communicate the decision on the complaint or appeal to the complainant and describe the handling process.	Procedures	YES	VL 003, 4.3 The PEFC-secretariat is responsible (...) for informing the involved parties on the result of the of dispute settlement. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	N/A	According to PEFC Switzerland, no party has placed complaints so far. Upon request, information will be shared. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
5.3.2 The standardising body shall establish at least one contact point for enquiries, complaints and appeals relating to its standard-setting activities. The contact point shall be easy to access and readily available.	Procedures	YES	VL 003, 4.3 The application for the initiation of a dispute settlement procedure has to be addressed in writing to the PEFC secretariat. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	YES	PEFC Switzerland's mail and email address is published on its website and on the cover page of VL 003. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
Standard-setting process			
<i>6.1.1 For the creation of a new standard, the standardising body shall develop a proposal including:</i>			
(a) the scope of the standard,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.5 Creation of a new standard For the creation of a new standard, a proposal including the following shall be developed1: a) the scope of the standard (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	N/A	Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable in this standard setting process.
(b) a justification of the need for the standard,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.5 Creation of a new standard For the creation of a new standard, a proposal including the following shall be developed: (...) b) a justification of the need for the standard, (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	N/A	Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable in this standard setting process.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(c) a clear description of the intended outcomes	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.5 Creation of a new standard</p> <p>For the creation of a new standard, a proposal including the following shall be developed: (...) c) a clear description of the intended outcomes (...).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	N/A	<p>Assessment decision: None</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable in this standard setting process.</p>
(d) a risk assessment of potential negative impacts arising from implementing the standard, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors that could affect the achievement of the outcomes negatively, • unintended consequences of implementation, • actions to address the identified risks, and 	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.5 Creation of a new standard</p> <p>For the creation of a new standard, a proposal including the following shall be developed: (...) d) a risk assessment of potential negative impacts arising from implementing the standard, such as factors that could affect the achievement of the outcomes negatively, unintended consequences of implementation, actions to address the identified risks, and a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Proc	N/A	<p>Assessment decision: None</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable in this standard setting process.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(e) a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable. NOTE Guidance for development of a proposal and justification is given in ISO Directives, Part 1, Annex C and Annex SL (Appendix 1).	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.5 Creation of a new standard For the creation of a new standard, a proposal including the following shall be developed: (...) e) a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	N/A	Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable in this standard setting process.
6.1.2 For the revision of a standard the proposal shall cover at least (a) and (e) of clause 6.1.1.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.1 Start The start of the revision process shall be communicated to the public at an appropriate time in an appropriate way (at least through the website and per e-mail). The announcement shall inform about the goals, the scope, the time frame and the possibilities to participate. It points to these Standard revision procedures and encourages the public to comment on their scope and contents. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	YES	<i>Information published on the website and is constantly updated with the ongoing stages: https://pefc.ch/de/revision/informationen/ and pdf download of the site: (8) informations on revision from website downloaded 140720.pdf</i> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
6.2.1 The standardising body shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting activities by means of a stakeholder identification mapping exercise. It shall define which stakeholder groups are relevant to the subject matter and why. For each stakeholder group the standardising body shall identify the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups</p> <p>(...) Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland through a stakeholder mapping activity, where it is defined, which stakeholder groups are relevant for the standard setting activities and scope, and why. For each stakeholder group the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them, shall be identified. Additionally, disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be identified and constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities shall be addressed. They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	NO	<p>PEFC Switzerland carried out a stakeholder mapping exercise at the beginning of the revision process, based on which a list of stakeholders and key stakeholders was established.</p> <p>However, no information was provided that attempts were made to identify likely key issues of stakeholders.</p> <p><i>(2) Stakeholder.pdf</i></p> <p><i>(19) key stakeholder participation</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p> <p>Justification: From the evidence provided on the revision process it is not apparent that it was defined why stakeholder groups are relevant and what their key issues are.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>6.2.2 Identification of stakeholder groups shall be based on nine major stakeholder groups as defined by Agenda 21 of the <i>United Nations Conference on Environment and Development</i> (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At least the following groups shall be included in the stakeholder mapping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forest owners, • business and industry, • indigenous peoples, • non-government organisations, • scientific and technological community, • workers and trade unions. <p>Other groups shall be added if relevant to the scope of standard-setting activities.</p> <p>NOTE The full list of nine major stakeholder groups defined by Agenda 21 of the <i>United Nations Conference on Environment and Development</i> consists of: (i) business and industry, (ii) children and youth, (iii) forest owners, (iv) indigenous peoples, (v) local authorities, (vi) non-government organisations, (vii) scientific and technological community, (viii) women, and (ix) workers and trade unions.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004 4.2.3.</p> <p>Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland (...) a) Representatives of the private forest b) Representatives of the state forest (canton-owned forest) c) Representatives of the communal forest d) Wood industry, pulp and paper industry including trade e) Environmental organisations f) Trade unions g) Other forest-related organisations (e.g. Swiss Forest Association, Forest Worker Association) h) Other interested parties (Consumer Associations, Tourism Associations) i) Forest contractors j) Scientists (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: As there are no indigenous peoples in Switzerland, the PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland carried out a stakeholder mapping exercise at the beginning of the revision process covering all stakeholder groups required.</p> <p><i>See stakeholder mapping in (2) Stakeholder.pdf</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>6.2.3 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders and address any constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities.</p> <p>NOTE A stakeholder can be both a disadvantaged and a key stakeholder at the same time.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups</p> <p>(...) Additionally, disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be identified and constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities shall be addressed. They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>According to PEFC Switzerland, no disadvantaged stakeholders in Switzerland have been identified. PEFC Switzerland did identify key stakeholders for all stakeholder groups.</p> <p>As potential constraints travel and accommodation costs for participation in working group meetings were identified. To address this participation in meetings via telecommunication and sending external representatives was offered to stakeholders.</p> <p>PEFC Switzerland provided evidence that all stakeholders identified were contacted by email and key stakeholders were contacted by phone. To address potential constraints, participation in meetings via telecommunication and sending external representatives was offered to stakeholders.</p> <p><i>(2) Stakeholder</i></p> <p><i>(14) Internal Mail Correspondence – contacting of Key Stakeholder.pdf & (14.1) Translation of (14)</i></p> <p><i>(19) key stakeholder participation</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>The standardising body shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation to stakeholders to participate in the process. The announcement shall be made in a timely manner through suitable media, as appropriate, to give stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions.</p> <p>NOTE 1 <i>In a timely manner</i> means (at the latest) four weeks before the first standard-setting activity is scheduled to occur.</p> <p>NOTE 2 <i>Through suitable media</i> means at least through the standardising body's website and by email and/or letter to identified stakeholders. Other media includes press releases, news articles, features in trade-press, information sent to branch organisations, social media, digital media, etc.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.2.1 Start</p> <p>The start of the revision process shall be communicated to the public at least 30 days before the start of activities at an appropriate time in an appropriate way (at least through the website and per e-mail). The announcement shall inform about the goals, the scope, the time frame and the possibilities to participate. It points to these standard revision procedures and encourages the public to comment on their scope and contents.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>A news article was published on PEFC Switzerland's website on 2nd July 2019. https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/erstes-schweizer-pefc-forum</p> <p>First save-the-date invitations for participation in review were sent to stakeholders by email on 09.07.2019.</p> <p><i>(3.1) Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working_Group_Reendorsement_200120</i></p> <p><i>(3.2) Dok_Mailing_Reminder Invitation Working GroupReendorsement_200128</i></p> <p><i>(III) Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include:			
(a) overview of the standard-setting process,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.2.1</p> <p>(...) The start of the revision process shall be communicated to the public at an appropriate time in an appropriate way (at least through the website and per e-mail). The announcement shall</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			inform about the goals, the scope, the time frame and the possibilities to participate. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	YES	See invitation to working group (3.2). See all links referred to in the invitation text in document 3.1) Overview given in link <i>“Eine Übersicht über den Revisionsprozess und die aktuellen Dokumente sind auf pefc.ch verfügbar“</i> . (“an overview to the revision process and the latest documents is available on pefc.ch”) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
(b) access to the proposal for the standard (refer to 6.1),	Procedures	N/A	<i>Not applicable for a revision of an existing standard</i> Assessment decision: N/A Justification: N/A
	Process	N/A	<i>Not applicable for a revision of an existing standard</i> Assessment decision: N/A Justification: N/A
(c) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,	Procedures	YES	VL004, 4.2.1 (...) The announcement shall inform about (...) the possibilities to participate. It points to these standard revision procedures (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	<p>Information on how to participate was provided on website and in emails.</p> <p>https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/erstes-schweizer-pefc-forum</p> <p>(3.1) <i>Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working Group_Reendorsement_200120</i></p> <p>(3.2) <i>Dok_Mailing_Reminder Invitation Working GroupReendorsement_200128</i></p> <p>(III) <i>Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(d) requests to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) or themselves to the working group (refer to 6.4). The request to disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is easy to understand,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.2.1</p> <p>(...) The announcement shall inform about (...) the possibilities to participate. It points to these standard revision procedures (...).</p> <p>VL004, 4.2.1</p> <p>(...) Persons who hold a key position or who have not participated in the process before are identified and invited personally and their participation is sought proactively.</p> <p>VL 004, 4.2.3</p> <p>(...) Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland (...) They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>According to PEFC Switzerland, no disadvantaged stakeholders in Switzerland have been identified. PEFC Switzerland did identify key stakeholders for all stakeholder groups.</p> <p>As potential constraints travel and accommodation costs for participation in working group</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>meetings were identified. To address this participation in meetings via telecommunication and sending external representatives was offered to stakeholders.</p> <p>PEFC Switzerland provided evidence that all stakeholders identified were contacted by email and key stakeholders were contacted by phone. To address potential constraints, participation in meetings via telecommunication and sending external representatives was offered to stakeholders.</p> <p><i>(2) Stakeholder</i></p> <p><i>(14) Internal Mail Correspondence – contacting of Key Stakeholder.pdf & (14.1) Translation of (14)</i></p> <p><i>(19) key stakeholder participation</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(e) explicit invitation and clear instruction on how to submit feedback on the scope and standard-setting process, and	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.2.1</p> <p>(...) The announcement shall inform about (...) the possibilities to participate. It points to these standard revision procedures and encourages the public to comment on their scope and contents. (...)</p> <p>4.2.2 (...) Feedback shall be submitted via the PEFC Switzerland website and, like feedback from other channels (meetings, training courses, etc), be collected and taken into consideration by the steering committee/certification commission.</p> <p>VL 004, 4.2.3</p> <p>(...) Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland (...) They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	YES	<p>Information on how to participate and to provide comments was provided on website and in emails.</p> <p>https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/erstes-schweizer-pefc-forum</p> <p>(3.1) <i>Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working Group_Reendorsement_200120</i></p> <p>(3.2) <i>Dok_Mailing_Reminder Invitation Working GroupReendorsement_200128</i></p> <p>(III) <i>Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(f) access to the standard-setting procedures.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.2.1</p> <p>(...) The announcement shall inform about (...) the possibilities to participate. It points to these standard revision procedures and encourages the public to comment on their scope and contents. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p><i>See invitation to working group (3.2). See all links referred to in the invitation text in document 3.1 Overview given in link "Eine Übersicht über den Revisionsprozess und die aktuellen Dokumente sind auf pefc.ch verfügbar". («an overview to the revision process and the latest documents are available on pefc.ch»)</i></p> <p>Information on how to participate and to provide comments was provided on website and in emails.</p> <p>https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/erstes-schweizer-pefc-forum</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>(3.1) <i>Dok_Mailing_Invitation_Working Group_Reendorsement_200120</i></p> <p>(3.2) <i>Dok_Mailing_Reminder Invitation Working GroupReendorsement_200128</i></p> <p>(III) <i>Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in Stans-Oberdorf</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.3.2 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on feedback received in response to the public announcement.	Procedures	YES	<p>See 6.3.1 a)</p> <p>And: VL004, 4.2.2 Identification of need for revision</p> <p>“To start the revision process, the existing standards shall be reviewed. This is done through feedback from stakeholders and a gap analysis, which examines the compliance of the Swiss PEFC standards with the latest international PEFC Standards published by the PEFC Council in Geneva, as well as other relevant standards and new scientific findings. Feedback shall be submitted via the PEFC Switzerland website and, like feedback from other channels (meetings, training courses, etc), be collected and taken into consideration by the steering committee/certification commission.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Based on the understanding that “Swiss PEFC standards” include procedural regulations such as the standard setting procedures, which are included in the scope of VL004, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met. This is supported by the fact that stakeholders were invited to comment on all system documents including procedural regulations in the process.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>According to PEFC Switzerland no feedback was received following the public announcement regarding the standard setting process.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.
6.4.1 The standardising body shall establish a permanent or temporary working group or adjust the composition of an already existing working group based on nominations it received. Acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justified in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group, considerations of an appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organisation, an individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard-setting.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups</p> <p>(...) They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process: a)Representatives of the private forest b)Representatives of the state forest (canton-owned forest), c)Representatives of the communal forest, d)Wood industry, pulp and paper industry including trade, e) Environmental organisations, f)Trade unions, g)Other forest related organisations (e.g. Swiss Forest Association, Forest Worker Association), h)Other interested parties (Consumer Associations, Tourism Associations), i)Forest contractors, j)Scientists</p> <p>The acceptance and refusal of the delegate representatives shall be justified in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group, considerations of an appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organisation, an individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard setting.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>After some effort by PEFC Switzerland to convince stakeholders to participate in the revision process, Artus Group certifications delegated a participant to represent them, namely Stefanie Weindler, WaldAargau (see mail "(15) <i>Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020.pdf</i>" and (15.1) <i>Translation[...]</i>) and "(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf".</p> <p>Gilbert Gubler, La Forestière, nominated himself for participation (see (15) <i>Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020.pdf</i> and (15.1) <i>Translation</i>) and was accepted by the NGB.</p> <p>PEFC Switzerland invited and nominated itself the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The representative of the wood industry, Michael Gautschi (HIS). He accepted the nomination by the NGB by phone. - Peter Schmider (BGU, environmental consulting) accepted the personal invitation to join the working group (see (16) <i>Peter Schmider Confirmation Working Group Jan 2020.pdf</i> and

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p><i>translation (16.1))</i></p> <p>According to PEFC Switzerland, no other nominations were received from any stakeholder and every stakeholder that agreed to participate in the working group had to be convinced with much effort by PEFC Switzerland.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.4.2 The working group shall:			
(a) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories, relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard, where no single concerned stakeholder group can dominate, nor be dominated in the process, and	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups</p> <p>(...) The acceptance and refusal of the delegate representatives shall be justified in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group, considerations of an appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organisation, an individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard-setting.</p> <p>Considering all these eight stakeholder groups, a well-balanced line-up of the working group is aimed at. A target for the participation of key stakeholders shall be defined. Persons who hold a key position or who have not participated in the process before are identified and invited personally and their participation is sought proactively.</p> <p>And: 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>The working group has a quorum if at least half of the members are present. Decisions of the working group must be based on a three quarters majority of the present members. Each member has one vote. Each stakeholder group holds a maximum of four votes. If more than four members of one stakeholder group are present, they choose the ones who shall participate in the voting. None of the stakeholder groups shall dominate the decision-making process.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	NO	<p>Statement by PEFC Switzerland:</p> <p>“In this revision process, stakeholders did not show much interest in participating. Therefore, all interested parties were motivated to participate. A focus was also laid on individuals having participated in the last revision, industry and forest owners, who got further e-mails with emphasis on their value by contributing to the process.”</p> <p>“In the working group due to the limited number of interested participants, it was impossible to achieve participation of every stakeholder group.</p> <p>“However, representatives from different locations (Bern, Valais, Vaud, Zurich) were represented, and female and male people were present during the working group meeting.”</p> <p>Working group participants ((4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf) represented four of eight stakeholder groups.</p> <p>As it was a small group, the moderator aimed to have everyone equally involved. Unfortunately, four participants had to be excused.</p> <p>However, the following stakeholder groups had agreed on working on the working group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Science/ENGO: Peter Schmider was invited to the working group, as he had written the PEFC Switzerland Standards before, and as he represents the stakeholder group “scientists”. His organization BGU teaches at different applied universities in Switzerland. - Representatives of the private forest Gilbert Gubler, la forestiere. Stefanie Weindler, WaldAargau. <p>Although the private forest owners are slightly over represented, it is important to involve them, as there are 244'000 private forest owners in Switzerland. - Representation of communal forests: Christina Giesch, ForêtValais ForêtValais is the association for private and communal forests in Wallis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wood industry/trade union: Michael Gautschi, HIS, represented the wood industry. HIS works closely together with the trade unions unia and syna, who are contractual partners for the collective labor agreement GAV Holzindustrie”

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p> <p>Justification: PEFC Switzerland did not achieve the balanced representation of all stakeholder categories in the working group. Forest owners were over-represented. ENGOs and trade unions were not directly represented in the working group, although PEFC Switzerland considered the former to have been represented through an environmental consultant also representing the stakeholder category <i>science</i>, and the latter to have been represented by a representative of the wood industry often consulting with trade unions. A certification body was on the group, but did not participate in the working group meeting. Government/authorities declined to participate. Therefore, the PEFC Benchmark requirement for balanced representation of stakeholders in the working group has not been met.</p>
(b) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that affected by the standard, and those that can influence implementation of the standard. The affected stakeholders shall be represented in an appropriate proportion among participants.	Procedures	YES	<p>See 6.4.2 a)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The stakeholder categories defined by PEFC Switzerland cover the requirements of this PEFC benchmark requirement and it can therefore be considered as met.</p>
	Process	NO	<p>See 6.4.2 a)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p> <p>Justification: PEFC Switzerland did not achieve the balanced representation of expertise and effected stakeholders from all stakeholder categories in the working group. Forest owners were over-represented. ENGOs and trade unions were not directly represented in the working group, although PEFC Switzerland considered the former to have been represented through an environmental consultant also representing the stakeholder category <i>science</i>, and the latter to have been represented by a representative of the wood industry often consulting with trade unions. A certification body was on the group, but did not participate in the working group meeting. Government/authorities declined to participate. Therefore, the PEFC Benchmark requirement for balanced representation of expertise and affected stakeholders in the working group has not been met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>6.4.3 In order to achieve balanced representation, the standardising body shall strive to have all identified stakeholder groups (refer to 6.2) represented. The standardising body shall set targets for the participation of key stakeholders and proactively seek their participation by using outreach such as (but not limited to) personal emails, phone calls, meeting invitations etc.</p> <p>NOTE When a stakeholder group is not represented and key stakeholders cannot be encouraged to participate, the standardising body may consider alternative options.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004 4.2.3. Appointment of working groups</p> <p>Considering all these eight stakeholder groups, a well-balanced line-up of the working group is aimed at. A target for the participation of key stakeholders shall be defined. Persons who hold a key position or who have not participated in the process before are identified and invited personally and their participation is sought proactively.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>According to PEFC Switzerland <i>“the target that was internally defined was, to have a balanced representation of the stakeholder groups and at least four participants, at least representing forest owners, the group certification organization, scientists as well as environmental NGOs. After sending two e-mails as invitation and reminder to participate in the standard setting process, stakeholders who did not react and were considered key stakeholders (NGOs, Trade Unions, governmental organisations, and Scientist) were contacted by phone ((see e-mail “(14) Internal Mail Correspondence - contacting of Key Stakeholder” and translation 14.1 & (19) key stakeholder participation for working group.pdf) or in persona. Many of them were reached successfully (see details below). Some stakeholders could not be reached however, for different reasons such as holidays or no availability in general (see “(19) key stakeholder participation for working group.pdf”).</i></p> <p><i>The environmental NGOs such as ProNatura and WWF did not respond to our series of enquiries ((19) key stakeholder participation for working group.pdf).</i></p> <p><i>Trade unions such as Unia and syna, did not respond to our series of enquiries.</i></p> <p><i>Further key stakeholders are the members of the certification committee of Lignum. The PEFC Switzerland advisory board (Vorstand) were invited by phone and in persona after receiving the reminder invitation for participation in the working group ((19) key stakeholder participation for working group.pdf).</i></p> <p><i>All regional working groups under the Lignum umbrella organisation (RAG/CAR), (see stakeholder groups) were contacted in persona to represent the entirety of the forest and timber</i></p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p><i>industry of different Swiss regions (cantons).</i></p> <p><i>The above stakeholders represent a holistic view on the Swiss forest and industry and were aimed for to give input with regard to practical certification. Their key issues are increased complexity with regard to certification of forest owners and the CoC.</i></p> <p><i>The reach out by phone yielded three acceptances for participation:</i></p> <p><i>→ Markus Bieli, Balteschwiler, could not physically participate but was asked to provide written input, send someone else or join through skype (see (15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020).</i></p> <p><i>→ Karl Büchel, Artus did not have time but sent a representative for Artus ((15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020).</i></p> <p><i>→ Niklaus Wirz, Pirmin Jung did not wish to get involved ((15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020).</i></p> <p><i>→ Christina Giesch cancelled shortly before the working group meeting as she felt represented by Gilbert Gubler (see (20) Cancellation Urban Brüttsch and C Gietsch.pdf). The Federal Office of Environment was contacted by phone, but the contacted stakeholders declined, as they are a executive body of the Swiss government, and therefore do not aim to get involved in political issues such as forest management standards, in order to not conflict with or undermine their own legislation.”</i></p> <p><i>Reference documents:</i></p> <p><i>Development report</i></p> <p><i>“(14) Internal Mail Correspondence - contacting of Key Stakeholder” and translation (14.1)</i></p> <p><i>15) Feedback from Stakeholders Jan 2020</i></p> <p><i>(19) key stakeholder participation for working group</i></p> <p><i>(20) Cancellation Urban Brüttsch and C Gietsch</i></p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: While the objective of establishing a balance representation of stakeholders in the working group was ultimately not met, PEFC Switzerland could demonstrate that targets for the participation of key stakeholders were set and that their participation was sought proactively through emails and phone calls. Therefore, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>
6.4.4 Activities of the working group shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where:			
(a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>(...) The developed drafts are made available to all members. All members are given the chance to comment on the drafts. Any remarks are documented and discussed within the working group.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland provided evidence that the working draft was available to all working group members and that during the working group at the round table, every working group member's input was considered and discussed.</p> <p>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(b) all members of the working group shall be given meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and to provide	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>The working group has a quorum if at least half of the members are present. Decisions of the working group must be based on a three quarters majority of the present members. Each member has one vote.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
feedback on working drafts, and			<p>Each stakeholder group holds a maximum of four votes. If more than four members of one stakeholder group are present, they choose the ones who shall participate in the voting. None of the stakeholder groups shall dominate the decision-making process. The decisions of the working group to publish the draft document of the working group and to recommend the final draft to the steering committee/ the certification commission for formal approval shall be based on the principle of consensus. The chairperson of the working group is responsible for the judgement on whether the final draft is sufficiently supported by the whole working group. The judgement shall be based on the definition of consensus according to ISO/IEC guideline 2:1996. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland provided evidence that the working draft was available to all working group members and that during the working group at the round table, every working group member's input was considered and discussed.</p> <p><i>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(c) feedback and views given by any member of the working group shall be considered in an open and transparent way where the outcome of these considerations is recorded.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004,4.2.4</p> <p><i>The developed drafts are made available to all members. All members are given the chance to comment on the drafts. Any remarks are documented and discussed within the working group.</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland provided evidence that the working draft was available to all working group members and that during the working group at the round table, every working group member's</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>input was considered and discussed. The meeting and its outcome was recorded in minutes.</p> <p>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>6.4.5 The decision of the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of consensus. In order to determine whether there is any sustained opposition, the working group can utilise the following methods:</p>			
(a) face-to face meeting(s) where there is a verbal yes/no vote, a show of hands for a yes/no vote; a statement on consensus from the Chair when there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal ballot, etc.,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004 , 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>(...) In order to reach a consensus, the working group can make use of the following processes to identify any opposition (according to the ISO definition) against the standard (draft): f) A conference for a verbal yes/ no voting (either face-to-face, by phone or in a combination of both), g) a conference for a yes/ no voting by a show of hands, h) a conference for a secret yes/ no voting, i) a determination of consensus by the chairperson on a conference where no dissenting vote is detected either verbal or by a show of hands, j) an exchange via e-mail to ask the members for their consent and the members reply in writing (one mandate per vote).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(b) telephone conference meeting(s)	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004 , 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
where there is a verbal yes/no vote,			<p>(...) In order to reach a consensus, the working group can make use of the following processes to identify any opposition (according to the ISO definition) against the standard (draft): f) A conference for a verbal yes/ no voting (either face-to-face, by phone or in a combination of both), g) a conference for a yes/ no voting by a show of hands, h) a conference for a secret yes/ no voting, i) a determination of consensus by the chairperson on a conference where no dissenting vote is detected either verbal or by a show of hands, j) an exchange via e-mail to ask the members for their consent and the members reply in writing (one mandate per vote).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p><i>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(c) e-mail request to the working group for agreement or objection where the members provide a formal (written) response (vote),	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004 , 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>(...) In order to reach a consensus, the working group can make use of the following processes to identify any opposition (according to the ISO definition) against the standard (draft): f) A conference for a verbal yes/ no voting (either face-to-face, by phone or in a combination of both), g) a conference for a yes/ no voting by a show of hands, h) a conference for a secret yes/ no voting, i) a determination of consensus by the chairperson on a conference where no dissenting vote is detected either verbal or by a show of hands, j) an exchange via e-mail to ask the members for their consent and the members reply in writing (one mandate per vote).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p><i>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(d) combinations of these methods.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004 , 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>(...) In order to reach a consensus, the working group can make use of the following processes to identify any opposition (according to the ISO definition) against the standard (draft): f) A conference for a verbal yes/ no voting (either face-to-face, by phone or in a combination of both), g) a conference for a yes/ no voting by a show of hands, h) a conference for a secret yes/ no voting, i) a determination of consensus by the chairperson on a conference where no dissenting vote is detected either verbal or by a show of hands, j) an exchange via e-mail to ask the members for their consent and the members reply in writing (one mandate per vote).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p><i>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.4.6 Where a vote is used in decision-making, the standard-setting procedures shall determine and include decision-making thresholds that quantifies	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>(...) The decisions of the working group to publish the draft document of the working group and</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
consensus. The threshold must be consistent with the consensus definition (refer to 3.1). However, a majority vote cannot override sustained opposition in order to achieve consensus.			<p>to recommend the final draft to the steering committee/ the certification commission for formal approval shall be based on the principle of consensus. The chairperson of the working group is responsible for the judgement on whether the final draft is sufficiently supported by the whole working group. The judgement shall be based on the definition of consensus according to ISO/IEC guideline 2:1996</p> <p>(...)</p> <p>In case of one vote of an essential opposition against an important part of the affected interest regarding a fundamental issue, reasons must be given. This controversial issue shall be resolved with the help of the following mechanisms: a) Discussion and negotiation about the controversial issue within the working group with the aim of finding a compromise, b) direct negotiation between the member(s) who have raised the controversial issue and the members of differing opinion with the aim of finding a compromise, c) dispute settlement process Note: The dispute settlement process shall be deduced from the PEFC procedures VL 003.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: While the standard setting procedures do not specify a threshold in form of a percentage of votes, the procedure meets the spirit of the PEFC benchmark requirement, which can therefore be considered as met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.4.7 When there is sustained opposition to a substantial issue, the issue shall be resolved using the following methods:			
(a) finding a compromise through	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.3 Decision making within the group

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group,			<p>(...) In case of one vote of an essential opposition against an important part of the affected interest regarding a fundamental issue, reasons must be given. This controversial issue shall be resolved with the help of the following mechanisms: a) Discussion and negotiation about the controversial issue within the working group with the aim of finding a compromise, b) direct negotiation between the member(s) who have raised the controversial issue and the members of differing opinion with the aim of finding a compromise, c) dispute settlement process Note: The dispute settlement process shall be deduced from the PEFC procedures VL 003.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p><i>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(b) finding a compromise through direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) making the objection and other stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.3 Decision making within the group</p> <p>(...) In case of one vote of an essential opposition against an important part of the affected interest regarding a fundamental issue, reasons must be given. This controversial issue shall be resolved with the help of the following mechanisms: a) Discussion and negotiation about the controversial issue within the working group with the aim of finding a compromise, b) direct negotiation between the member(s) who have raised the controversial issue and the members of differing opinion with the aim of finding a compromise, c) dispute settlement process Note: The dispute settlement process shall be deduced from the PEFC procedures VL 003.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p><i>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(c) additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary) where further stakeholder input can help to achieve consensus on unresolved issues. The standardising body determines the scope and duration of any additional public consultation.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.3 Decision making within the group</p> <p>(...) In case of one vote of an essential opposition against an important part of the affected interest regarding a fundamental issue, reasons must be given. This controversial issue shall be resolved with the help of the following mechanisms: a) Discussion and negotiation about the controversial issue within the working group with the aim of finding a compromise, b) direct negotiation between the member(s) who have raised the controversial issue and the members of differing opinion with the aim of finding a compromise, c) dispute settlement process Note: The dispute settlement process shall be deduced from the PEFC procedures VL 003.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Additional rounds of public consultation are not specified as consensus building mechanism in the standard setting procedures. As the wording of the benchmark can be interpreted as being permissive rather than mandatory for this element, i.e. leaving the choice on whether or not to use additional public consultations to the standardising body, however, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p><i>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
6.4.8 When a substantial issue cannot be resolved and sustained opposition persists, the standardising body shall initiate dispute resolution in accordance with its procedures for impartial and objective action.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.3 Decision making within the group</p> <p>(...) In case of one vote of an essential opposition against an important part of the affected interest regarding a fundamental issue, reasons must be given. This controversial issue shall be resolved with the help of the following mechanisms: (...) c) dispute settlement process Note: The dispute settlement process shall be deduced from the PEFC procedures VL 003.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Only one working group meeting took place. According to its minutes, decisions were taken unanimously and in consensus.</p> <p>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de.pdf)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.5.1 The standardising body shall organise public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that:			
(a) the start and the end dates of public consultation are announced in a timely manner through suitable media, NOTE <i>In a timely manner</i> means (at the latest) the day before the start of public consultation.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.4</p> <p>(...) The developed drafts are made available to all members. (...) After this round table the working groups will meet again to develop a new draft based on the comments received and to make it available for the subsequent public consultation. This consultation period shall last 60 days at least. Usually, the documents for the consultation process are provided on the website of PEFC Switzerland. Start and end dates of the consultation period as well as the necessary documents shall be published via adequate media at latest one day before the start of the public consultation. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
	Process	YES	<p>The consensus on the draft lead to the e-mail announcement [to stakeholders on 18th February 2020] and website announcement [21st April 2020] of the public consultation on the draft ND 003 Standard for forest management [open until 30th June 2020]. To manage incoming feedback from the public consultation, a comment section was introduced on the pefc.ch/revision/kommentar page in German and French.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
(b) a direct invitation to comment on the enquiry draft is sent to each stakeholder identified by stakeholder identification mapping (refer to 6.2) aiming for a balanced participation of stakeholder groups,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.4</p> <p>(...) Stakeholders shall be invited to comment on the draft (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>The consensus on the draft found by the working group led to an e-mail announcement to stakeholders on 18th February 2020.</p> <p><i>(11) Mailing_Announcement public consultation_200424</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
(c) invitations are sent to disadvantaged and key stakeholders by methods that ensure they reach recipients and are easy to understand,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.4 (...) Stakeholders shall be invited to comment on the draft. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Based on the understanding that both disadvantaged stakeholders, of which none were identified, and key stakeholders in Switzerland have access to the internet and email</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			correspondence, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	Yes	The consensus on the draft found by the working group led to an e-mail announcement to stakeholders on 18 th February 2020. <i>(11) Mailing_Announcement public consultation_200424</i> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: Any key stakeholders identified have been informed like all other stakeholders by email, which can be considered as appropriate in the context of Switzerland. The PEFC benchmark is met.
(d) the enquiry draft is made publicly available,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.4 (...) After this round table the working groups will meet again to develop a new draft based on the comments received and to make it available for the subsequent public consultation. This consultation period shall last 60 days at least. Usually, the documents for the consultation process are provided on the website of PEFC Switzerland. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	The draft was published on PEFC Switzerland's website on 21 st April 2020. https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/konsultation-standardrevision Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(e) public consultation is for at least 60 days,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.4 (...) This consultation period shall last 60 days at least. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	The consultation was open from 27 th April until 30 th June 2020. https://pefc.ch/de/neuigkeiten/konsultation-standardrevision Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
(f) all feedback is considered by the working group in an objective manner, and	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.4 (...). The remarks suggested during the consultation period will be documented, verified by the working group and if applicable included in the documents. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: Objectivity is not literally required for the consideration of consultation comments. However, the wording “ <i>verified by the working group and if applicable included</i> ” can be similarly understood as requiring an objective approach. The PEFC benchmark can be considered as met.
	Process	YES	No feedback regarding the content of the standards was received during the public consultation. <i>Development report</i> <i>(10) Revision Feedback Sheet.pdf</i> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>(g) a synopsis of feedback is compiled for each material issue, including the outcome of considering the issue. The synopsis is made publicly available (e.g. on a website) and is sent to each stakeholder/party that gave feedback.</p> <p>NOTE For clarity the standardising body's synopsis may aggregate responses on material issues where there was similar feedback from different stakeholders. However, best practice would be to publish each piece of original feedback and the response, to allow each stakeholder to identify its own feedback.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group</p> <p>(...) The remarks suggested during the consultation period will be documented, verified by the working group and if applicable included in the documents. Critical remarks will be discussed between a representative of the working group and the submitting member and a realisable solution will be developed.</p> <p>Each party who gave feedback shall receive a report on the comments received and the outcome of the working group discussion with regard to that matter. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>No feedback regarding the content of the standards was received during the public consultation.</p> <p><i>Development report</i></p> <p><i>(10) Revision Feedback Sheet.pdf</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
6.5.2 For new standards the standardising body shall organise a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.3 Documentation</p> <p>(...) For new standards the standardizing body shall organize a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.</p> <p>If the changes in the revised documents are considerable or a new standard was developed, the draft standard shall be tested within the scope of a pilot project. In that case, the working group shall consider the outcome of pilot testing. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	N/A	Not applicable
<p>6.6 The standardising body shall organise pilot testing of new standard(s) to assess the clarity, auditability and feasibility of the requirements. The working group shall consider the outcome of pilot testing.</p> <p>NOTE Pilot testing is not required for revision of an existing standard when experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.3 Documentation</p> <p>(...) For new standards the standardizing body shall organize a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.</p> <p>If the changes in the revised documents are considerable or a new standard was developed, the draft standard shall be tested within the scope of a pilot project. In that case, the working group shall consider the outcome of pilot testing. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	N/A	Not applicable
Approval and Publication			
<p>7.1 The standardising body shall approve the standard(s)/normative document(s) formally when there is evidence of consensus among the working group.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.4</p> <p>(...) The decisions of the working group to publish the draft document of the working group and to recommend the final draft to the steering committee/ the certification commission for formal approval shall be based on the principle of consensus. (..)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	The draft for the standard for sustainable forest management as well as VL 001 with changes applied marked were sent to the certification committee on 08.April 2020 and approved on

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>09.April 2020.</p> <p><i>(II) Verabschiedung Draft 1 ND 003 und VL 001 _ AW. Standardrevision PEFC Schweiz Überprüfung und Verabschieden von Dokumenten.msg</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
7.2.1 The formally approved standard(s)/normative document(s) shall be published and made publicly available at no cost within 14 days of approval, or as otherwise defined by the standardising body.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL004, 4.3 Documentation</p> <p>(...) In order to guarantee transparency and public availability, all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC Switzerland. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The time frame of 14 days is not explicitly specified. However, “promptly” can be considered as meeting the intent of the PEFC benchmark requirement, especially as PEFC Switzerland published the final standard on its website only one day after approval by the certification committee.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>All updated documents (final standards and standards with changes marked in red) were approved by the certification committee on 28. September and uploaded to the website on 29. September 2020, together with the development report.</p> <p><i>(VIII) RE PEFC Standardrevision. Verabschiedung der Systemdokumente</i></p> <p><i>https://pefc.ch/de/revision/informationen/ and pefc.ch/de/dokumente</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
7.2.2 Standard(s) shall include:			

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(a) identification and contact information for the standardising body,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.4</p> <p>Formalities in the standard revision procedure (...) The standard shall include identification and contact information for the standardizing body (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Realised in full in the final version of the document nd 003. See in System Documents (ND_003_standards_for_forest_management_29072020.pdf)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
(b) official language of the standard,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.4</p> <p>Formalities in the standard revision procedure (...) The standard shall include (...) the official language of the standard (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Realised in full in the final version of the document nd 003. See in System Documents (ND_003_standards_for_forest_management_29072020.pdf)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
(c) a note that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.4</p> <p>Formalities in the standard revision procedure (...) A note shall clarify that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
reference.			Council is the reference. (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	Realised in full in the final version of the document nd 003. See in System Documents (ND_003_standards_for_forest_management_29072020.pdf) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
(d) The approval date and the date of next periodic review NOTE The date of next periodic review may be within a shorter period than five years based on (for example) stakeholder expectations or other foreseen developments.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.4 Formalities in the standard revision procedure (...) The standard shall include (...) the approval date and the date of next periodic review (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	Realised in full in the final version of the document nd 003. See in System Documents (ND_003_standards_for_forest_management_29072020.pdf) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
7.2.3 Printed copies shall be made available upon request at a price that covers no more than administrative costs (if any)	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.4 Formalities in the standard revision Printed copies shall be made available upon request at a price that covers no more than administrative costs (if any). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	Realised in full in the final version of the document nd 003. See in System Documents (ND_003_standards_for_forest_management_29072020.pdf) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
7.2.4 The standardising body shall make the development report (refer to PEFC GD 1007) publicly available	Procedures	YES	VL004 4.3, A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international) within the following four weeks. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	See https://pefc.ch/de/revision/informationen Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
Periodic review of standards			
8.1 The standard(s)/normative document(s) shall be reviewed at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period. The review shall be based on consideration of feedback received during the standard's implementation and a gap analysis. If necessary, a stakeholder consultation shall be organised to obtain further feedback and	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 Identification of need for revision To start the revision process, the existing standards shall be reviewed. This is done through feedback from stakeholders and a gap analysis, which examines the compliance of the Swiss PEFC standards with the latest international PEFC Standards published by the PEFC Council in Geneva, as well as other relevant standards and new scientific findings. Feedback shall be submitted via the PEFC Switzerland website and, like feedback from other channels (meetings, training courses, etc), be collected and taken into consideration by the steering committee/certification commission. And

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
input.			<p>VL004, 4.2. Internal procedure PEFC Switzerland, 4.2.1. Start</p> <p>(...) Consequently the steering committee also decides upon the start of the revision process which has to take part every five years. The process shall be started two years before this five-year-period ends to allow sufficient time for the standard setting and endorsement process. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>Development report, page 6: The re-endorsement process was started with sending out Save the Date invitations on 3. July 2019 for a stakeholder meeting at the PEFC Forum on 30th October 2019, where all stakeholders identified in a stakeholder mapping activity in June 2019 (result: updated stakeholder list⁴) were invited to discuss the need for a standard revision from their point of view. In the invitation, the stakeholders were explicitly asked to send their feedback and comments to Olin Bartlome, CEO of PEFC Switzerland. No feedback was received neither before nor during or after the event, which is interpretable as no need for revision, and was communicated on the website. (...)</p> <p>A Gap Analysis revealed the necessity to subject the Swiss Standards for Sustainable forest management (ND 003) and Requirements for Group Certification (ND 002) to a normal revision in order to bring them in line with the PEFC Council's sustainability benchmark ST 1003:2018 and PEFC Council's Benchmark ST 1002:2018, respectively.</p> <p><i>(5.1) full GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_de</i></p> <p><i>(5.2) critical paragraphs</i></p> <p><i>(5.3) GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_engl</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>8.2.1 The standardising body shall establish and maintain a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. This mechanism shall be accessible on the website of the standardising body and/or PEFC National Governing Body with clear directions for providing feedback.</p> <p>NOTE Feedback can be sent in various formats: comments, requests for clarification and/or interpretation, complaints, etc.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) Feedback shall be submitted via the PEFC Switzerland website and, like feedback from other channels (meetings, training courses, etc), be collected and taken into consideration by the steering committee/certification commission.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>The website of PEFC Switzerland offers various points of information, where e-mail and phone numbers are indicated in case of questions. During the revision process, a comment section was established where feedback can be placed and is answered.</p> <p><i>(9)Comments page download 08july2020.pdf)</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
<p>8.2.2 All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.</p>	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) Feedback shall be submitted via the PEFC Switzerland website and, like feedback from other channels (meetings, training courses, etc), be collected and taken into consideration by the steering committee/certification commission.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>All feedback was collected in a feedback sheet and considered in the working group if given before the working group meeting. Otherwise, the feedback was answered. During the public consultation no Feedback was received.</p> <p><i>(10) Revision Feedback Sheet.pdf</i></p> <p><i>4180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
8.3.1 At the start of a review, the standardising body shall evaluate the standard against appropriate PEFC International standards, national laws and regulations, and other relevant standards to identify potential gaps in the standard.	Procedures	YES	VL004, 4.2.2 To start the revision process, the existing standards shall be reviewed. This is done through feedback from stakeholders and a gap analysis, which examines the compliance of the Swiss PEFC standards with the latest international PEFC Standards published by the PEFC Council in Geneva, as well as other relevant standards and new scientific findings. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	A Gap Analysis was carried out by Dimitra Vlaskou Badra (PEFC Switzerland Secretariat), see full gap analysis and supported by an external consultant. <i>(5.1) full GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_de.pdf</i> <i>(5.2) critical paragraphs</i> <i>(5.3) GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_engl</i> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
8.3.2 The standardising body shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research and relevant emerging issues.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 To start the revision process, the existing standards shall be reviewed. This is done through feedback from stakeholders and a gap analysis, which examines the compliance of the Swiss PEFC standards with the latest international PEFC Standards published by the PEFC Council in Geneva, as well as other relevant standards and new scientific findings. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	One particular subject was the use of wood ash as fertilizer, which however is prohibited in forests by Swiss law.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<p>(G1) ChemRRV 814.81), p.103 ff.)</p> <p>(4) 180220_Protocol Working group Runder Tisch_Protokoll_engl_de</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
8.4.1 Where the feedback and the gap analysis do not identify a need to revise the standard, the standardising body shall organise stakeholder consultation to determine whether stakeholders see a need for revising the standard. The standardising body shall include the gap analysis in the stakeholder consultation.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) In case the gap analysis does not reveal any need for a standard revision, stakeholders shall be informed and the need for adaptations on their part shall be determined. This can take the form of a public consultation of at least 30 days or working group meetings. If there is no need for revision after the consultation of stakeholders, the steering committee shall determine whether the standard should be left in its existing form or whether a revision is necessary and shall publish the decision. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>The gap analysis revealed the need for a revision.</p> <p>(5.1) full GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_de.pdf</p> <p>(5.2) critical paragraphs</p> <p>(5.3) GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_engl</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
8.4.2 At the start of a review, the standardising body shall update the stakeholder identification mapping (refer to clause 6.2).	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.3 (...) The working group will be appointed by the steering committee at the start of the revision process. Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland.(...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	<p>According to PEFC Switzerland, stakeholder lists are updated on a regular basis and are organised in the stakeholder documentation according to where the party is attributed.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
<i>8.4.3 The standardising body shall organise:</i>			
(a) a public consultation period of at least 30 days (following the requirements of clause 6.5.1) and/or,	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.2.2</p> <p>(...) In case the gap analysis does not reveal any need for a standard revision, stakeholders shall be informed and the need for adaptations on their part shall be determined. This can take the form of a public consultation of at least 30 days or working group meetings. If there is no need for revision after the consultation of stakeholders, the steering committee shall determine whether the standard should be left in its existing form or whether a revision is necessary and shall publish the decision. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>No public consultation period was organised. Instead, a stakeholder meeting (PEFC Forum on 30th October 2019) was organised.</p> <p><i>(6.1) Einladung PEFC FINAL_end-MB 12.9.2019</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(b) stakeholder meetings.	Procedures	YES	VL004, 4.2.2 (...) In case the gap analysis does not reveal any need for a standard revision, stakeholders shall be informed and the need for adaptations on their part shall be determined. This can take the form of a public consultation of at least 30 days or working group meetings. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	At the PEFC Forum on 30 th October 2019, stakeholders had the opportunity to express their opinions on the standards and need for revision. <i>(6.1) Einladung PEFC FINAL_end-MB 12.9.2019</i> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
8.4.4 The standardising body shall announce the review in a timely manner (refer to 6.3).	Procedures	YES	VL004, 4.2.1 (...) The start of the revision process shall be communicated to the public at least 30 days before the start of activities at an appropriate time in an appropriate way (at least through the website and per e-mail). (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	First invitations (save the date) for participation in review sent out on 9 th July 2019 <i>(III) Save The Date Erstes Schweizer PEFC-Forum am 30. Oktober 2019 in StansOberdorf</i> <i>(6.1) Einladung PEFC FINAL_end-MB 12.9.2019</i> Assessment decision: Conformity

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
8.5.1 Based on the feedback received during the period of a standard's implementation, the outcome of the gap analysis and the consultations, the standardising body shall decide whether to reaffirm the standard or whether a revision of the standard is necessary.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If there is no need for revision after the consultation of stakeholders, the steering committee shall determine whether the standard should be left in its existing form or whether a revision is necessary and shall publish the decision. If the consultation and gap analysis reveal a need for revision of the standards, it shall be communicated whether the revision is a normal or editorial revision. The process of a normal revision follows 4.2.2 to 4.4. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	No changes required (none by mail previous to PEFC Forum, none at PEFC Forum). However the gap analysis showed need for adaptation. <i>(5.3) GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_engl</i> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
8.5.2 The decision shall be made at the highest decision-making level of the standardising body	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If there is no need for revision after the consultation of stakeholders, the steering committee shall determine whether the standard should be left in its existing form or whether a revision is necessary and shall publish the decision. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	Following the gap analysis, it was evident that a revision is necessary. <i>(5.3) GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_engl</i>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark is not applicable as need for revision was determined.
8.5.3 Where the decision is to reaffirm a standard, the standardising body shall provide a justification for the decision and make the justification publicly available.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If there is no need for revision after the consultation of stakeholders, the steering committee shall determine whether the standard should be left in its existing form or whether a revision is necessary and shall publish the decision. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	Following the gap analysis, it was evident that a revision is necessary. <i>(5.3) GAP ANALYSIS 20201702_engl</i> Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark is not applicable as need for revision was determined.
8.5.4 Where the decision is to revise the standard, the standardising body shall specify the type of revision (normal or editorial revision).	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If the consultation and gap analysis reveal a need for revision of the standards, it shall be communicated whether the revision is a normal or editorial revision. The process of a normal revision follows 4.2.2 to 4.4. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	<i>Under https://pefc.ch/de/revision/informationen/informations-on-the-revision-process, it says "Der Prozess der normalen Standardrevision erfolgt nach dem Leitfaden «VL 004 Verfahren der Standardrevision» .» == The processus of a normal standard revision follows the guideline VL004, standard setting procedures.</i>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
Revision of standards			
9.1 Procedures for revision of standard(s)/normative document(s) shall conform to those stated in section 6. A normal revision can occur at the periodic review, or between periodic reviews, but does not include editorial revisions and time-critical revisions.	Procedures	YES	VL004, 4.1, Procedure in the framework of national processes The steering committee observes the development of national processes referring to standards for forest management and focal point as regards content. In case that the „Forest Standard for Switzerland“ or the main indicators of the „Forest Programme Switzerland“ are enhanced the steering committee investigates the need to adapt the PEFC regulations. If the national processes result in need for adaptation, the steering committee will initiate the revision of the system documentation. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	YES	The revision of the forest management standard was carried out as a normal revision. <i>Development report</i> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
9.2 Editorial revisions can be made without triggering the normal revision process. The standardising body shall approve the editorial changes formally and publish an amendment or a new edition of the standard.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If it is an editorial revision, the steering committee shall formally adopt the required changes and publish the new version of the standard. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	N/A	The revision of the forest management standard was a normal revision. Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark was not applicable.
9.3.1 A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If national laws change so that PEFC standards can no longer be met, or if there is a request from PEFC International to adapt national standards in a period shorter than that required for the normal revision, a time-critical revision shall be carried out. The steering committee shall therefore prepare a draft that can be commented by stakeholders (not mandatory). The document shall be formally recognized by the steering committee/the certification committee and published with a justification of the time-critical process.(...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	The revision of the forest management standard was a normal revision. Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable.
9.3.2 A time-critical revision can be conducted only in the following situations:			
(a) Change in national laws and regulations affecting compliance with PEFC International requirements	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If national laws change so that PEFC standards can no longer be met, or if there is a request from PEFC International to adapt national standards in a period shorter than that required for the normal revision, a time-critical revision shall be carried out. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	The revision of the forest management standard was a normal revision. Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable.
(b) Instruction by PEFC International to comply with specific or new PEFC requirements within a timescale that is too short for a normal revision.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If national laws change so that PEFC standards can no longer be met, or if there is a request from PEFC International to adapt national standards in a period shorter than that required for the normal revision, a time-critical revision shall be carried out. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	The revision of the forest management standard was a normal revision. Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable.
<i>9.3.3 The time-critical revision shall follow these steps:</i>			
(a) The standardising body shall draft the revised standard,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If national laws change so that PEFC standards can no longer be met, or if there is a request from PEFC International to adapt national standards in a period shorter than that required for the normal revision, a time-critical revision shall be carried out. The steering committee shall therefore prepare a draft (...).

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	The revision of the forest management standard was a normal revision. Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable.
(b) The standardising body may consult stakeholders, but it is not mandatory,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If national laws change so that PEFC standards can no longer be met, or if there is a request from PEFC International to adapt national standards in a period shorter than that required for the normal revision, a time-critical revision shall be carried out. The steering committee shall therefore prepare a draft that can be commented by stakeholders (not mandatory). (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	The revision of the forest management standard was a normal revision. Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable.
(c) The revised standard shall be approved formally at the highest appropriate decision-making level of the standardising body,	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) If national laws change so that PEFC standards can no longer be met, or if there is a request from PEFC International to adapt national standards in a period shorter than that required for the normal revision, a time-critical revision shall be carried out. (...) The document shall be formally recognized by the steering committee/the certification committee (...). Assessment decision: Conformity

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	The revision of the forest management standard was a normal revision. Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable.
(d) The standardising body shall explain the justification for the urgent change(s) and make the justification publicly available.	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.2.2 (...) The document shall be formally recognized by the steering committee/the certification committee and published with a justification of the time-critical process. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.
	Process	N/A	The revision of the forest management standard was a normal revision. Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement was not applicable.
9.4.1 A revision shall define the application date and transition period of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s).	Procedures	YES	VL 004, 4.4 (...) Formalities in the standard revision procedure • A revision shall define the application date and transition period of the revised standard(s)/ normative document(s). An application date shall not be more than one year after the publication of the standard. This allows time for endorsement of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s), introduction of change(s), information dissemination and training. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	<p>No transition period was introduced in the forest management standard.</p> <p>The application date of the FM standard was set to 3rd January 2022.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
9.4.2 An application date shall not be more than one year after the publication of the standard. This allows time for endorsement of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s), introduction of change(s), information dissemination and training.	Procedures	YES	<p><i>VL 004, 4.4 Formalities in the standard revision procedure (...) An application date shall not be more than one year after the publication of the standard. This allows time for endorsement of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s), introduction of change(s), information dissemination and training.</i></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
	Process	YES	<p>The application date of the FM standard was set to 3rd January 2022.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>
9.4.3 The transition period shall not exceed one year. The standardising body may determine a longer period when justified by exceptional circumstances.	Procedures	YES	<p>VL 004, 4.4</p> <p>(...) The transition period shall not exceed one year. The standardizing body may determine a longer period when justified by exceptional circumstances, in case the endorsement of the of the revised standard requires a longer time. (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	<p>The application date of the FM standard was set to 3rd January 2022.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>

PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018)

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
Context of the national standard and the organisations applying a PEFC endorsed standard		
4.1 General		
The requirements for sustainable forest management defined by regional, national or sub-national forestmanagement standards shall:		
a) include management and performance requirements that are applicable at the forest management unit level, or at another level as appropriate, to ensure that the intent of all requirements is achieved at the forest management unit level; Note: An example of a situation where a requirement can be defined as being at another level (e.g. group/regional) is monitoring of forest health. Through monitoring of forest health at regional level, and communicating of results at the FMU level, the objective of the requirement is met without the necessity to carry out the individual monitoring of each forest management unit.	YES	ND 003 2. Scope The National Standards refer exclusively to the sustainable management of forests. The standards are applicable to forest management at unit level and to the forest owner/ manager who is responsible for the forest management. The forest owner/ manager is responsible for ensuring that the activities and operations of all contractors meet the respective criteria of these National Standards. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) be clear, performance based and auditable;	YES	ND 003, Entire Document Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The requirements of ND003 are sufficiently clear, performance based and auditable.
c) apply to activities of all forest operators in the defined forest area who have an impact on achieving compliance with the requirements;	YES	ND 003 2. Scope (...) The forest owner/ manager is responsible for ensuring that the activities and operations of all contractors meet the respective criteria of these National Standards A.1 G9 If the forest owner confers forest management or parts of it to a third party (forest manager, forest contractor, etc.), binding commitments are made to ensure the absolute compliance with the National Standards.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>d) require record-keeping that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the forest management standards;</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, Part C, 3.8:</p> <p>“The forest enterprise assesses and documents all relevant data for controlling purposes.</p> <p>These comprise at least: • Yield of all harvested forest products, • Increment, regeneration, and condition of the forest, • Environmental impact of forest management such as changes in flora and fauna (by means of reference to inventories, maps, Red Lists, list of neophytes), • Social effects of harvesting or other forest operations (health effects, reports to the SUVA accident insurance), • Costs, productivity and efficiency of forest management.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Records are required for yield of all harvested forest products; Increment, regeneration, and condition of the forest; Environmental impact of forest management; Social effects of harvesting or other forest operations (health effects, reports to the SUVA accident insurance); Costs, productivity and efficiency of forest management.</p> <p>This can be considered sufficient to address the main elements of PEFC ST 1003. The PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be seen as met.</p>
<p>e) specify “100% PEFC certified”, or another system specific claim, as claim to be used to communicate the origin of products in an area covered by the standard to customers with a PEFC chain of custody;</p> <p>Note: System specific claims of PEFC endorsed standards and PEFC Council approved abbreviations of such claims and the claim “100% PEFC certified”, and their translations into languages other than English,</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management, Part C 3.9</p> <p>“The chain of custody is consistent, documents (invoices, felling reports etc.) are available that enable traceability of each certified forest product to its origin. Products from the sustainably managed forest unit shall be specified as “100 % PEFC certified” or another system specific claim, as claim to be used to communicate the origin of these products in an area covered by the standard to customers with a PEFC chain of custody.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
are published online on the PEFC website www.pefc.org .		
f) require that where owners/managers of forests are selling products from areas other than covered by the standard, only products from areas covered by the standard are sold with the claim "100% PEFC-certified" or a system specific claim;	YES	<p>VL005, 3a) The PEFC Logo usage licence is issued to an individual or to a legal entity (e.g. forest owner or enterprise) based on the requirements of the normative document ND 005 (corresponds to PEFC ST 2001:2020 of PEFC international). In the case of a forest certification or a multi-site certification of independent enterprises for a chain-of-custody certification, each participant receives an individual logo usage license.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: While the benchmark requirement is not met by the FM standard, ND003, according to PEFC Switzerland's procedures for the issuance of PEFC Logo usage licences, VL005, 3a) every participant in FM group certification obtains a PEFC trademark license from PEFC Switzerland, thereby making the requirements of ND005 (adopted PEFC ST 2001) mandatory for certified forest owners. This can be considered as sufficient to meet this PEFC benchmark requirement.</p>
g) require that claims on the origin of products in an area covered by the standard are only made by forest owners/managers covered by a PEFC recognised certificate issued against the standard;	YES	<p>VL005, 3a) The PEFC Logo usage licence is issued to an individual or to a legal entity (e.g. forest owner or enterprise) based on the requirements of the normative document ND 005 (corresponds to PEFC ST 2001:2020 of PEFC international). In the case of a forest certification or a multi-site certification of independent enterprises for a chain-of-custody certification, each participant receives an individual logo usage license.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: While the benchmark requirement is not met by the FM standard, ND003, according to PEFC Switzerland's procedures for the issuance of PEFC Logo usage licences, VL005, 3a) every participant in FM group certification obtains a PEFC trademark license from PEFC Switzerland, thereby making the requirements of ND005 (adopted PEFC ST 2001) mandatory for certified forest owners. This can be considered as sufficient to meet this PEFC benchmark requirement.</p>
h) specify requirements concerning the information which need to be provided to a PEFC chain of custody certified customer;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Part C Operational management</p> <p>3.9.1 The traceability of the forest products back to its place of origin is warranted. The invoices, credit notes or delivery receipts referring to certified products must contain the type of product, the quantity, the name of the purchaser and the ven-dor as well as the evidence of certification (certificate number, PEFC).</p> <p>3.9.2 All sales of certified products are listed and clearly arranged to enable the certification body to</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>clearly retrace the chain of custody in the scope of an audit.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
i) include an overview of applicable legislation, if requirements of this benchmark are not reflected in the regional, national or sub-national standard, because they are already addressed through the legislation.	YES	<p>ND 003, Annex A1, Checklist on laws</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of affected stakeholders		
The standard requires that the organisation shall determine:		
a) the affected stakeholders that are relevant to the sustainable forest management;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management, Part A 3.2</p> <p>The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments.</p> <p>ND 003, Standard 1 1.4</p> <p>Findings on potential social impact of forest management are integrated in forest management planning and in the formulation of the respective measures. Consensus based solutions are developed with individuals or groups who are directly affected by management operations. This way, disputes can be avoided from the outset. In case of conflicts, appropriate dispute settlement procedures are employed.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1 1.4 Findings on potential social impact of forest management are integrated in forest management planning and in the formulation of the respective measures. Consensus based solutions are developed with individuals or groups who are directly affected by management operations. This way, disputes can be avoided from the outset. In case of conflicts, appropriate dispute settlement procedures are employed.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
4.3 Determining the scope of the management system		
4.3.1 The standard requires that the organisation shall determine the boundaries and applicability of the management system to establish its scope.	YES	ND 003 Standard 3 Management Part A 3.1 The quantity of harvested forest products is in accordance with permanently sustainable levels. The forest manager compiles a list of the certified forest products. Part B Operational planning Objective: The forest enterprise develops an appropriate management plan, keeps it up-to-date and applies it. The longterm objectives of management and the means for achieving them are clearly stated. 3.4 The management plan and the associated documents contain details regarding: a) Management objectives; b) Description of the managed forests, ownership status and rights of use, limiting environmental factors, socioeconomic conditions, and adjacent lands c) Description of the silvicultural system based on inventory data and the ecological situation; d) Justification of the annual cut and the tree species selection (harvesting techniques, increment, tariffs, assessment of annual yield, site maps containing recommendations for species selection etc.). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: ND003's requirements for forest management plans, determining amongst other things forest location, extent, products and activities can be considered as equivalent to determining the scope of a management system.
4.3.2 The standard requires that forest management shall comprise the cycle of inventory and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and shall include an appropriate assessment of the social, environmental and economic impacts of forest management practices. This shall form a basis for a cycle of continuous improvement.	YES	ND 003 Standard 3 Management Part A Benefits from the forest Objective: Forest management encourages the sustainable and efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and provide a wide range of environmental and social benefits. 3.1 The quantity of harvested forest products is in accordance with permanently sustainable levels. The forest manager compiles a list of the certified forest products. 3.2 The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental,

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments.</p> <p>3.3 The forest manager minimizes waste and avoids damage to other forest resources.</p> <p>Part B Operational planning</p> <p>Objective: The forest enterprise develops an appropriate management plan, keeps it up-to-date and applies it. The longterm objectives of management and the means for achieving them are clearly stated.</p> <p>3.4 The management plan and the associated documents contain details regarding: a) Management objectives;</p> <p>b) Description of the managed forests, ownership status and rights of use, limiting environmental factors, socioeconomic conditions, and adjacent lands</p> <p>c) Description of the silvicultural system based on inventory data and the ecological situation;</p> <p>d) Justification of the annual cut and the tree species selection (harvesting techniques, increment, tariffs, assessment of annual yield, site maps containing recommendations for species selection etc.).</p> <p>3.5 Enterprises of 400 ha and more must provide a comprehensive management plan in writing. It is updated on a regular basis (every 15 to 25 years) in order to incorporate the results of observations or new scientific and technical findings and to take into account changing ecological, social or economic conditions. Enterprises of less than 400 ha must include in their plan the specifications defined in 3.4 b) and d) in writing.</p> <p>3.6 The forest owner makes a summary of the key sections of the management plan (defined at criterion 3.4) available to the public on request. Confidential business information need not be disclosed</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: All elements of this benchmark requirement, inventory and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as an assessment of social, environmental and economic impacts, jointly leading to a continuous cycle of improvement, are in essence covered by the referenced requirements of ND003.</p>
5. Leadership		

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
5.1 The standard requires that the organisation shall provide a commitment:		
a) to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system;	YES	<p>ND 003 2. Compliance with laws</p> <p>(...) The forest manager commits himself to manage the forest according to these National Standards.</p> <p>(...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) to continuously improve the sustainable forest management system.	YES	<p>ND003, Scope</p> <p>(...) "The suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the sustainable forest management system and the sustainable management of the forest shall be continuously improved by the forest owner/manager."</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
5.2 The standard requires that this commitment shall be publicly available.	YES	<p>VL005, 3a) The PEFC Logo usage licence is issued to an individual or to a legal entity (e.g. forest owner or enterprise) based on the requirements of the normative document ND 005 (corresponds to PEFC ST 2001:2020 of PEFC international). In the case of a forest certification or a multi-site certification of independent enterprises for a chain-of-custody certification, each participant receives an individual logo usage license.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: As certified forest owners obtain their own PEFC trademark license they ought to be registered individually in the public PEFC register of certified entities. ND003, which requires a commitment to its implementation from all certified entities, is publicly available likewise. In consequence, information on the forest owner's commitment should be publicly available and this PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as being essentially addressed.</p>
5.3 The standard requires that responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.	YES	<p>ND003, Standard 3, Part B Operational planning</p> <p>3.4 "The management plan and the associated documents contain details regarding: (...) e) Definition and assignment of responsibilities for sustainable forest management.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6. Planning		
6.1 Actions to address risks and opportunities		
6.1.1 The standard requires that the organisation shall consider risks and opportunities concerning compliance with the requirements for sustainable forest management. Size and scale of the operations of the organisation shall be considered.	YES	ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part A Benefits from the forest Objective: Forest management encourages the sustainable and efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and provide a wide range of environmental and social benefits 3.2 The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: Forest enterprises very likely naturally aim for economic profitability and are also required to do so by ND003, Part A 3.2. As they are also encouraged to make efficient use of all forest products and services, it can be considered as highly likely that risks as well as opportunities of certification are well considered. The PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as essentially addressed.
6.1.2 The standard requires that inventory and mapping of forest resources shall be established and maintained, adequate to local and national conditions and in correspondence with the requirements described in this international benchmark standard.	YES	ND 003, Standard 3, Part B Operational planning 3.4 The management plan and the associated documents contain details regarding: a) Management objectives; b) Description of the managed forests, ownership status and rights of use, limiting environmental factors, socio-economic conditions, and adjacent lands c) Description of the silvicultural system based on inventory data and the ecological situation; d) Justification of the annual cut and the tree species selection (harvesting techniques, increment, tariffs, assessment of annual yield, site maps containing recommendations for species selection etc.).

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>Standard 3 Management Indicators</p> <p>3.4.1 The plans and supporting documents contain the following details/ maps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest area and forest map (public, private, certified), • Ownership situation and usage rights, • Mapping of biotopes, • Site conditions (with reference to site maps and recommendations available in the canton), • Information concerning habitats worthy of protection and of national, cantonal and regional importance, • game reserves, no-hunting zones, • Groundwater protection zones XII, • Recreation and tourism areas, • Protective forests, • Natural and special forest reserves, • WEP of priority functions and objects of special function, mapping of forest functions, • Forest opening-up/ skidtrail design. <p>3.4.2 The silvicultural planning measures are described with respect to stand types and objectives.</p> <p>3.4.3 The desired species composition is determined using site parameters for each stand with reference to natural forest associations. See also indicators 2.2.3 and 2.2.4. 3.4.4 Sustainable annual harvesting levels (annual allowable cut) are determined, justified and documented.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.2 Management plan		
6.2.1 The standard requires that management plans shall be:		
a) elaborated and periodically updated or continually adjusted;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management, Part B, Operational planning</p> <p>Part B Operational planning</p> <p>Objective: The forest enterprise develops an appropriate management plan keeps it up-to-date and applies it. (...)</p> <p>Indicator 3.5.1 Plan revision: Responsibilities for the collection and updating of data for the revision of the planning are defined. Principally, the plan must be revised after 25 years the latest (or on a frequency required by the canton).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) appropriate to the size and use of the forest area;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management, Part B, Operational planning 3.5 Enterprises of 400 ha and more must provide a comprehensive management plan in writing. It is up-dated on a regular basis (every 15 to 25 years) in order to incorporate the results of observations or new scientific and technical findings and to take into account changing ecological, social or economic conditions. Enterprises of less than 400 ha must include in their plan the specifications defined in 3.4 b) and d) in writing.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) based on applicable local, national and international legislation as well as existing land-use or other official plans; and	YES	<p>PEFC Switzerland comment: <i>Besides the indicator cited below, it is self explanatory (and determined by the list of applicable legislation) that management is based on local legislation.</i></p> <p>ND 003, Standard 2, 2.4.1 The forest owner participates in the efforts of the canton to designate forest reserves. (...) ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part B, Indicator 3.4.5 Forest conditions and development trends are monitored according to procedures used in the respective canton (e.g. data of the Swiss National Forest Inventory, LFI).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
d) adequately covering forest resources.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, Part B Operational planning</p> <p>3.4 The management plan and the associated documents contain details regarding:</p> <p>a) Management objectives;</p> <p>b) Description of the managed forests, ownership status and rights of use, (...)</p> <p>c) Description of the silvicultural system based on inventory data (...);</p> <p>d) Justification of the annual cut and the tree species selection (harvesting techniques, increment, tariffs, assessment of annual yield, site maps containing recommendations for species selection etc.).</p> <p>3.4.1 The plans and supporting documents contain the following details/ maps: • Forest area and forest map (public, private, certified), • Ownership situation and usage rights, • Mapping of biotopes, • Site conditions (with reference to site maps and recommendations available in the canton), • Information</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>concerning habitats worthy of protection and of national, cantonal and regional importance, • game reserves, no-hunting zones, • Groundwater protection zonesXII, • Recreation and tourism areas, • Protective forests, • Natural and special forest reserves, • WEP of priority functions</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.2.2 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part A,</p> <p>3.1.1 The planning shows which products and services the forest enterprise intends to produce and where. This includes wood and non-wood products as well as environmental and other services. In doing so, the productivity of ecosystems is to be maintained. Evidence: List of certified products site maps, logging planning, prescribed cut etc.</p> <p>Part B, 3.4.1 The plans and supporting documents contain the following details/ maps: • Forest area and forest map (public, private, certified), • Ownership situation and usage rights, • Mapping of biotopes, • Site conditions (with reference to site maps and recommendations available in the canton), • Information concerning habitats worthy of protection and of national, cantonal and regional importance, • game reserves, no-hunting zones, • Groundwater protection zonesXII, • Recreation and tourism areas, • Protective forests, • Natural and special forest reserves, • WEP of priority functions and objects of special function, mapping of forest functions, • Forest opening-up/ skidtrail design.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.2.3 The standard requires that management plans shall include at least a description of the current forest management unit, long-term objectives, and the average annual allowable cut, including its justification.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part B,</p> <p>Part B Operational planning</p> <p>Objective: The forest enterprise develops an appropriate management plan, keeps it up-to-date and applies it. The long-term objectives of management and the means for achieving them are clearly stated.</p> <p>3.4 The management plan and the associated documents contain details regarding:</p> <p>a) Management objectives;</p> <p>b) Description of the managed forests, ownership status and rights of use, limiting environmental factors,</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>socio-economic conditions, and adjacent lands</p> <p>c) Description of the silvicultural system based on inventory data and the ecological situation;</p> <p>d) Justification of the annual cut and the tree species selection (harvesting techniques, increment, tariffs, assessment of annual yield, site maps</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <p>3.4.2 The silvicultural planning measures are described with respect to stand types and objectives.</p> <p>3.4.3 The desired species composition is determined using site parameters for each stand with reference to natural forest associations. See also indicators 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.</p> <p>3.4.4. Sustainable annual harvesting levels (annual allowable cut) are determined, justified and documented.</p> <p>3.4.5 Forest conditions and development trends are monitored according to procedures used in the respective canton (e.g. data of the Swiss National Forest Inventory, LFI).</p> <p>3.4.6. The selection of harvesting techniques and equipment (skidtrail design, cable lines) can be justified according to defined criteria (relief, forest condition, soil condition etc.).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.2.4 The standard requires that the annually allowable use of non-wood forest products shall be included in the management plan where forest management covers commercial use of non-wood forest products at a level which can have an impact on their long-term sustainability.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part A,</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.1 The planning shows which products and services the forest enterprise intends to produce and where. This includes wood and non-wood products as well as environmental and other services. In doing so, the productivity of ecosystems is to be maintained.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.2.5 The standard requires that management plans specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation and damage to forest	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part A,</p> <p>Indicator 3.3.1 Appropriate measures for the protection of the remaining stand, natural regeneration, soil and water quality and wildlife are undertaken.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
ecosystems.		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.2.6 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the results of scientific research.	YES	ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part B, Indicator 3.5.2 New scientific findings and technical innovations must be regarded during plan revision. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.2.7 The standard requires that a summary of the management plan, appropriate to the scope and scale of forest management, shall be publicly available and shall include information on the general objectives and forest management principles.	YES	ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part B, The forest owner makes a summary of the key sections of the management plan (defined at criterion 3.4) available to the public on request. Confidential business information need not be disclosed Indicator 3.6.1 The content and at least a summary of the forest planning on operational level is made publicly available in an appropriate way. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.2.8 The standard requires that the publicly available summary of the management plan may exclude confidential business and personal information and other information made confidential by applicable legislation or for the protection of cultural sites or sensitive natural resource features.	YES	ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part B, The forest owner makes a summary of the key sections of the management plan (defined at criterion 3.4) available to the public on request. Confidential business information need not be disclosed Indicator 3.6.1 The content and at least a summary of the forest planning on operational level is made publicly available in an appropriate way. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.3 Compliance requirements		

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
6.3.1 Legal compliance		
<p>6.3.1.1 The standard requires that the organisation shall identify and have access to the legislation applicable to its forest management and determine how these compliance obligations apply to the organisation.</p> <p>Note: For a country which has signed a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the European Union and the producing country, the “legislation applicable to forest management” is defined by the VPA agreement.</p>	YES	<p>2. Compliance with laws</p> <p>Forest management respects all applicable laws of Switzerland as well as international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and complies with all requirements of PEFC Switzerland.</p> <p>The forest manager complies with all national and local legislation and official regulations. He pays all applicable and legally prescribed fees, contributions, taxes and other public royalties.</p> <p>Laws of particular relevance are the Forest Act as well as the Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Natur- und Heimatschutzgesetz) and the Environmental Protection Act and the respective regulations (see Annex 1, G1: List of relevant legislation).</p> <p>A.1 Checklist on laws, Indicator G1:</p> <p>Forest owner and forest manager are aware of the sources of information, in order to access all relevant legal regulations.</p> <p>List of relevant legislation: • Forest Act (WaG) • Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act (NHG), • Environmental Protection Act (USG), • Water Protection Act (GSchG), • Spatial Planning Act (RPG), • Labour Protection Act (ArG), • Hunting Act (JSG), • Civil Code (ZBG, particularly because of landregister), • Others such as ChemG, KVG, UVG, BBG.</p> <p>Access to up-to-date legislation is guaranteed at any time.2 (www.admin.ch/ch) Updates and information are provided by the group management or the cantonal forest service.</p> <p>ND 003, 1. Introduction Switzerland is signatory state of the following international agreements: The Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the agreements of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1993 in Rio). Provisions of these agreements are respected in forest management. The forest owner commits himself to manage the forest according to these National Standards of PEFC.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.3.1.2 The standard requires that the	YES	ND 003, 2. Compliance with laws The forest manager complies with all national and local legislation and

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
organisation shall comply with applicable local, national and international legislation on forest management, including but not limited to forest management practices; nature and environmental protection; protected and endangered species; property, tenure and land-use rights for indigenous peoples, local communities or other affected stakeholders; health, labour and safety issues; anti-corruption and the payment of applicable royalties and taxes.		<p>official regulations. He pays all applicable and legally prescribed fees, contributions, taxes and other public royalties. Laws of particular relevance are the Forest Act as well as the Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Naturund Heimatschutzgesetz) and the Environmental Protection Act and the respective regulations (see Annex 1, G1: List of relevant legislation). The forest manager commits himself to manage the forest according to these National Standards.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.3.1.3 The standard requires that where no anti-corruption legislation exists, the organisation must take alternative anti-corruption measures appropriate to the risk of corruption.	YES	<p>There is anti-corruption legislation defined in the Swiss Criminal Code Art 322 Corruption is forbidden</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.3.1.4 The standard requires that measures shall be implemented to address protection of the forest from unauthorised activities such as illegal logging, illegal land use, illegally initiated fires, and other illegal activities.	Yes	<p>Indicator 2.3.6 Forest roads and trails must be closed for the use of motor vehicles outside the forest sector. For this purpose appropriate sign posts are installed. In case of non-compliance the forest owner informs the relevant authorities.</p> <p>Indicator G 4 In case of unauthorized forest utilization or illegal activities (disposal of waste, vandalism etc.) by third parties the forest owner informs the appropriate authorities.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Unauthorised activities such as illegal logging, illegal land use, illegally initiated fires, and other illegal activities related to forest management on site are known to occur on any significant level in present Switzerland according to publicly available information. Other illegal activities, such as unauthorized use of forest roads by motor vehicles, are addressed. The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6.3.2 Legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land		
6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property	YES	ND 003, 2. Compliance with laws (...) Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>rights, tree ownership and land tenure arrangements shall be clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant management unit. Likewise, legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land shall be clarified, recognised and respected.</p> <p>Note: Guidance for the handling of tenure arrangements can be obtained from the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.</p>		<p>are defined by an entry in the land register according to the civil code. The forest manager is aware of them and respects them.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>6.3.2.2 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall be conducted in recognition of the established framework of legal, customary and traditional rights such as outlined in ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which shall not be infringed upon without the free, prior and informed consent of the holders of the rights, including the provision of compensation where applicable. Where the extent of rights is not yet resolved, or is in dispute, there are processes for just and fair resolution. In such cases forest managers shall, in the interim, provide meaningful opportunities for parties to be engaged in forest management decisions whilst respecting the processes and roles and responsibilities laid out in the policies and laws where the certification takes place.</p>	N/A	<p>There are no Indigenous Peoples in Switzerland.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is not applicable.</p>
<p>6.3.2.3 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall respect human rights as defined by the Universal Declaration</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1 1.2 Forest management operations are carried out in accordance with or exceeding relevant legislation and regulations regarding health, safety and rights (including the ILO conventions) of all employees. Relevant experience and knowledge of local forest owners and residents is used most</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
on Human Rights.		effectively. Switzerland has ratified the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.3.3 Fundamental ILO conventions		
6.3.3.1 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall comply with fundamental ILO conventions. Note: In countries where the fundamental ILO conventions have been ratified, the requirements of 6.3.3.1 apply. In countries where a fundamental convention has not been ratified and its content is not covered by applicable legislation, specific requirements shall be included in the forest management standard.		Switzerland has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.3.4 Health, safety and working conditions		
6.3.4.1 The standard requires that forest operations shall be planned, organised and performed in a manner that enables health and accident risks to be identified and all reasonable measures to be applied to protect workers from work-related risks. Workers shall be informed about the risks involved with their work and about preventive measures.		ND 003, Standard 1 1.2 Forest management operations are carried out in accordance with or exceeding relevant legislation and regulations regarding health, safety and rights (including the ILO conventions) of all employees. Relevant experience and knowledge of local forest owners and residents is used most effectively. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.3.4.2 The standard requires that working conditions shall be safe, and guidance and training in safe working practices shall be provided to all those assigned to a task in	YES	ND 003, Standard 1 1.1 Employment opportunities are offered to the local population and preference is given to local enterprises and competitors in case of comparable tenders. All employees are provided with sufficient information regarding working technique, protective equipment, sustainable forest

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>forest operations. Working hours and leave shall comply with national laws or applicable collective agreements.</p> <p>Note: Guidance for specifying national standards can be obtained from the ILO Code of Good Practice: Safety and Health in Forestry Work.</p>		<p>management etc. They are supported in further education.</p> <p>Indicator G 11 The labour rights according to the ILO Conventions No 87, 98 and 154 (organizing trade unions, protection against dismissal) are prescribed by law. Forest enterprises are all under the authority of SUVA, who supervises work safety.- Rights must be ensured (interview with employees).</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.3 The operations manager supervises the compliance with safety regulations. Especially the use of personal safety equipment and its condition is regularly checked.- Regular checks in the depot, in the forest.</p> <p>Indicator 1.4.1 Results of studies on health effects of forest work are taken into account when the management plan and the resulting measures are developed. Interview with employees, purchasing receipts of environmentally friendly operation material etc.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>6.3.4.3 The standard requires that wages of local and migrant forest workers as well as of contractors and other operators operating in PEFC-certified areas shall meet or exceed at least legal, industry minimum standards or, where applicable, collective bargaining agreements.</p> <p>Note: Where wages are below the living wage of a country, steps should be taken to attain increased wages towards a living wage level over time in addition to increases for inflation.</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1 (...) "1.5 Wages of local and migrant forest workers as well as of contractors and other operators operating in PEFCcertified areas shall meet or exceed at least the collective labour agreement of the wood industry Switzerland (Gesamtarbeitsvertrag GAV Holzindustrie)." (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>6.3.4.4 The standard requires that the organisation is committed to equal opportunities, non-discrimination and freedom from workplace harassment. Gender equality shall be promoted.</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, ND 003, Standard 1 (...) "1.6 The organisation commits to equal opportunities, non-discrimination and freedom from workplace harassment. Gender equality shall be promoted."</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
7. Support		
7.1 Resources		
7.1.1 The standard requires that the organisation shall determine and provide the resources needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the sustainable forest management system.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3,</p> <p>3.2.1 Forest enterprises are managed according to economic principles and hold the necessary management tools.</p> <p>The financial plan/ the balance of accounts show the allocation of resources for the implementation of the plan. Efficient allocation of financial resources and structures. Financial planning, balance of accounts obligatory for enterprises of 400 ha or more.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
7.2 Competence		
7.2.1 The standard requires that forest managers, contractors, employees and forest owners shall be provided with sufficient information and kept up-to-date through continuous training in relation to sustainable forest management, as a precondition for all management planning and practices described in this benchmark.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1 [...] 1.3 "The forest personnel and other forest workers are adequately trained and instructed in relation to sustainable forest management in order to guarantee a professional implementation of planned measures."</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
7.3 Communication		
7.3.1 The standard requires that effective communication and consultation with local communities, indigenous peoples and other stakeholders relating to sustainable forest management shall be provided.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1</p> <p>1.4 Findings on potential social impact of forest management are integrated in forest management planning and in the formulation of the respective measures. Consensus-based solutions are developed with individuals or groups who are directly affected by management operations. This way, disputes can be avoided from the outset. In case of conflicts, appropriate dispute settlement procedures are employed.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
7.4 Complaints		
7.4.1 The standard requires that appropriate mechanisms are in place for resolving complaints and disputes relating to forest management operations, land use rights and work conditions.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1</p> <p>Indicator 1.4.6 Mechanisms for dispute settlement are clearly defined and all relevant incidents are documented. In cases of conflict any involved party has the possibility to take legal action.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
7.5 Documented Information		
7.5.1 The standard requires that the organisation's management system shall include documented information required by the standard and determined by the organisation as being necessary for the effectiveness of the sustainable forest management system.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.4</p> <p>"The management plan and the associated documents contain details regarding:</p> <p>a) Management objectives; b) Description of the managed forests, ownership status and rights of use, limiting environmental factors, socioeconomic conditions, and adjacent lands c) Description of the silvicultural system based on inventory data and the ecological situation; d) Justification of the annual cut and the tree species selection (harvesting techniques, increment, tariffs, assessment of annual yield, site maps containing recommendations for species selection etc.)."</p> <p>3.5 "Enterprises of 400 ha and more must provide a comprehensive management plan in writing. It is updated on a regular basis (every 15 to 25 years) in order to incorporate the results of observations or new scientific and technical findings and to take into account changing ecological, social or economic conditions.</p> <p>Enterprises of less than 400 ha must include in their plan the specifications defined in 3.4 b) and d) in writing. rights of use, limiting environmental factors, socioeconomic conditions, and adjacent lands c) Description of the silvicultural system based on inventory data and the ecological situation; d) Justification of the annual cut and the tree species selection (harvesting techniques, increment, tariffs, assessment of annual yield, site maps containing recommendations for species selection etc.)."</p> <p>Indicator G 13 "Pesticides used by the enterprise are documented on an up-to-date list that specifies trade name and active agent. The specific instruction manual must be followed. If the instructions do not specify the area of application, the method and amount of use, these details are documented on the</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>same list. The quantity of used agent is documented. - List of applied pesticides, details of use: quantity (liters, cubic meters)."</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.1 "The forest enterprise has laid down defined safety arrangements (standard solution FORST or individual solution) 4 and fully implements them in order to meet the requirements of the Federal Coordination Commission for Occupational Work Safety (EKAS). Documentation is available.- Manuals of the standard solution, audit reports etc"</p> <p>Indicator 1.4.6 "Mechanisms for dispute settlement are clearly defined and all relevant incidents are documented."</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.2 "Clear felling is prohibited. (...) these size limits can be exceeded in exceptional cases. The forest manager is obliged to justify and document such exceptions"</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.1 "The minimum distance between skid trails is 20 metres. The network of skid trails is documented in maps (at least sketched)."</p> <p>Indicator 2.4.4 "The forest manager documents (e.g. by the means of a tending and management plan) that between April and mid of July tending and harvesting operations are carried out on maximum 5% of the certification unit"</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
7.5.2 The standard requires that the documented information is relevant, and updated as appropriate, to the activities of the organisation.	YES	<p>See 7.5.1</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The regular updating of management plans is only required for enterprises larger than 400ha. However, all other required documentation should be understood as being updated when activities that require documentation occur. The PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as being essentially addressed.</p>
8. Operation		
8.1 Criterion 1: Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle		

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.1.1 The standard requires that management shall aim to maintain or increase forests and their ecosystem services and maintain or enhance the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of forest resources.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2 2.2 The ecological functions and values of the forest are either maintained intact or enhanced, or restored. This includes: • forest regeneration and succession, • genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, • natural cycles that influence the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
8.1.2 The standard requires that the quantity and quality of the forest resources and the capacity of the forest to store and sequester carbon shall be safeguarded in the medium and long term by balancing harvesting and growth rates, using appropriate silvicultural measures and preferring techniques that minimise adverse impacts on forest resources.	YES	<p>ND 003 Standard 2 2.2 The ecological functions and values of the forest are either maintained intact or enhanced, or restored. This includes: • forest regeneration and succession, • genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, • natural cycles that influence the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p> <p>Indicator 3.4.4 3.4.4 Sustainable annual harvesting levels (annual allowable cut) are determined, justified and documented.</p> <p>Standard 3 Management Part A Benefits from the forest Objective: Forest management encourages the sustainable and efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and provide a wide range of environmental and social benefits.</p> <p>3.1 The quantity of harvested forest products is in accordance with permanently sustainable levels. The forest manager compiles a list of the certified forest products.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
8.1.3 The standard requires that climate positive practices in management operations, such as greenhouse gas emission reductions and efficient use of resources shall be encouraged.	YES	<p>N 003, Standard 3 3.2</p> <p>The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments. This includes climate positive practices in management operations, such as greenhouse gas emission reductions and efficient use of resources.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion:		

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>a) is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority including consultation with affected stakeholders; and</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>ND 003, Checklist on laws G16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized.</p> <p>Federal Act on Forest Art. 4 Definition of deforestation</p> <p>Deforestation is the permanent or temporary change of use of forest land.</p> <p>Art. 5 Prohibition on deforestation and derogations</p> <p>1 Deforestation is prohibited.</p> <p>2 In exceptional cases a deforestation permit may be granted if the applicant proves that there are important reasons for the deforestation that outweigh the interest of forest conservation and, furthermore, the following conditions are fulfilled:</p> <p>a. the proposed site must be essential to the works for which the deforestation is to be carried out;</p> <p>b. the works must essentially fulfil the spatial planning requirements;</p> <p>c. the deforestation does not cause any serious threat to the environment.</p> <p>3 Important reasons do not include financial interests, such as the potentially profitable use of the land or the low-cost acquisition of land for non-forestry purposes.</p> <p>3bis If the authorities have to decide whether to grant permission for the construction of installations for the generation of renewable energies and for energy transportation and distribution, when weighing up interests the national interest in constructing such installations is to be considered equal to other national interests.</p> <p>4 The protection of nature and cultural heritage must be taken into account.</p> <p>5 A time limit shall be set for deforestation permits.</p> <p>Art. 16 Detrimental uses</p> <p>1 Uses that do not constitute deforestation as defined in Article 4, but which endanger or interfere with the functions or management of the forest are unlawful.</p> <p>Rights of use in such cases shall be revoked, if necessary by compulsory purchase. The cantons shall enact the necessary provisions. The competent authorities may authorise such uses for important reasons subject to certain conditions and requirements.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) entails a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area; and	NO	<p>See 8.1.4 a</p> <p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p> <p>Justification: While the conversion of forest to non-forest land is strictly limited by the Swiss Forest Act, a size limitation for conversions of not greater than 5% of forest type within the certified area as required by the PEFC International Benchmark Standard is neither defined by legislation, nor by ND 003. Therefore, this PEFC benchmark requirement cannot be considered as met.</p>
c) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and	YES	<p>See 8.1.4 a</p> <p>(...) 2 In exceptional cases a deforestation permit may be granted if the applicant proves that there are important reasons for the deforestation that outweigh the interest of forest conservation and, furthermore, the following conditions are fulfilled:</p> <p>(...)</p> <p>c. the deforestation does not cause any serious threat to the environment.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and	YES	<p>See 8.1.4 a, and</p> <p>2.5 Forests of high conservation value (forests disclosed with the priority functions “protection against natural hazards” or “nature and landscape”) are registered in the required WEP (forest development plan) lists and inventories.</p> <p>Indicator 2.5.1 After consultation with experts and stakeholders the forest manager notes, surveys, and depicts High Conservation Value Forests on maps. They comprise: • Forests with priority function “protection against natural hazards” (protection of settlements and infrastructure) • Naturally historically valuable forests with priority function “nature and landscape” (protection of habitats of rare and sensitive</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>animal and plant species, genetic reserves and nationally or regionally representative landscape structures).</p> <p>Indicator 2.5.2 The specific requirements for High Conservation Value Forests are recorded in the planning. Their biological and / or social characteristics are described in the management plan.</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.1 The forest owner has defined management rules for High Conservation Value Forests and stresses the special management of these forests in case of consultations with stakeholders.</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.2 The management plan indicates the specific measures for improving the characteristics identified.</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.3 All measures are described in the public summary of the planning.</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.4 If plantings are carried out in High Conservation Value Forests the specifications of the project "Sustainability and performance check of protection forests" (NAiS) are observed.Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: "High carbon stock" forests and their conversion are not specifically covered by legislation on conversions, nor by ND 003. However, the standard requires that where forests with "high conservation value" are identified, the value identified is improved and thereby conserved. Such forests of high conservation value include forests with "with priority function "nature and landscape" (protection of habitats of rare and sensitive animal and plant species, genetic reserves and nationally or regionally representative landscape structures)". As forests with such environmental values that are to be conserved are very likely to be also forests with high carbon stock, it can be argued that through the requirement for conservation of these values, the essence of this PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>
e) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.	YES	<p>See 8.1.4 a</p> <p>(...)2 In exceptional cases a deforestation permit may be granted if the applicant proves that there are important reasons for the deforestation that outweigh the interest of forest conservation (...)</p> <p>(...) 3 Important reasons do not include financial interests, such as the potentially profitable use of the land or the low-cost acquisition of land for non-forestry purposes. (...) If the authorities have to decide whether to grant permission for the construction of installations for the generation of renewable energies and for energy transportation and distribution, when weighing up interests the national interest in constructing such installations is to be considered equal to other national interests.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: A contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits is not mentioned per se by legislation, but it is apparent that the loss of forest is required to be outweighed by other meaningful interests of society. The PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as met.</p>
8.1.5 The standard requires that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion:		
a) is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority; and	YES	<p>Standard 2, 2.1 The environmental impact of forest management operations is evaluated prior to commencement. The operations are adjusted based on the evaluation of their effect on the respective natural resource. Evaluations include landscape conservation considerations as well as facilities for on-site processing.</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.1</p> <p>For operations that may cause inevitable environmental impairments^V the concrete potential effects are identified, protective measures are defined and implemented (e.g. soil protection).</p> <p>V Environmental impairment:</p> <p>The effects of the following forest operations: (...) • Afforestations;</p> <p>Federal Act on Forest Art. 7 Compensation for deforestation</p> <p>1 For all deforestation, compensation in kind must be provided in the same region and with species that are predominantly suited to the location.</p> <p>2 Measures may be implemented for the benefit of nature and landscape conservation instead of compensation in kind: a. in areas with increasing quotation of relevant text) forest area; b. in other areas by way of exception in order to conserve arable land and areas of ecological or landscape value.</p> <p>3 Compensation for deforestation may be dispensed with in the case of deforestation: a. of areas that have grown in the last 30 years in order to reclaim arable land; b. to guarantee flood protection and to rehabilitate waters; c. for the preservation and improvement of biotopes in accordance with Articles 18a and 18b paragraph 1 of the Federal Act of 1 July 19662 on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>4 If arable land that has been reclaimed in accordance with paragraph 3 letter is given a different use within 30 years, the compensation for deforestation must be provided retrospectively.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: ND 003, indicator 2.1.1, endnote V considers afforestation as an “environmental impairment” of forest operations. This indicator is linked to 2.1 of ND 003, which requires that “The environmental impact of forest management operations is evaluated prior to commencement. The operations are adjusted based on the evaluation of their effect on the respective natural resource. Evaluations include landscape conservation considerations as well as facilities for on-site processing.”</p> <p>In the Federal Forest Act, afforestation is referred to only as compensation mechanism required for officially authorized deforestations.</p> <p>Taking into account that according to FAO data afforestation in Switzerland is taking place only at an insignificant level, with under 800ha being afforested between 1994 and 2005 and 0ha being afforested between 2005 and 2011, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as sufficiently addressed.</p>
b) is established based on a decision-making basis where affected stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making on conversion through transparent and participatory consultation processes; and		<p>ND 003, Standard 1 Findings on potential social impact of forest management are integrated in forest management planning and in the formulation of the respective measures. Consensus-based solutions are developed with individuals or groups who are directly affected by management operations. This way, disputes can be avoided from the outset. In case of conflicts, appropriate dispute settlement procedures are employed.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) does not have negative impacts on threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) nonforest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species or other protected areas; and		<p>Afforestation is covered by Art. 7 " Compensation for deforestation" from the Swiss Forest Law.</p> <p>Federal Act on Forest Art. 7 Compensation for deforestation</p> <p>1 For all deforestation, compensation in kind must be provided in the same region and with species that are predominantly suited to the location.</p> <p>2 Measures may be implemented for the benefit of nature and landscape conservation instead of compensation in kind:</p> <p>a. in areas with increasing quotation of relevant text) forest area;</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>b. in other areas by way of exception in order to conserve arable land and areas of ecological or landscape value.</p> <p>3 Compensation for deforestation may be dispensed with in the case of deforestation:</p> <p>a. of areas that have grown in the last 30 years in order to reclaim arable land;</p> <p>b. to guarantee flood protection and to rehabilitate waters;</p> <p>c. for the preservation and improvement of biotopes in accordance with Articles 18a and 18b paragraph 1 of the Federal Act of 1 July 19662 on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: ND 003, indicator 2.1.1, endnote V considers afforestation as an “environmental impairment” of forest operations. This indicator is linked to 2.1 of ND 003, which requires that “The environmental impact of forest management operations is evaluated prior to commencement. The operations are adjusted based on the evaluation of their effect on the respective natural resource. Evaluations include landscape conservation considerations as well as facilities for on-site processing.”</p> <p>In the Federal Forest Act, afforestation is referred to only as compensation mechanism required for officially authorized deforestations.</p> <p>Taking into account that according to FAO data afforestation in Switzerland is taking place only at an insignificant level, with under 800ha being afforested between 1994 and 2005 and 0ha being afforested between 2005 and 2011, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as sufficiently addressed.</p>
d) entails a small proportion of the ecologically important non-forest ecosystem managed by an organisation; and		<p>See 8.1.5 c</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: See 8.1.5 c. The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>
e) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and		<p>See 8.1.5 c</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: See 8.1.5 c. The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>
f) makes a contribution to long-term		<p>See 8.1.5 c</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
conservation, economic, and social benefits.		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: See 8.1.5 c. The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.
8.1.6 The standard requires that if conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations is being considered, it must add economic, ecological, social and/or cultural value. Precondition of adding such value are circumstances where the conversion:		
a) is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority; and	YES	Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
b) is established based on a decision-making basis where affected stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making on conversion through transparent and participatory consultation processes; and	YES	Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
c) has a positive impact on long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and	YES	Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
d) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and	YES	Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
e) safeguards protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and	YES	Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
f) safeguards socio-economic functions of forests, including the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests and other cultural services; and	YES	Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
g) has a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices; and	YES	Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
h) is based on credible evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.	YES	Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.2 Criterion 2: Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality		
8.2.1 The standard requires that health and vitality of forest ecosystems shall be maintained or enhanced and degraded forest ecosystems shall be rehabilitated wherever and as far as economically feasible, by making best use of natural structures and processes and using preventive biological measures.	YES	<p>ND003, Standard 2</p> <p>2.2 The ecological functions and values of the forest are either maintained intact or enhanced, or restored.</p> <p>This includes: • forest regeneration and succession, • genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, • natural cycles that influence the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.2.2 The standard requires that adequate genetic, species and structural diversity shall be encouraged or maintained to enhance the stability, vitality and resilience of the forests to adverse environmental factors and strengthen natural regulation mechanisms.	YES	<p>ND003, Standard 2</p> <p>2.2 The ecological functions and values of the forest are either maintained intact or enhanced, or restored. This includes: • forest regeneration and succession, • genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, • natural cycles that influence the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.2.3 The standard requires that use of fire shall be limited to regions where fire is an essential tool in forest management for regeneration, wildfire protection and habitat management or a recognized practice of indigenous peoples. In these cases adequate management and control measures shall be taken.	YES	<p>ND 003, Checklist on laws G 5 Burning undried wood and logging residues (fresh branches, parts of the crown, bark etc.) is prohibited except on official order.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.2.4 The standard requires that appropriate forest management practices such as reforestation and afforestation with tree species and provenances that are suited to the site conditions or the use of tending, harvesting	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2,</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.4 The larger part of the stand contains tree species indigenous to the site.</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.6 If even-aged, pure stands alien to the site are likely to develop due to natural dynamics, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure a viable proportion of tree species of the natural forest</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
and transport techniques that minimise tree and/or soil damages shall be applied.		<p>community.</p> <p>2.3 In order to avoid soil erosion and damage to the remaining stand by harvesting operations, forest road construction and other mechanical interventions, adequate regulations are elaborated, documented and implemented.</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.3. Harvesting and wood storage are carried out under consideration of ground water and spring water protection zones. In zones S2 and S3 pesticides for stored round wood must not be applied. Furthermore motor vehicles must not be fuelled or parked in these zones. ND 003 Standard 3, Part A 3.3 The forest manager minimizes waste and avoids damage to other forest resources.</p> <p>Indicator 3.3.2 Logging practices are selected in a way to avoid stem breaks, timber devaluation and damages to the remaining stand.</p> <p>Indicator 3.8.2 After harvesting (carried out by the owner or through a third party) a monitoring of soil and stand damages is implemented. In case of damages exceeding the figures defined in the annual planning or in the contracts, suitable corrective actions are taken. Such excessive damages are documented and corrective actions defined.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.2.5 The standard requires that the indiscriminate disposal of waste on forest land shall be strictly avoided. Non-organic waste and litter shall be collected, stored in designated areas and removed in an environmentally-responsible manner. The spillage of oil or fuel during forest management operations shall be prevented. Emergency procedures for the minimisation of risk of environmental harm arising from the accidental spillage shall be in place.	YES	<p>Standard 3, Part A 3.3 The forest manager minimizes waste and avoids damage to other forest resources</p> <p>Checklist on laws: G 4: In case of unauthorized forest utilization or illegal activities (disposal of waste, vandalism etc.) by third parties the forest owner informs the appropriate authorities.</p> <p>G 15: The disposal of chemicals, containers, liquid and solid anorganic wastes including residues of fuel and oil is carried out in an environmentally sound way and outside the forest</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.2.6 The standard requires that integrated pest management, appropriate silviculture alternatives and other biological measures	YES	<p>ND 003, Checklist on laws</p> <p>G 12 Forest management promotes the development and adaptation of environmentally friendly methods</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
shall be preferred to minimise the use of pesticides.		<p>of pest control without chemicals.</p> <p>The areal use of pesticides is forbidden, especially the use of chemicals which are belonging to WHO types 1A or 1B. The only exceptions are on the one hand the punctual treatment of log piles outside groundwater protection zones if other economically reasonable measures are not possible, and on the other hand measures on official order. In this case, the user must possess a licence for use. Pesticides that are used must have permission by the Federal Office for the Environment (BAFU).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.2.7 The standard requires that any use of pesticides is documented.	YES	<p>ND 003 Checklist on laws;</p> <p>G 13 Pesticides used by the enterprise are documented on an up- to-date list that specifies trade name and active agent. The specific instruction manual must be followed. If the instructions do not specify the area of application, the method and amount of use, these details are documented on the same list. The quantity of used agent is documented.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.2.8 The standard requires that the WHO Class 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available. Any exception to the usage of WHO Class 1A and 1B pesticides shall be defined in the national/regional standard.	YES	<p>ND 003, Checklist on laws</p> <p>(...) The areal use of pesticides is forbidden, especially the use of chemicals which are belonging to WHO types 1A or 1B. The only exceptions are on the one hand the punctual treatment of log piles outside groundwater protection zones if other economically reasonable measures are not possible, and on the other hand measures on official order. In this case, the user must possess a licence for use. Pesticides that are used must have permission by the Federal Office for the Environment (BAFU).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.2.9 The standard requires that pesticides, such as chlorinated hydrocarbons whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their	YES	<p>Pesticides that are used must have permission by the Federal Office for the Environment (BAFU).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
intended use, and any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. Note: "Pesticides banned by international agreements" are defined in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.		
8.2.10 The standard requires that the use of pesticides shall follow the instructions given by the pesticide producer and be implemented with proper equipment by trained personnel.		G 13 Pesticides used by the enterprise are documented on an up-to-date list that specifies trade name and active agent. The specific instruction manual must be followed. If the instructions do not specify the area of application, the method and amount of use, these details are documented on the same list. The quantity of used agent is documented. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
8.2.11 The standard requires that where fertilisers are used, they shall be applied in a controlled manner and with due consideration for the environment. Fertilizer use shall not be an alternative to appropriate soil nutrient management.	YES	"Ordinance on the reduction of hazards by chemicals". Annex 2.6, Article 3.3.1(5) prohibits the use of fertilisers in forests. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
8.3 Criterion 3: Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood)		
8.3.1 The standard requires that the capability of forests to produce a range of wood and non-wood forest products and services on a sustainable basis shall be maintained.	YES	ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part A, 3.2 The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments indicator 3.1.1 The planning shows which products and services the forest enterprise intends to produce and where. This includes wood and non-wood products as well as environmental and other services. In doing so, the productivity of ecosystems is to be maintained. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.3.2 The standard requires that sound economic performance shall be pursued, taking into account possibilities for new markets and economic activities in connection with all relevant goods and services of forests.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management, Part A 3.2</p> <p>The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments.</p> <p>3.2.1 Forest enterprises are managed according to economic principles and hold the necessary management tools. The financial plan/ the balance of accounts show the allocation of resources for the implementation of the plan.</p> <p>3.2.3 The services supplied by the forest manager and income from public ecological services as well as income from the marketing of nature conservation services and secondary forest products are documented.</p> <p>3.3 The forest manager minimizes waste and avoids damage to other forest resources.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.3.3 The standard requires that management, harvesting and regeneration operations shall be carried out at a time, and in a way, that does not reduce the productive capacity of the site, for example by avoiding damage to soil and retained stands and trees.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part A,</p> <p>3.1 The quantity of harvested forest products is in accordance with permanently sustainable levels. The forest manager compiles a list of the certified forest products.</p> <p>3.3 The forest manager minimizes waste and avoids damage to other forest resources.</p> <p>Standard 2</p> <p>2.3 In order to avoid soil erosion and damage to the remaining stand by harvesting operations, forest road construction and other mechanical interventions, adequate regulations are elaborated, documented and implemented.</p> <p>Indicator 3.3.2 Logging practices are selected in a way to avoid stem breaks, timber devaluation and damages to the remaining stand.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.3.4 The standard requires that harvesting levels of both wood and non-wood forest products shall not exceed a rate that can be sustained in the long term, and optimum use shall be made of the harvested products.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 Management Part A</p> <p>3.1 The quantity of harvested forest products is in accordance with permanently sustainable levels. The forest manager compiles a list of the certified forest products.</p> <p>3.2 The forest manager strives towards economic profitability. He takes into account all environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and maintains the full productivity of the ecosystems by ensuring the necessary investments.</p> <p>3.3 The forest manager minimizes waste and avoids damage to other forest resources.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.3.5 The standard requires that adequate infrastructure such as roads, skid tracks or bridges shall be planned, established and maintained to ensure efficient delivery of goods and services while minimising negative impacts on the environment.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard</p> <p>2 2.1 The environmental impact of forest management operations is evaluated prior to commencement. The operations are adjusted based on the evaluation of their effect on the respective natural resource. Evaluations include landscape conservation considerations as well as facilities for on-site processing.</p> <p>2.3 In order to avoid soil erosion and damage to the remaining stand by harvesting operations, forest road construction and other mechanical interventions, adequate regulations are elaborated, documented and implemented. The protection of water resources is guaranteed. The construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure (excluding strip roads (skid trails, etc.)) shall be carried out in a manner that minimises bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.4 Criterion 4: Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems		
8.4.1 The standard requires that management planning shall aim to maintain, conserve or enhance biodiversity on landscape, ecosystem, species and genetic levels.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2 Forest ecosystem</p> <p>Objective: Forest management conserves biological diversity and its associated values like water resources, soil fertility and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes. That way, it maintains the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>2.2 The ecological functions and values of the forest are either maintained intact or enhanced, or restored. This includes: • forest regeneration and succession, • genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, • natural cycles that influence the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p> <p>Indicator 2.4.3 Known populations of endangered species and responsibility species and their habitats, as well as legally protected areas (e.g. nature reserves) are described in the planning and depicted on maps. The forest manager periodically up-dates the data (e.g. inventories) on endangered species and their biotopes.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
<p>8.4.2 The standard requires that inventory, mapping and planning of forest resources shall identify, protect, conserve or set aside ecologically important forest areas.</p> <p>Note: This does not prohibit forest management activities that do not damage the important ecologic values of those biotopes.</p>	YES	<p>2.5 Forests of high conservation value (forests disclosed with the priority functions “protection against natural hazards” or “nature and landscape”) are registered in the required WEP (forest development plan) lists and inventories.</p> <p>Indicator 2.5.1 After consultation with experts and stakeholders the forest manager notes, surveys, and depicts High Conservation Value Forests on maps. They comprise: • Forests with priority function “protection against natural hazards” (protection of settlements and infrastructure) • Naturally historically valuable forests with priority function “nature and landscape” (protection of habitats of rare and sensitive animal and plant species, genetic reserves and nationally or regionally representative landscape structures).</p> <p>Indicator 2.5.2 The specific requirements for High Conservation Value Forests are recorded in the planning. Their biological and / or social characteristics are described in the management plan.</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.1 The forest owner has defined management rules for High Conservation Value Forests and stresses the special management of these forests in case of consultations with stakeholders.</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.2 The management plan indicates the specific measures for improving the characteristics identified.</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.3 All measures are described in the public summary of the planning.</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.4 If plantings are carried out in High Conservation Value Forests the specifications of the project “Sustainability and performance check of protection forests” (NAiS) are observed.</p> <p>Indicator 2.4.3 Known populations of endangered species and responsibility species and their habitats, as</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>well as legally protected areas (e.g. nature reserves) are described in the planning and depicted on maps. The forest manager periodically up-dates the data (e.g. inventories) on endangered species and their biotopes.</p> <p>Indicator 3.4.1 The plans and supporting documents contain the following details/ maps: • Forest area and forest map (public, private, certified), • Ownership situation and usage rights, • Mapping of biotopes, • Site conditions (with reference to site maps and recommendations available in the canton), • Information concerning habitats worthy of protection and of national, cantonal and regional importance, • game reserves, no-hunting zones, • Groundwater protection zones, • Recreation and tourism areas, • Protective forests, • Natural and special forest reserves, • WEP of priority functions and objects of special function, mapping of forest functions, Forest opening-up/ skid-trail design.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: While the standard does not literally require the protection and conservation of “high conservation value forests”, it does require that specific measures are taken to improve the high value characteristics identified. This can be understood as de facto protecting and conserving the high conservation value of the concerned forest. The PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as met.</p>
<p>8.4.3 The standard requires that protected, threatened and endangered plant and animal species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures shall be taken for their protection and, where relevant, to increase their population.</p> <p>Note: The requirement does not preclude trade according to CITES requirements.</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2</p> <p>2.4 Safeguards exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats. Conservation zones and protection areas are established on a scale appropriate to the extent and intensity of forest management and to the uniqueness of the affected resources (e.g. nesting and feeding habitats).</p> <p>Indicator 2.4.3 Known populations of endangered species and responsibility species and their habitats, as well as legally protected areas (e.g. nature reserves) are described in the planning and depicted on maps. The forest manager periodically up-dates the data (e.g. inventories) on endangered species and their biotopes.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.4.4 The standard requires that successful regeneration shall be ensured through natural regeneration or planting that is adequate to	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.3 Forest regeneration proceeds naturally. Possible exceptions from this basic principle are: •</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
ensure the quantity and quality of the forest resources.		<p>Artificial regeneration for the conversion of stands not adapted to the site including the avoidance of natural regeneration of species/provenances that are not site adapted • Promotion of rare autochthonous tree species, for the establishment of stands under difficult conditions • Maintenance of protective functions • Restoration of degraded forest stands • Supplementary plantings to reach economic goals, unless contrary to the requirements 2.2.4 • Where planting is inevitable, only plant and seed material from known and adapted provenances will be used. • Genetically modified organisms are not used. 2.2.4 The larger part of the stand contains tree species indigenous to the site</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
<p>8.4.5 The standard requires that for reforestation and afforestation origins of native species that are well-adapted to site conditions shall be preferred. Only those introduced species, provenances or varieties shall be used whose impacts on the ecosystem and on the genetic integrity of native species and local provenances have been scientifically evaluated, and if negative impacts can be avoided or minimised.</p> <p>Note: CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction, and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species are recognised as guidance for avoidance of invasive species.</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.3 Forest regeneration proceeds naturally. Possible exceptions from this basic principle are: • Artificial regeneration for the conversion of stands not adapted to the site including the avoidance of natural regeneration of species/provenances that are not site adapted • Promotion of rare autochthonous tree species, for the establishment of stands under difficult conditions • Maintenance of protective functions • Restoration of degraded forest stands • Supplementary plantings to reach economic goals, unless contrary to the requirements 2.2.4 • Where planting is inevitable, only plant and seed material from known and adapted provenances will be used. • Genetically modified organisms are not used. 2.2.4 The larger part of the stand contains tree species indigenous to the site</p> <p>Indicator 2.7.1 Tree species not adapted to the site are allowed on a small scale (individual trees or small groups of them) that does not compromise the long-term development to a natural forest association.</p> <p>Standard 2, 2.7 The planting of exotic species is in line with the recommendations of site maps and is carefully monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.4.6 The standard requires that afforestation, reforestation and other tree planting activities that contribute to the improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity shall be promoted.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2, Objective: Forest management conserves biological diversity (...) and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes. That way, it maintains the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>2.2 The ecological functions and values of the forest are either maintained intact or enhanced, or restored. This includes: • forest regeneration and succession, • genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, • natural cycles that influence the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p> <p>Federal Act on Forests Art 1 Chapter 1 General Provisions Art. 1 Aim 1 T</p> <p>This Act is intended to: a. conserve the forest in its area and spatial distribution; b. protect the forest as a near natural community; c. ensure that the forest can fulfil its functions, in particular its protective, social and economic functions (forest functions); d. promote and maintain the forestry sector. 2 It is furthermore intended to contribute to the protection of human life and important material assets against avalanches, landslides, erosion and rockfall (natural events).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
<p>8.4.7 The standard requires that genetically-modified trees shall not be used.</p> <p>Note: The restriction on the usage of genetically-modified trees has been adopted by the PEFC General Assembly based on the Precautionary Principle. Until enough scientific data on genetically modified trees indicates that impacts on human and animal health and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than, those presented by trees genetically improved by traditional methods, no genetically-modified trees will be used.</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2 2.2.3 Genetically modified organisms are not used</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
<p>8.4.8 The standard requires that a diversity of both horizontal and vertical structures and the diversity of species such as mixed stands shall be promoted, where appropriate. The practices shall also aim to maintain or restore landscape diversity.</p>	YES	<p>ND003, Standard 2</p> <p>2.2.9 At all altitudes the structural diversity is enhanced and the potential for natural regeneration is maintained.</p> <p>ND 003, Standard 2, Objective: Forest management conserves biological diversity (...) and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes. That way, it maintains the ecological functions and the integrity of the</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>forest.</p> <p>2.2 The ecological functions and values of the forest are either maintained intact or enhanced, or restored. This includes: • forest regeneration and succession, • genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, • natural cycles that influence the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.4.9 The standard requires that traditional management practices that create valuable ecosystems on appropriate sites shall be supported, where appropriate.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1</p> <p>1.2 (...) Relevant experience and knowledge of local forest owners and residents is used most effectively.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: In the context of Switzerland this requirement of ND003 can be considered as sufficient to address the PEFC benchmark requirement.</p>
8.4.10 The standard requires that tending and harvesting operations shall be conducted in a way that does not cause lasting damage to ecosystems. Wherever possible, practical measures shall be taken to maintain or improve biological diversity.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, Part A 3.3 The forest manager minimizes waste and avoids damage to other forest resources.</p> <p>Indicators 3.3.1 Appropriate measures for the protection of the remaining stand, natural regeneration, soil and water quality and wildlife are undertaken.</p> <p>3.3.2 Logging practices are selected in a way to avoid stem breaks, timber devaluation and damages to the remaining stand.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.4.11 The standard requires that infrastructure shall be planned and constructed in a way that minimizes damage to ecosystems, especially to rare, sensitive or representative ecosystems and genetic reserves, and that takes threatened or other key species – in particular their migration patterns – into consideration.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.1 For operations that may cause inevitable environmental impairments the concrete potential effects are identified, protective measures are defined and implemented (...).</p> <p>Indicator 2.5.1 After consultation with experts and stakeholders the forest manager notes, surveys, and depicts High Conservation Value Forests on maps. They comprise: • Forests with priority function “protection against natural hazards” (protection of settlements and infrastructure) • Naturally historically valuable forests with priority function “nature and landscape” (protection of habitats of rare and sensitive</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>animal and plant species, genetic reserves and nationally or regionally representative landscape structures).</p> <p>Indicator 2.4.3 Known populations of endangered species and responsibility species and their habitats, as well as legally protected areas (e.g. nature reserves) are described in the planning and depicted on maps. The forest manager periodically up-dates the data (e.g. inventories) on endangered species and their biotopes.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: ND003 does not specifically connect infrastructure planning and the protection of threatened or key species. However, there are several requirements for the protection of threatened species which in consequence influence and limit the planning and establishment of infrastructure. The PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as met.</p>
8.4.12 The standard requires that, with due regard to management objectives, measures shall be taken to control the pressure of animal populations on forest regeneration and growth as well as on biodiversity.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2,</p> <p>Indicator 2.4.7 The forest owner aims for a wildlife density which is tolerable for the ecosystem and which allows all main tree species to regenerate naturally. To achieve this, he cooperates with hunters and hunting authorities.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.4.13 The standard requires that standing and fallen dead wood, hollow trees, old groves and rare tree species shall be left in quantities and distribution necessary to safeguard biological diversity, taking into account the potential effect on the health and stability of forests and on surrounding ecosystems.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.7 The forest owner leaves dead and hollow trees (biotope trees) standing, provided they do not represent a serious safety risk. Lying deadwood (except from wind throw) is principally left lying in the stand.</p> <p>2.2.8 Old forest patches are identified during the planning in order to promote and support special habitats and to enable natural dynamics in the forest. Old forest patches remain in the stand longer than the normal rotation period possibly up to the dead wood phase or are substituted within another stand reaching this stage of age.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.5 Criterion 5: Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)		
8.5.1 The standard requires that protective functions of forests for society, such as their potential role in erosion control, flood prevention, water purification, climate regulation, carbon sequestration and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services shall be maintained or enhanced.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2</p> <p>2.3 In order to avoid soil erosion and damage to the remaining stand by harvesting operations, forest road construction and other mechanical interventions, adequate regulations are elaborated, documented and implemented. The protection of water resources is guaranteed. The construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure (excluding strip roads (skid trails, etc.)) shall be carried out in a manner that minimises bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained.</p> <p>2.5 Forests of high conservation value (forests disclosed with the priority functions “protection against natural hazards” or “nature and landscape”) are registered in the required WEP (forest development plan) lists and inventories.</p> <p>2.6 The management plan contains practical precautional measures to maintain or achieve the objectives of the protective function. Annual internal audits are carried out to check and evaluate the effectiveness of the applied measures.</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.3 Forest regeneration proceeds naturally. Possible exceptions from this basic principle are: (...) Maintenance of protective functions</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.5 As long as the protective function is guaranteed, the forest owner commits himself to tolerate the natural dynamics occurring in his forest, not to introduce drainage systems and not to maintain existing drainage networks.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.5.2 The standard requires that areas that fulfil specific and recognised protective functions for society shall be mapped, and forest management plans and operations shall ensure the maintenance or enhancement of these functions.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2</p> <p>Indicator 3.4.1 The plans and supporting documents contain the following details/ maps: (...) • Groundwater protection zones (...) • Protective forests</p> <p>2.3 In order to avoid soil erosion and damage to the remaining stand by harvesting operations, forest road construction and other mechanical interventions, adequate regulations are elaborated, documented and implemented. The protection of water resources is guaranteed. The construction of roads, bridges and</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>other infrastructure (excluding strip roads (skid trails, etc.)) shall be carried out in a manner that minimises bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained.</p> <p>2.5 Forests of high conservation value (forests disclosed with the priority functions “protection against natural hazards” or “nature and landscape”) are registered in the required WEP (forest development plan) lists and inventories.</p> <p>2.6 The management plan contains practical precautional measures to maintain or achieve the objectives of the protective function. Annual internal audits are carried out to check and evaluate the effectiveness of the applied measures.</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.3 Forest regeneration proceeds naturally. Possible exceptions from this basic principle are: (...) Maintenance of protective functions</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.5 As long as the protective function is guaranteed, the forest owner commits himself to tolerate the natural dynamics occurring in his forest, not to introduce drainage systems and not to maintain existing drainage networks.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
<p>8.5.3 The standard requires that special care shall be given to forestry operations on sensitive soils and erosion-prone areas as well as in areas where operations might lead to excessive erosion of soil into watercourses. Techniques applied and the machinery used shall be suitable for such areas. Special measures shall be taken to minimise the pressure of animal populations on these areas.</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 2,</p> <p>Indicators 2.3.1 Driving is restricted to forest roads and skid trails. There is no extensive driving allowed on forest floor. Skid trail systems are established adapted to the terrain in a way that driving on the forest floor is minimized. The minimum distance between skid trails is 20 metres. The network of skid trails is documented in maps (at least sketched).</p> <p>2.3.2 Tire marks on skid trails, which destroy the structure and fertility of the soil near and under the surface in the long term, must be prevented (tire mark type III according to the guidelines of the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research - WSL), or at least minimised (tire mark type II according to the WSL guidelines). The prohibition of extensive driving also applies to calamity areas.</p> <p>2.3.3 Harvesting and wood storage are carried out under consideration of ground water and spring water protection zones. In zones S2 and S3 pesticides for stored round wood must not be applied. Furthermore motor vehicles must not be fuelled or parked in these zones</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
8.5.4 The standard requires that special care shall be given to forestry operations in forest areas with water protection functions to avoid adverse effects on the quality and quantity of water resources. Inappropriate use of chemicals or other harmful substances or inappropriate silvicultural practices influencing water quality in a harmful way shall be avoided. Downstream water balance and water quality shall not be significantly affected by the operations.	YES	ND 003, Standard 2, Indicators 2.3.1 Driving is restricted to forest roads and skid trails. There is no extensive driving allowed on forest floor. Skid trail systems are established adapted to the terrain in a way that driving on the forest floor is minimized. The minimum distance between skid trails is 20 metres. The network of skid trails is documented in maps (at least sketched). 2.3.2 Tire marks on skid trails, which destroy the structure and fertility of the soil near and under the surface in the long term, must be prevented (tire mark type III according to the guidelines of the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research - WSL), or at least minimised (tire mark type II according to the WSL guidelines). The prohibition of extensive driving also applies to calamity areas. 2.3.3 Harvesting and wood storage are carried out under consideration of ground water and spring water protection zones. In zones S2 and S3 pesticides for stored round wood must not be applied. Furthermore motor vehicles must not be fuelled or parked in these zones Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
8.5.5 The standard requires that construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure shall be carried out in a manner that minimises bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained.	YES	ND 003, Standard 2 2.3 In order to avoid soil erosion and damage to the remaining stand by harvesting operations, forest road construction and other mechanical interventions, adequate regulations are elaborated, documented and implemented. The protection of water resources is guaranteed. The construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure (excluding strip roads (skid trails, etc.)) shall be carried out in a manner that minimises bare soil exposure, avoids the introduction of soil into watercourses and preserves the natural level and function of water courses and river beds. Proper road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met
8.6 Criterion 6: Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of socio-economic functions and conditions		

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.6.1 The standard requires that forest management planning shall aim to respect all socio-economic functions of forests.	YES	<p>ND 003 Standard 3</p> <p>Management Part A Benefits from the forest Objective:</p> <p>Forest management encourages the sustainable and efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and provide a wide range of environmental and social benefits.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.6.2 The standard requires that adequate public access to forests for the purpose of recreation shall be provided, taking into account respect for ownership rights, safety and the rights of others, the effects on forest resources and ecosystems, as well as compatibility with other functions of the forest.	YES	<p>Federal Act on Forest Section 3 Pedestrian and Vehicular Access to the Forest Art. 14 Accessibility</p> <p>1 The cantons ensure that the forest is accessible to the general public.</p> <p>2 Where necessary for the conservation of the forest or other public interests, such as the protection of wild flora and fauna, the cantons shall: a. restrict accessibility to certain forest areas; b. subject the staging of major events in the forest to obtaining a permit</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>
8.6.3 The standard requires that sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meeting the needs of indigenous peoples and local communities (e.g. health, subsistence) shall be protected or managed in a way that takes due regard of the significance of the site.	YES	<p>Indicator G 1 Forest owner and forest manager are aware of the sources of information, in order to access all relevant legal regulations.</p> <p>List of relevant legislation: (...) Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act (NHG)</p> <p>Indicator 2.6.5 Tree monuments, exceptional individual trees, and culturally and historically important sites in the forest are preserved.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: Considering that there are no Indigenous Peoples in Switzerland, the PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
8.6.4 The standard requires that management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the	YES	<p>ND003, Standard 1, Objective:</p> <p>Forest management operations maintain or enhance the social and economic well-being of forest workers</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
forest management area, where appropriate supported by engagement with local communities and indigenous peoples.		<p>and local communities.</p> <p>1.1 Employment opportunities are offered to the local population and preference is given to local enterprises and competitors in case of comparable tenders. All employees are provided with sufficient information regarding working technique, protective equipment, sustainable forest management etc. They are supported in further education.</p> <p>1.2 (...) Relevant experience and knowledge of local forest owners and residents is used most effectively.</p> <p>1.4 Findings on potential social impact of forest management are integrated in forest management planning and in the formulation of the respective measures. (...)</p> <p>ND003, Standard 3, Part A Forest management encourages the sustainable and efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and provide a wide range of environmental and social benefits.</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.2 The forest can be used by local schools and educational establishments for the purpose of environmental education.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
8.6.5 The standard requires that the best use shall be made of forest-related experience and traditional knowledge, innovations and practices such as those of forest owners, NGOs, local communities, and indigenous peoples. Equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge shall be encouraged.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1</p> <p>1.2 (...) Relevant experience and knowledge of local forest owners and residents is used most effectively.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: In the context of Switzerland this requirement of ND003 can be considered as sufficient to address the PEFC benchmark requirement.</p>
8.6.6 The standard requires that management shall give due regard to the role of forestry in local economies. Special consideration shall be given to new opportunities for training and employment of local people, including	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 1</p> <p>1.1 Employment opportunities are offered to the local population and preference is given to local enterprises and competitors in case of comparable tenders. All employees are provided with sufficient information regarding working technique, protective equipment, sustainable forest management etc. They</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
indigenous peoples.		are supported in further education. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
8.6.7 The standard requires that forest management shall contribute to research activities and data collection needed for sustainable forest management or support relevant research activities carried out by other organisations, as appropriate.	YES	ND003, Standard 1 1.1.2 The forest can be used by local schools and educational establishments for the purpose of environmental education. Federal Act on Forest: Art. 31 Research and development 1 The Confederation may commission or provide financial assistance for the following purposes: a. research on the forest; b. research and development of measures for the protection of the forest against harmful effects; c. research and development of measures aimed at protecting human life and significant material assets against natural events; d. research and development of measures to boost the market for wood and the use of wood. 2 It may establish and operate research institutes. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9. Performance evaluation		
9.1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation		
9.1.1 The standard requires that monitoring of forest resources and evaluation of their management, including ecological, social and economic effects, shall be periodically performed, and results fed back into the planning process.	YES	ND 003, Standard 3 Part C Operational management Objective: The forest condition, the yields of forest products, the chain of custody as well as the operational measures and their social and ecological impact are monitored and documented. 3.1 Operational audits are carried out in a way and at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem. The audits are conducted regularly and in a transparent manner to ensure that periodic reviews of the results show possible changes. 1.4 Findings on potential social impact of forest management are integrated in forest management planning and in the formulation of the respective measures. 2.1 The environmental impact of forest management operations is evaluated prior to commencement.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>The operations are adjusted based on the evaluation of their effect on the respective natural resource. Evaluations include landscape conservation considerations as well as facilities for on-site processing.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
9.1.2 The standard requires that health and vitality of forests shall be periodically monitored, especially key biotic and abiotic factors that potentially affect health and vitality of forest ecosystems, such as pests, diseases, overgrazing and overstocking, fire, and damage caused by climatic factors, air pollutants or by forest management operations.	YES	<p>Indicator 3.4.5 Forest conditions and development trends are monitored according to procedures used in the respective canton (e.g. data of the Swiss National Forest Inventory, LFI).</p> <p>Indicator 3.8.4 Invasive neophytes listed in the Black List are monitored in the forest as well and possibly suppressed (with the exception of common black locust). The concerned forest owners are to be informed.</p> <p>2.6 The management plan contains practical precautional measures to maintain or achieve the objectives of the protective function. Annual internal audits are carried out to check and evaluate the effectiveness of the applied measures.</p> <p>3.7 Operational audits are carried out in a way and at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem. The audits are conducted regularly and in a transparent manner to ensure that periodic reviews of the results show possible changes.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
9.1.3 The standard requires that where it is the responsibility of the forest owner/manager and included in forest management, the use of non-wood forest products, including hunting and fishing, shall be regulated, monitored and controlled.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.1 The planning shows which products and services the forest enterprise intends to produce and where. This includes wood and non-wood products as well as environmental and other services. In doing so, the productivity of ecosystems is to be maintained.</p> <p>Part C Operational management</p> <p>Objective: The (...) yields of forest products (...) are monitored and documented.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
9.1.4 The standard requires that working conditions shall be regularly monitored and adapted as necessary.	YES	<p>Standard 1, Objective: Forest management operations maintain or enhance the social and economic well-being of forest workers (...).</p> <p>1.2 Forest management operations are carried out in accordance with or exceeding relevant legislation and regulations regarding health, safety and rights (including the ILO conventions) of all employees. (...)</p> <p>1.3 The forest personnel and other forest workers are adequately trained and instructed in order to guarantee a professional implementation of planned measures.</p> <p>1.4 Findings on potential social impact of forest management are integrated in forest management planning and in the formulation of the respective measures. (...)</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.2 All persons working in the forest , which do not come under the Regulations for Worker's Safety of the Accident Insurance Law (UVG), can prove an education and training on job safety and first aid. The training courses must be proven by appropriate attestations and / or confirmations.</p> <p>ND 003, Standard 1 Indicator 1.3.3 Annual appraisal interviews are conducted to agree on objectives and measures (e.g. on further education).</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is sufficiently addressed.</p>
9.2 Internal audit		
9.2.1 Objectives		
The standard requires that an internal audit programme at planned intervals shall provide information on whether the management system		
a) conforms to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the organisation's requirements for its management system; • the requirements of the national sustainable forest management standard 	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3,</p> <p>3.7 "Operational audits are carried out in a way and at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem. The audits are conducted regularly and in a transparent manner to ensure that periodic reviews of the results show possible changes. This internal review system revises the forest enterprise's management plan and management system to prove conformity to the organisation's requirements for its management system and the requirements of the national sustainable forest management standard. The enterprise shall provide information on whether the management system is effectively implemented and maintained.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		(...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) is effectively implemented and maintained.	YES	ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 "Operational audits are carried out in a way and at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem. The audits are conducted regularly and in a transparent manner to ensure that periodic reviews of the results show possible changes. This internal review system revises the forest enterprise's management plan and management system to prove conformity to the organisation's requirements for its management system and the requirements of the national sustainable forest management standard. The enterprise shall provide information on whether the management system is effectively implemented and maintained. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.2.2 Organisation The standard requires that the organisation shall:		
a) plan, establish, implement and maintain an audit programme(s) including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting, which shall take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous audits;	YES	ND 003, Part C 3.7 (...) "The organisation shall provide information on whether the management system is effectively implemented and maintained. These internal audits shall be carried out by the organisation itself the following shall be defined: a) the frequency of these internal operational audits b) the methods, c) responsibilities, d) planning requirements and reporting taking into account the processes required and the results of previous audits (...) The operational audit shall include • the results and status of actions from previous audits (internal and external by independent assessors) • changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system • information on the organisation's performance, including trends in: • nonconformities and corrective actions; • monitoring and measurement results; • audit results; • opportunities for continual improvement. The outputs of the operational audit shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the management system and the results shall be documented."

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) define the audit criteria and scope for each audit;	YES	ND 003, Part C 3.7 (...) "The organisation shall provide information on whether the management system is effectively implemented and maintained. These internal audits shall be carried out by the organisation itself the following shall be defined: (...) e) audit criteria and scope of each audit." Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) select the auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;	YES	ND 003, Part C 3.7 (...) "The auditors shall be selected and audits conducted to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process. The auditors can be external consultants or enterprise-internals." (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) ensure that the results of the audits are reported to relevant management;	YES	ND 003, Part C 3.7 (...) "It shall be ensured, that the results of the audits are reported to the relevant management." (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
e) retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.	YES	ND 003, Part C 3.7 (...) "Documented information shall be retained as evidence of the Implementation of the audit program and the audit results." (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3 Management review		
9.3.1 The standard requires that an annual	NO	ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 "Operational audits are carried out in a way and at a frequency appropriate to

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
management review shall at least include:		<p>the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem. The audits are conducted regularly and in a transparent manner to ensure that periodic reviews of the results show possible changes.” (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p> <p>Justification: While the requirements for internal operational auditing can be considered as requirements for a “management review, it is required that the internal audit/review is conducted only “regularly” and “and at a frequency appropriate to the extent and the intensity of management operations and on the complexity and sensitivity of the particular ecosystem”.</p> <p>As, however, the PEFC benchmark requires an “annual” review, not just a “regular” one, the PEFC benchmark is not fully met.</p>
a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 (...) The operational audit shall include i. the results and status of actions from previous audits (internal and external) (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 (...) “The operational audit shall include (...) ii. changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system” (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) information on the organisation’s performance, including trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nonconformities and corrective actions; • monitoring and measurement results; • audit results; 	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 (...) “The operational audit shall include (...) “iii. information on the organisation’s performance, including trends in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. nonconformities and corrective actions; 2. monitoring and measurement results; 3. audit results” (...) <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) opportunities for continual improvement	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 (...) "The operational audit shall include (...) iv. opportunities for continual improvement."</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
9.3.2 The standard requires that the outputs of the management review shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the management system.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 (...) "The outputs of the operational audit shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the management system and the results shall be documented."</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
9.3.3 The standard requires that documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews shall be retained.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.7 (...) "The outputs of the operational audit shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the management system and the results shall be documented."</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
10. Improvement		
10.1 Nonconformity and corrective action		
10.1.1 The standard requires that when a nonconformity occurs, the organisation shall:		
<p>a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable:</p> <p>i. take action to control and correct it;</p> <p>ii. deal with the consequences;</p>	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.12 (...) "In any case of identified nonconformities, the forest enterprise shall review the nonconformity, determine its causes and if similar nonconformities exist or could potentially occur. Any action needed to address the nonconformity shall be taken and its effectiveness reviewed."</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) evaluate the need for action to eliminate the causes of the nonconformity, in order that it	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.12 (...) "In any case of identified nonconformities, the forest enterprise shall review the nonconformity, determine its causes and if similar nonconformities exist or could potentially occur."</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>does not recur or occur elsewhere, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. reviewing the nonconformity; ii. determining the causes of the nonconformity; iii. determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur; 		<p>Any action needed to address the nonconformity shall be taken and its effectiveness reviewed.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) implement any action needed;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.12 (...) “In the case of minor non-conformities the applicant respectively the forest owner is obliged to take or initiate measures, which will produce relief if possible and / or will preclude a continuation or repetition.” (...) “In any case of identified nonconformities, the forest enterprise shall review the nonconformity, determine its causes and if similar nonconformities exist or could potentially occur. Any action needed to address the nonconformity shall be taken and its effectiveness reviewed.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.12 (...) “In any case of identified nonconformities, the forest enterprise shall review the nonconformity, determine its causes and if similar nonconformities exist or could potentially occur. Any action needed to address the nonconformity shall be taken and its effectiveness reviewed.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
e) make changes to the management system, if necessary.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.12 (...)</p> <p>“In the case of minor non-conformities the applicant respectively the forest owner is obliged to take or initiate measures, which will produce relief if possible and / or will preclude a continuation or repetition. (...) “If systematic non-conformities challenge the efficiency of the whole system, corrective actions will have to be agreed upon with the applicant for the entire spatial unit. The applicant informs the certification body about the implementation of the corrective measures within the fixed time limit.” (...)</p> <p>“In any case of identified nonconformities, the forest enterprise shall review the nonconformity, determine its causes and if similar nonconformities exist or could potentially occur. Any action needed to address</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>the nonconformity shall be taken and its effectiveness reviewed.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The preclusion of a continuation or repetition of nonconformities that is required by ND003 implies that changes to the management system are made. The PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as met.</p>
10.1.2 The standard requires that corrective actions shall be appropriate to the effects of the nonconformities encountered.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.12 (...)</p> <p>“In the case of minor non-conformities the applicant respectively the forest owner is obliged to take or initiate measures, which will produce relief if possible and / or will preclude a continuation or repetition. (...) “If systematic non-conformities challenge the efficiency of the whole system, corrective actions will have to be agreed upon with the applicant for the entire spatial unit. The applicant informs the certification body about the implementation of the corrective measures within the fixed time limit.” (...)</p> <p>“In any case of identified nonconformities, the forest enterprise shall review the nonconformity, determine its causes and if similar nonconformities exist or could potentially occur. Any action needed to address the nonconformity shall be taken and its effectiveness reviewed.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The preclusion of a continuation or repetition of the nonconformity that is required by ND003 implies that corrective actions have been appropriate. The PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as met.</p>
10.1.3 The standard requires that the organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of:		
a) the nature of the nonconformities and any subsequent actions taken;	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3 3.13 The records according to ch. 3.8 to 3.12 will be kept for at least 5 years.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) the results of any corrective action.	YES	<p>ND 003, Standard 3, 3.13 “The records according to ch.3.8 to 3.12 will be kept for at least 5 years.”</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>10.2 Continual improvement</p> <p>The standard requires that the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the sustainable forest management system and the sustainable management of the forest shall be continuously improved.</p>	YES	<p>ND003, Scope</p> <p>(...) "The suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the sustainable forest management system and the sustainable management of the forest shall be continuously improved by the forest owner/manager."</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC Checklist - Group Forest Management Certification (PEFC ST 1002:2018)

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
4. Context of the group organisation		
<p>4.1 Understanding the group organisation and its context</p> <p>The standard shall define how relevant external and internal issues of the group organisation shall be determined. A general framework for the group organisation shall be determined:</p>		
a) regional groups: group of forest owners/managers defined by regional borders and	YES	<p>ND 001 4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms</p> <p>Forest owners , organisations of forest owners (e.g. forestry associations) or forest managers with the forest area they are responsible for managing can form a group.</p> <p>The formation of the group can be based on regional borders, similarities regarding their managed forest areas or other reasonable circumstances.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) other groups and/or	YES	<p>ND 001 4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms</p> <p>(...) The formation of the group can be based on regional borders, similarities regarding their managed forest areas or other reasonable circumstances.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) whether there are any other specific circumstances which influence the implementation of the group management system.	YES	<p>ND 001 4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms</p> <p>(...) The formation of the group can be based on regional borders, similarities regarding their managed forest areas or other reasonable circumstances.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of affected stakeholders		
4.2.1 The standard requires that the group organisation shall identify:		
a) the affected stakeholders that are relevant for the group management system and	YES	<p>ND 001 4.1 To elaborate the group management system, representatives of the group organisation and/or the group representation shall identify the affected stakeholders that are relevant for the group management system and the relevant expectations of these affected stakeholders and consider them in the development of an adequate group management system.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) the relevant expectations of these affected stakeholders.	YES	<p>ND 001 4.1 To elaborate the group management system, representatives of the group organisation and/or the group representation shall identify the affected stakeholders that are relevant for the group management system and the relevant expectations of these affected stakeholders and consider them in the development of an adequate group management system.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
4.3 Determining the scope of the group management system		
4.3.1 The standard shall provide definitions relating to the following terms, which are in conformity with the definitions of those terms presented in chapter 3:		
a) the group organisation and the elements of the group organisation (group entity and participant),	YES	<p>4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms</p> <p>Forest owners¹, organisations of forest owners (e.g. forestry associations) or forest managers with the forest area they are responsible for managing can form a group. [...] For the purposes of implementation of the sustainable forest management standard and its group certification, the group is represented by the group representation.</p> <p>The term “the group” covers all members (participants) of the group, while “the group organisation” covers all members of the group including the group representation². (²A legal entity that represents the participants, with overall responsibility for ensuring the conformity of forest management in the certified area to the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system. The structure of the group representation should follow the operations,</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<p>number of participants and other basic conditions for the group organisation in order to be representative of the group. It may be represented by one person.)</p> <p>4.3.3.1 Options for membership</p> <p>The following persons or organisations can be group members: a) Forest owners b) Forest enterprises, forest districts and forest managers as representatives of the areas they manage c) Organisations of forest owners (e.g. forestry associations)</p> <p>(¹The term “forest owners” includes forest leaseholders.)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) the certified area,	YES	<p>4.1 Overview and Definition of the group and relevant terms (...)</p> <p>The forest area of these persons or organisations forming a group shall be clearly and definitely delimited. In principle, the whole forest area, which is managed by a person or organisation which is member of the group, shall be included in the forest area of the group.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) the group certificate and	YES	<p>ND 001, 4.1 The group organisation holds a group forest certificate, a document confirming that the group organisation complies with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
d) the document confirming participation in group certification.	YES	<p>ND 001, 4.1 The Group forest certification is defined as a certification of the group organisation under one group forest certificate.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
4.3.2 The standard requires that for the establishment of the scope for the group management system the boundaries and applicability of the group management system shall be determined.	YES	<p>4.1 The forest area of these persons or organisations forming a group shall be clearly and definitely delimited.</p> <p>4.2.Guiding principles of the group for forest management</p> <p>Based on the regulations of PEFC Switzerland, especially the standards for forest management, the group shall develop common guiding principles.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
4.3.3 The standard shall define which requirements of the sustainable forest management standard may be fulfilled on group level.	YES	<p>ND001, 4.3.3.2 Tasks of the members a) Obligation to manage their forest in line with the sustainable forest management standards of PEFC Switzerland (ND 003 Standards for forest management)</p> <p>ND003, Scope: The standards are applicable to forest management at unit level and to the forest owner/manager who is responsible for the forest management.</p> <p>ND001, 4.1 (...) The group management system shall ensure and ease the implementation of the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management Standards on a group level. Therefore, the operational planning, operational management and the internal and external audits as well as corrective measures as defined in ND 003 Sustainable Forest Management can be carried out on a group level.</p> <p>(...) Also, if a group organisation decides to fulfil requirements of the sustainable forest management standard on the group level, these requirements shall be considered in the group management plan.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: ND 003 requirements on operational planning, operational management and the internal and external audits as well as corrective measures are specified as requirements that may be met on group level. All other requirements of ND003 apply by default on forest management unit level. The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
4.3.4 The standard requires that the scope shall	YES	4.2 (...)The guiding principles shall be documented and be publicly available.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
be made available as documented information.		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
4.4 Group management system		
4.4.1 The standard requires that all participants shall be subject to the internal monitoring and the internal audit programme.	YES	4.6 Performance evaluation Three types of performance evaluation shall be performed. An annual internal monitoring programme and an annual internal audit programme shall be planned and operated by the group representation. Furthermore, a management review shall be at least organised by the group representation. The internal monitoring programme serves as an evaluation of the group members' conformity with the certification requirements. All group members are subject to the internal monitoring programme. The internal audit programme covers both, group members and the group representation. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
4.4.2 The standard requires that a certified PEFC chain of custody system shall be in place if a group entity acts as a trader of forest based material not covered by group certificate.	YES	4.3.1 Group representation (applicant) (...) In case the group representation acts as a trader of forest based material not covered by the group certificate, a certified PEFC chain of custody system shall be in place. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
5. Leadership		
5.1 Organisational roles, responsibilities and authorities		
5.1.1 Functions and responsibilities of the group entity		
The standard requires that the following functions and responsibilities of the group entity shall be specified:		
a) to implement and maintain an effective management system covering all participants of the group;	YES	4.3.2 Tasks of the group representation a) Generate the necessary documentations, particularly regarding the procedures concerning the group management Assessment decision: Conformity

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) to represent the group organisation in the certification process, including in communications and relationships with the certification body, submission of an application for certification, and contractual relationship with the certification body;	YES	4.3.1 Group representation (applicant) The group representation is the responsible body for the group certification and applicant in the certification process. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) to establish written procedures for the management of the group organisation;	YES	4.3.1 Group representation (applicant) b) Establish written procedures for the management of the group and integrate the group certification requirements in the group management system Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) to establish written procedures for the acceptance of new participants of the group organisation. These acceptance procedures shall cover at least the verification of the applicant's information about contact details, clear identification of their forest property and its/their size(s)	YES	4.3.2c) Admit new members and provide written procedures for the acceptance of new members (covering at least information about contact details, clear identification of their forest property and its/their size(s)) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
e) to establish written procedures for the suspension and exclusion of participants who do not correct/close nonconformities. Group participants excluded from any certification group based on nonconformities cannot be accepted within 12 months after exclusion	YES	4.3.2d) Exclude members and provide written procedures for the suspension or exclusion of members who do not correct/close non-conformities 4.5 Group members excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within 12 months after exclusion. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
f) to keep documented information of:	YES	4.3.2

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>i. the group entity and participants' conformity with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard, and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system,</p> <p>ii. all participants, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/their size(s),</p> <p>iii. the certified area,</p> <p>iv. the implementation of an internal monitoring programme, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken;</p>		<p>i. j) Keep documented information of the group representations' and group members' conformity with the sustainable forest management standards</p> <p>ii), iii) f) List all members including their contact details and their forest areas (identification and size), as well as the total certified area</p> <p>iv) h) Plan and implement internal audits on both group members and group representation and keep documented information on the audit's review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>g) to establish connections with all participants based on a binding written agreement which shall include the participants' commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standard. The group entity shall have a written contract or other written agreement with all participants covering the right of the group entity to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any participant from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the sustainable forest management standard;</p> <p>Note: The requirements for "participant' commitment" and "written contract or other written agreement with all participants" may also be satisfied by the commitment of and written agreement of a pre-existing organisation or group or the members participation, such as a forest owners'/managers' association, SFM programme and submission to tax programming, where the organisation can demonstrate that it has a legal</p>	YES	<p>4.3.2</p> <p>f) List all members including their contact details and their forest areas (identification and size), as well as the total certified area and register all their selfcommitments.</p> <p>e) Have a binding written agreement or contract with all group members which shall include the group members' commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standards (ND003) and covering the right of the group representation to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any participant from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the sustainable forest management standard</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
mandate to represent the participants and where its commitment and the terms and conditions of the contract are enforceable.		
h) to provide all participants with a document confirming participation in the group forest certification;	YES	<p>4.3.2 Tasks of the group representation</p> <p>c) Admit new members and provide written procedures for the acceptance of new members (covering at least information about contact details, clear identification of their forest property and its/their size(s)),</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
i) to provide all participants with information and guidance required for the effective implementation and maintenance of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system;	YES	<p>4.3.2 l) Inform the group members and provide guidance</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
j) to address nonconformities reported from group members which were identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification and to ensure implementation with all group members;	YES	<p>4.3.2 n) address nonconformities reported from group members which were identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification and to ensure implementation with all group members</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
k) to operate an internal monitoring programme that provides for the evaluation of the participants' conformity with the certification requirements;	YES	<p>4.3.2 n) address nonconformities reported from group members which were identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification and to ensure implementation with all group members</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
l) to operate an annual internal audit programme covering both group members and group entity;	YES	<p>4.3.2 h) Elaborate ongoing internal monitorings that provide for the evaluation of the participants' conformity with the certification</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
m) to operate a management review of the group forest certification and acting on the results from the review;	YES	4.3.2 j) Organise annual management reviews that provide for the evaluation of the internal audits, the annual reviews and the implementation of the group management system. 4.7 Management review The group representation shall undertake an annual review. This review shall consist of an assessment with respect to: c) The status of actions from previous management reviews; (...) The output of the management review shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the group management system. Documented in-formation shall be retained as evidence of the results of the reviews. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
n) to provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the certification body, accreditation body, PEFC International or the National Governing Body for relevant data, documentation or other information; allowing access to the forest area covered by the group organisation and other facilities, whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or otherwise related or with implications for the management system.	YES	4.3.2 o) provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the certification body, accreditation body, PEFC International or the National Governing Body for relevant data, documentation or other information; allowing access to the forest area covered by the group organisation and other facilities, whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or otherwise related or with implications for the management system. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
5.1.2 Function and responsibilities of participants The standard requires that the following functions and responsibilities of the participants shall be specified:		
a) To provide the group entity with a binding written agreement, including a commitment on conformity with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification system; group participants excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within	YES	4.3.3.2. Tasks of the members The members of the group are assigned to: a) Obligation to comply with the regulations of the group by signing contract with the group representation [...] 4.5 Procedures for the admittance of new members [...] Previous group participation shall be communicated to the group representation. Group members excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within 12 months after exclusion.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
<p>12 months after exclusion.</p> <p>Note: The requirement for “written agreement” and participants’ “commitment” is also satisfied by the commitment of and written agreement of a pre-existing organisation or group or the members participation, such as a forest owners’/managers’ association, SFM programme and submission to tax programming, where the organisation can demonstrate that it has a legal mandate to represent the participants and where its commitment and the terms and conditions of the contract are enforceable.</p>		<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>b) To provide the group entity with information about previous group participation.</p>	YES	<p>4.5 [...] Previous group participation shall be communicated to the group representation. Group members excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within 12 months after exclusion.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>c) to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system as well as with the requirements of the management system;</p>	YES	<p>4.3.3.2. b) Obligation to manage their forest in line with the sustainable forest management standards of PEFC Switzerland (ND 003 Standards for forest management)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>d) to provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the group entity, or certification body for relevant data, documentation or other information; allowing access to the forest and other facilities, whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or otherwise related or with implications for the management system;</p>	YES	<p>4.3.3.2. c) Provide information about their forest area and full cooperation and assistance in responding to all request from the group representation or certification body, d) Provide information and to provide access to the forest area and administration for the purpose of both internal audits and external certification and surveillance audits.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
e) to inform the group entity about nonconformities identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification.		4.3.3.2 f) Inform the group representation about nonconformities identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
f) to implement relevant corrective and preventive actions established by the group entity.	YES	4.3.3.2 e) Implement improvement and corrective measures determined by the group representation Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
5.2 Commitment and policy		
5.2.1 The standard requires that the group entity shall provide a commitment:		
a) to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system;	YES	4.3.1. Group representation (applicant) (...) The group representation shall provide a commitment to: a) Comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) to integrate the group certification requirements in the group management system;	YES	4.3.1 b) Establish written procedures for the management of the group management and integrate the group certification requirements in the group management system Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) to continuously improve the group management system;	YES	4.3.1 c) Continuously improve the group management system Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) to continuously support the improvement of the sustainable management of the land/forests by	YES	4.3.1 d) Continuously support the improvement of the sustainable management of the land/forests by

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
the participants.		<p>the group members.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
5.2.2 The commitment of the group entity may be part of a group management policy and shall be publicly available as documented information upon request.	YES	<p>4.3.1 (...)The commitment of the group entity may be part of a group management policy and shall be publicly available as documented information upon request.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
5.2.3 The standard requires that the participants shall provide a commitment		
a) to follow the rules of the management system;	YES	<p>4.3.3.2 The members of the group are assigned to: a) Obligation to comply with the regulations of the group by signing contract with the group representation</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) to implement the requirements of the sustainability standard in their operations in their area.	YES	<p>4.3.3.2 The members of the group are assigned to: b) Obligation to manage their forest in line with the sustainable forest management standards of PEFC Switzerland (ND 003 Standards for forest management)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
6. Planning		
6.1 The standard requires that if a group organisation plans any changes in the group management system, these changes shall be included in a group management plan.	YES	<p>4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms (...) Procedures and processes relevant to the group organisation are defined in a group management plan, where changes planned in the group management system shall be included. It shall be produced by group members and/or the group representation and be approved by the group representation.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.2 The standard requires that if a group organisation decides to fulfil requirements of the sustainable forest management standard on the group level, these requirements shall be considered in a group management plan.	YES	4.1. Also, if a group organisation decides to fulfil requirements of the sustainable forest management standard on the group level, these requirements shall be considered in the group management plan. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
7. Support		
7.1 The standard requires that resources needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the group management system shall be determined and provided.	YES	4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms (...) The group management system shall ensure and ease the implementation of the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management Standards on a group level. Within the group system, resources for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the group management shall be provided. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
7.2 The standard shall define the necessary competence of persons doing work in the group management system.	YES	ND001, 4.1 Persons doing work in the management system shall have adequate education and knowledge of the sustainable forest management standard, the requirements for group certification and other standards, laws and technological issues if required for the work in question. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
7.3 The standard requires that communication processes shall be in place to raise the awareness of participants concerning:		
a) the group management policy;	YES	4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms [...] Communication processes shall be in place to raise the awareness of participants concerning: a) the group management policy; Assessment decision: Conformity

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard;	YES	<p>4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms [...]</p> <p>Communication processes shall be in place to raise the awareness of participants concerning: (...) b) the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard;</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) their contribution to the effectiveness of the group management system and the sustainable forest management, including the benefits of improved group performance;	YES	<p>4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms [...]</p> <p>Communication processes shall be in place to raise the awareness of participants concerning: (...) c) their contribution to the effectiveness of the group management system and the sustainable forest management, including the benefits of improved group performance;</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
d) the implications of not conforming with the group management system requirements.	YES	<p>4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms [...]</p> <p>Communication processes shall be in place to raise the awareness of participants concerning: (...) d) the implications of not conforming with the group management system requirements.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
7.4 The standard requires that the internal and external communications relevant to the group management system shall be determined. This includes:		
a) on what to communicate;	YES	<p>4.1. Additionally, the internal and external communications relevant to the group management system shall be determined. This includes what, when, with whom and how to communicate.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) when to communicate;	YES	4.1. Additionally, the internal and external communications relevant to the group management system

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		shall be determined. This includes what, when, with whom and how to communicate. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) with whom to communicate;	YES	4.1. Additionally, the internal and external communications relevant to the group management system shall be determined. This includes what, when, with whom and how to communicate. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) how to communicate.	YES	4.1. Additionally, the internal and external communications relevant to the group management system shall be determined. This includes what, when, with whom and how to communicate. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
7.5 The standard requires that appropriate mechanisms shall be in place for resolving complaints and disputes relating to group management and sustainable forest management operations.	YES	4.1. Overview and definition of the group and relevant terms [...] Mechanisms for complaints are established and documented information about the management system and the conformance with the sustainable forest management standard is kept. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
7.6 The standard requires that the documented information relevant to the group management system and the conformance with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard is:		
a) up to date;	YES	4.4 Documentation Documented information relevant to the group management or the conformance with the forest management standard ND 003 is up to date (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) available and suitable for use, where and when	YES	4.4 Documentation Documented information relevant to the group management or the conformance with the forest management standard ND 003 is up to date, available and suitable for use, where and

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
it is needed;		when it is needed (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) adequately protected against loss of confidentiality, improper use, or loss of integrity.	YES	4.4 Documentation Documented information relevant to the group management or the conformance with the forest management standard ND 003 is (...) adequately protected against loss of confidentiality, improper use, or loss of integrity. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
8. Operation		
8.1 The standard requires that the group organisation shall plan, implement and control processes needed:		
a) to meet the requirements of the group certification standard and the sustainable forest management standard and	YES	4.1. The group organisation plans, implements and controls processes needed a) to ensure that the requirements of the group certification standard and sustainable forest management standards are met (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) to implement the actions determined in 6.	YES	4.1 The group organisation plans, implements and controls processes needed (...) b) to implement actions determined in the management plan. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
8.2 The standard requires that this planning, implementing and controlling shall be done by:		
a) defining the necessary processes and establishing criteria for those;	YES	4.1. The group organisation plans, implements and controls processes needed (...) by: c) defining the necessary processes and establishing criteria for those (...). Assessment decision: Conformity

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) implementing control of the processes in accordance with the criteria;	YES	4.1. The group organisation plans, implements and controls processes needed (...) by: (...) d) implementing control of the processes in accordance with the criteria; (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) keeping documented information to the extent necessary to have confidence that the processes have been carried out as planned.	YES	4.1. The group organisation plans, implements and controls processes needed (...) by: (...) e) keeping documented information to the extent necessary to have confidence that the processes have been carried out as planned. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9. Performance evaluation		
9.1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation		
9.1.1 The standard requires that an ongoing internal monitoring programme provides confidence in the conformity of the group organisation with the sustainable forest management standard. In particular, it shall be determined:		
a) what shall be monitored and measured;	YES	4.6.1 Internal monitoring (...) The group representation establishes an ongoing internal monitoring programme and determines a) what shall be monitored and measured; (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) the methods for monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation, as applicable, to ensure valid results;	YES	4.6.1 Internal monitoring (...) The group representation establishes an ongoing internal monitoring programme and determines (...) b) the methods for monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation, as applicable, to ensure valid results; (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
c) when the monitoring and measuring shall be performed;	YES	4.6.1 Internal monitoring (...) The group representation establishes an ongoing internal monitoring programme and determines (...) c) when the monitoring and measuring shall be performed; (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) when the results from monitoring and measurement shall be analysed and evaluated;	YES	4.6.1 Internal monitoring (...) The group representation establishes an ongoing internal monitoring programme and determines (...) d) when the results from monitoring and measurement shall be analysed and evaluated; (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
e) what documented information shall be available as evidence of the results.	YES	4.6.1 Internal monitoring (...) The group representation establishes an ongoing internal monitoring programme and determines (...) e) what documented information shall be available as evidence of the results. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.1.2 The standard requires that the group entity shall evaluate the group management performance and the effectiveness of the group management system concerning the implementation of the sustainable forest management requirements.	YES	4.6.1 Internal monitoring (...) The group representation shall evaluate the group management performance and the effectiveness of the group management system concerning the implementation of the sustainable forest management requirements. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.2 Internal audit		
9.2.1 Objectives		
9.2.1.1 The standard requires that an annual internal audit programme shall provide information on whether the group management system:		
a) conforms to	YES	4.6.2.2 Objectives The group representation shall plan and implement internal audits annually to check the compliance with group regulations and to detect potential respectively demand for improvements.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
i. the group organisation's own requirements for its group management system; ii. the requirements of the national group certification standard;		(...) Especially, the audits shall ensure: a) The compliance of the group management system with group organisation's own requirements for its group management system b) The compliance of the group management system with the standards for sustainable forest management and the standard for group certification Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) ensures the implementation of the sustainable forest management standard on the participant level;	YES	4.6.2.2 [...] c) The implementation of the sustainable forest management standard on the participant level Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) is effectively implemented and maintained.	YES	4.6.2.2. [...] f) That the group management system is effectively implemented and maintained Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.2.1.2 The standard requires that the internal audit programme shall cover the group entity and all group participants. The group entity shall be audited annually. The participants may be selected on a sample basis.	YES	4.6.2.2 (...) The internal audit programme shall cover the group representation and all group members. The group representation should be audited annually. The members may be selected on a sample basis Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.2.2 Organisation		
The standard requires an internal audit programme which shall cover at least:		
a) planning, establishing, implementing and maintaining an audit programme(s) including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting, which shall take into consideration the importance of the processes	YES	4.6.2.1 Procedures A plan shall be drawn up by the group representation for the audits which shall include information at least about a) planning, establishing, implementing and maintaining an audit programme(s) including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting, which shall take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous audits (...) f) The

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
concerned and the results of previous audits;		participants g) The period of time h) The proceeding to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process
b) definition of the audit criteria and scope for each audit;	YES	4.6.2.1 Procedures (...) b) The focal points of the audit and scope for each audit (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) competence of internal auditor (forest knowledge, standard knowledge);	YES	4.6.2.1 (...) c) selection of auditors and their competence (forest knowledge, standard knowledge are mandatory) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) selection of auditors and conducting of audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;	YES	4.6.2.1 (...) h) The proceeding to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
e) ensuring that the results of the audits are reported to relevant group management;	YES	4.6.2.1 (...) d) ensuring that the results of the audits are reported to the relevant group organisation or management Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
f) retaining of the documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.	YES	4.6.2.1 (...) e) retaining of the documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3 Selection of participants in the internal audit programme		
9.3.1 General		

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
9.3.1.1 The standard requires the establishment of requirements for the selection of participants in the internal audit programme. These requirements shall include the following procedures for:	YES	<p>4.6.2.3. Participants</p> <p>The participants in the internal audit programme are selected based on a risk-based procedure, which shall be specified. The sample (size according to 4.6.2.4) shall be distributed to sample categories (4.6.2.5) according to the result of a risk assessment. 25% of the sample should be selected at random.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
a) determination of the sample size (9.3.2);	YES	<p>4.6.2.4 Sample size</p> <p>For a surveillance audit, the number of participants is determined by the formula: \sqrt{n}, rounded to the upper whole number, where n is the number of certified enterprises.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) determination of sample categories (9.3.3);	YES	<p>4.6.2.5 Sample categories</p> <p>The sample categories shall be established based on the results of a risk assessment. The indicators used in the risk assessment shall reflect the geographical scope of the standard. The following non exhaustive list of indicators may be used for the risk assessment: (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) distribution of the sample to the categories (9.3.4);	YES	<p>4.6.2.3 (...) The sample (size according to 4.6.2.4) shall be distributed to sample categories (4.6.2.5) according to the result of a risk assessment. 25% of the sample should be selected at random.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
d) selection of the participants (9.3.5).	YES	<p>4.6.2.3. Participants The participants in the internal audit programme are selected based on a risk-based procedure, which shall be specified. (...)</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.1.2 The standard may define additional requirements on the regional, national or sub-national level.	YES	<p>Currently no need due to small amount of groups</p> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.1.3 The standard shall define additional sampling requirements in case of participation of pre-existing organisations or group or the members participation, such as a forest owners'/managers' association, SFM programme and submission to tax programming which have their own members.	YES	<p>4.6.2.4 Sample size For a surveillance audit, the number of participants is determined by the formula: \sqrt{n}, rounded to the upper whole number, where n is the number of certified enterprises. (...)</p> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: ND 002 specifically defines "n" in the sampling formula as the number of "certified enterprises". All individual organisations covered by the group certification are therefore directly subject to sampling, regardless of whether several organisations have joined the group certification as a "pre-existing group" or not. The intent of the PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as met.
9.3.2 Determination of the sample size		
9.3.2.1 The sample size shall be calculated for the participants of the group organisation.	YES	<p>4.6.2.4 Sample size For a surveillance audit, the number of participants is determined by the formula: \sqrt{n}, rounded to the upper whole number, where n is the number of certified enterprises. Applicants for membership shall be considered in the audit plan in the course of the application and shall be included in the audits at the earliest possible date.</p> Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: ND001 defines requirements for groups (see scope). Therefore, this requirement applies to sampling within the group organisation. The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.2.2 The size of the sample generally should be the square root of the number of participants: ($y=\sqrt{x}$), rounded to the upper whole number.	YES	<p>4.6.2.4 Sample size For a surveillance audit, the number of participants is determined by the formula: \sqrt{n}, rounded to the upper whole number, where n is the number of certified enterprises. Applicants for membership shall be considered in the audit plan in the course of the application and shall be included in the audits at the earliest possible date.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.2.3 The size of the sample may be adapted by a standard taking into account one or more of the following indicators:		
a) results of a risk assessment. In this case deviations of sample sizes in case of low or high risk for individual categories shall be defined;	YES	4.6.2.4 Sample size (...) The size of the sample may be adapted taking into account one or more of the following indicators: a) results of a risk assessment. In this case deviations of sample sizes in case of low or high risk for individual categories shall be defined; Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) results of internal audits or previous certification audits;	YES	4.6.2.4 Sample size (...) The size of the sample may be adapted taking into account one or more of the following indicators: (...) b) results of internal audits or previous certification audits; Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) quality / level of confidence of the internal monitoring programme;	YES	4.6.2.4 Sample size (...) The size of the sample may be adapted taking into account one or more of the following indicators: (...) c) quality / level of confidence of the internal monitoring programme; Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) use of technologies allowing the gathering of information concerning specified requirements; Note: Such technologies may be e.g. the use of satellite data or drones and allow compliance statements for specific requirements of a sustainability standard or support the risk based sampling.	YES	4.6.2.4 Sample size (...) The size of the sample may be adapted taking into account one or more of the following indicators: (...) d) use of technologies allowing the gathering of information concerning specified requirements; Note: Such technologies may be e.g. the use of satellite data or drones and allow compliance statements for specific requirements of a sustainability standard or support the risk based sampling. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
e) based on other means of gathering information about activities on the ground. Note: One way could be a survey with participants who provide some information about their activities on the ground.	YES	Not applied Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: Adaptation indicator is optional, not mandatory. The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.3 Determination of sample categories		
9.3.3.1 The sample categories shall be established based on the results of a risk assessment. The indicators used in the risk assessment shall reflect the geographical scope of the standard. The following non exhaustive list of indicators may be used for the risk assessment:		
a) ownership type (e.g. state forest, communal forest, private forest);	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories The sample categories shall be established based on the results of a risk assessment. The indicators used in the risk assessment shall reflect the geographical scope of the standard. The following non exhaustive list of indicators may be used for the risk assessment: a. ownership type (e.g. state forest, communal forest, private forest); Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) size of management units (different size classes);	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories (...) b. size of management units (different size classes) (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
c) biogeographic region (e.g. lowlands, low mountain range, high mountain range);	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories (...) c. biogeographic region (e.g. lowlands, low mountain range, high mountain range); (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) operations, processes and products of potential group participants;	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories (...) d. operations, processes and products of potential group participants (...). Assessment decision: Conformity

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
e) deforestation and forest conversion;	YES	Not applied Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
f) rotation period(s);	YES	Not applied Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
g) richness of biological diversity;	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories (...) f. richness of biological diversity; (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
h) recreation and other socio-economic functions of the forest;	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories (...) g. recreation and other socioeconomic functions of the forest; (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
i) dependence of and interaction with local communities and indigenous people;	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories (...) h. dependence of and interaction with local communities; (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
j) available resources for administration, operations, training and research;	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories (...) i. available resources for administration, operations, training and research (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
k) governance and law enforcement.	YES	4.6.2.5 Sample categories (...) j. governance and law enforcement.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.3.2 Conditions which constitute risk for each indicator on low, medium and high level and the respective consequences for the sampling shall be defined.	YES	4.6.2.4 Sample size The size of the sample may be adapted taking into account one or more of the following indicators: a) results of a risk assessment. In this case deviations of sample sizes in case of low or high risk for individual categories shall be defined; Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.4 Distribution of the sample The sample shall be distributed to the categories according to the result of the risk assessment.	YES	4.6.2.3. Participants The participants in the internal audit programme are selected based on a risk-based procedure, which shall be specified. The sample (size according to 4.6.2.4) shall be distributed to sample categories (4.6.2.5) according to the result of a risk assessment. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.5 Selection of the participants		
9.3.5.1 At least 25% of the sample should be selected at random.	YES	4.6.2.3 (...) 25% of the sample should be selected at random. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.3.5.2 A risk-based procedure for the selection of the participants shall be specified.	YES	4.6.2.3. Participants The participants in the internal audit programme are selected based on a risk-based procedure, which shall be specified. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.4 Management review		
9.4.1 The standard requires that an annual management review shall at least include:		

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;	YES	<p>4.6.3 The group representation shall undertake an annual review. This review shall consist of an assessment with respect to: a) The status of actions from previous management reviews; (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the group management system;	YES	<p>4.6.3 The group representation shall undertake an annual review. This review shall consist of an assessment with respect to: (...) b) Changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the group management system; (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
c) the status of conformity with the sustainable forest management standard, that includes reviewing the results of the internal monitoring programme, the internal audit and the certification body's evaluations and surveillance;	YES	<p>4.6.3 The group representation shall undertake an annual review. This review shall consist of an assessment with respect to: (...) c) The status of conformity with the sustainable forest management standard, that includes reviewing the results of the internal monitoring programme, the internal audit and the certification body's evaluations and surveillance; (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>d) information on the group performance, including trends in:</p> <p>i. nonconformities and corrective actions;</p> <p>ii. monitoring and measurement results;</p> <p>iii. audit results;</p>	YES	<p>4.6.3 The group representation shall undertake an annual review. This review shall consist of an assessment with respect to: (...) d) Information on the group performance, including trends in: i. nonconformities and corrective actions; ii. monitoring and measurement results; iii. audit results (...)</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
e) opportunities for continual improvement.	YES	<p>4.6.3 The group representation shall undertake an annual review. This review shall consist of an assessment with respect to: (...) e) Opportunities for continual improvement.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
9.4.2 The standard requires that the outputs of the management review shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the group management system.	YES	4.6.3 Management Review (...) The output of the management review shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the group management system. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.4.3 The standard requires that the group organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews.	YES	4.6.3 Management Review (...) Documented information shall be retained as evidence of the results of the reviews. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
10. Improvement		
10.1 Nonconformity and corrective action		
10.1.1 The standard requires when a nonconformity occurs, the group organisation shall:		
a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: i. take action to control and correct it; ii. deal with the consequences;	YES	5.1 Nonconformity and corrective action When a nonconformity occurs, the group organisation shall: 1) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: i. take action to control and correct it; ii. deal with the consequences; (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) evaluate the need for action to eliminate the causes of the nonconformity, in order that it does not recur or occur elsewhere, by: i. reviewing the nonconformity; ii. determining the causes of the nonconformity; iii. determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur;	YES	5.1 Nonconformity and corrective action When a nonconformity occurs, the group organisation shall: (...) 2) evaluate the need for action to eliminate the causes of the nonconformity, in order that it does not recur or occur elsewhere, by: i. reviewing the nonconformity ii. determining the causes of the nonconformity iii. determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
c) implement any action needed;	YES	5.1 Nonconformity and corrective action When a nonconformity occurs, the group organisation shall: (...) 3) implement any action needed (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;	YES	5.1 Nonconformity and corrective action When a nonconformity occurs, the group organisation shall: (...) 4) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken; (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
e) make changes to the group management system, if necessary.	YES	5.1 Nonconformity and corrective action When a nonconformity occurs, the group organisation shall: (...) 5) make changes to the group management system, if necessary. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
10.1.2 The standard requires that the group organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of:		
a) the nature of the nonconformities and any subsequent actions taken;	YES	5.1 (...) The group organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of the nature of the nonconformities and any subsequent actions taken (...). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
b) the results of any corrective action.	YES	5.1 (...) The group organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of (...) the results of any corrective action. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
10.1.3 The standard requires that a participant who was excluded from a group certification shall be internally audited by the group entity before it	YES	5.1 (...) A participant who was excluded from a group certification shall be internally audited by the group entity before it is allowed to re-enter the group certification. The internal audit shall not take

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
is allowed to re-enter the group certification. The internal audit shall not take place sooner than 12 months after the exclusion.		<p>place sooner than 12 months after the exclusion.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
<p>10.2 Continual improvement</p> <p>The standard requires that the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the group management system and the sustainable management of the forest shall be continuously improved.</p>	YES	<p>5.2 Continual improvement The standard requires that the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the group management system and the sustainable management of the forest shall be continuously improved.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

PEFC Checklist - Certification and Accreditation Procedures (Annex 6, PEFC TD)

No.	PEFC benchmark requirement	YES/ NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
Certification Bodies			
1.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification shall be carried out by impartial, independent third parties that cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making body, or in the forest management and are independent of the certified entity?	Annex 6, 3.1 YES	VL 002-1 4.1 Tasks of the 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. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
2.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body for forest management certification shall fulfil requirements defined in ISO 17021?	Annex 6, 3.1 YES	VL 002-1 4.2. Requirements for certification bodies The certification bodies have to comply with the following PEFC requirements: (...)Accreditation according to ISO 17021 at an independent national accreditation body. The relevant forest management standards shall be covered by the accreditation scope. (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
3.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies carrying out forest certification shall have the technical competence in forest management on its economic, social and environmental impacts, and on the forest	Annex 6, 3.1 YES	VL 002-1 4.2 Requirements for certification bodies (...) • Guarantee competence in forestry, with regard to the requirements for admitted auditors. (...) 4.3 Requirements for auditors • Completed studies in forestry at a university, a university of applied sciences or a higher vocational college. • At least two years of working experience as forester or forest engineer (the preparation course for the state forest service will be recognised). • Practical experience in auditing (at least 5 audit days as coauditor with PEFC, thereof 3 days at on-siteaudits). • Good knowledge of the standards and procedures of PEFC Switzerland. • Conditions of ISO 19011.

No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES/ NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	certification criteria?			Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
4.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies shall have a good understanding of the national PEFC system against which they carry out forest management certification?	Annex 6, 3.1	YES	VL 002-1 4.2 Requirements for certification bodies (...) • Good knowledge of the standards and procedures of PEFC Switzerland Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
5.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies have the responsibility to use competent auditors and who have adequate technical know-how on the certification process and issues related to forest management certification?	Annex 6, 3.2	YES	VL 002-1 4. 2. Requirements for certification bodies The certification bodies have to comply with the following PEFC requirements: (...) • Guarantee competence in forestry, with regard to the requirements for admitted auditors. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
6.	Does the scheme documentation require that the auditors must fulfil the general criteria of ISO 19011 for Quality Management Systems auditors or for Environmental Management Systems auditors?	Annex 6, 3.2	YES	VL 002-1 4.2 Requirements for Auditors (...) • Conditions of ISO 19011. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
7.	Does the scheme documentation include additional qualification requirements for auditors carrying out forest management audits? [*)]	Annex 6, 3.2	YES	VL 002-1 4.3 (...) • At least two years of working experience as forester or forest engineer (the preparation course for the state forest service will be recognised). • Practical experience in auditing (at least 5 audit days as coauditor with PEFC, thereof 3 days at on-site audits). (...) Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
Certification procedures				

No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES/ NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies shall have established internal procedures for forest management certification?	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 Requirements for certification bodies (...) • Auditing procedures correspond to the conditions of ISO 19011 Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
9.	Does the scheme documentation require that applied certification procedures for forest management certification shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements defined in ISO 17021?	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 "Accreditation according to ISO 17021" Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
10.	Does the scheme documentation require that applied auditing procedures shall fulfil or be compatible with the requirements of ISO 19011?	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 Ch. 4.2 • Auditing procedures correspond to the conditions of ISO 19011. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
11.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body shall inform the relevant PEFC National Governing Body about all issued forest management certificates and changes concerning the validity and scope of these certificates?	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 Ch. 4.1 Tasks of the certification bodies (...) Inform the PEFC National Governing Body about all issued forest management certificates and changes concerning the validity and scope of these certificates Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
12.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body shall carry out controls of PEFC logo usage if the certified entity is a PEFC	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 Ch. 4.1 Tasks of the certification bodies • Control the use the PEFC logo by certificate holders and participating forest owners with respect to the PEFC Logo Rules (see ND 005). Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES/ NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	logo user?			
13.	Does a maximum period for surveillance audits defined by the scheme documentation not exceed more than one year?	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 Ch. 4.1 Tasks of the certification bodies (...) The maximum period for surveillance audits is one year and maximum period for re-assessment audit is five years. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
14.	Does a maximum period for assessment audit not exceed five years for forest management certifications?	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 Ch. 4.1 Tasks of the certification bodies (...) The maximum period for surveillance audits is one year and maximum period for re-assessment audit is five years. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
15.	Does the scheme documentation include requirements for public availability of certification report summaries?	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 Ch. 4.1 Tasks of the certification bodies (...) 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 the auditee upon request. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
16.	Does the scheme documentation include requirements for usage of information from external parties as the audit evidence?	Annex 6, 4	YES	VL 002-1 Ch. 4.1 Tasks of the certification bodies (...) The audit evidence to determine the conformity with the forest management standard may include relevant information from external parties (e.g. government agencies, community groups, conservations organizations, etc.) as appropriate. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
17.	Does the scheme documentation include additional requirements for certification procedures? ^[*1]	Annex 6, 4	N/A	Not mandatory Assessment decision: None Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is not applicable..
Accreditation procedures				
18.	Does the scheme documentation require that	Annex 6, 5	YES	VL 002-1 Ch. 4.2 Requirements for certification bodies (...) • Accreditation according to ISO 17021 at an independent national accreditation body. The relevant forest management

No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES/ NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	certification bodies carrying out forest management certification shall be accredited by a national accreditation body?			standards shall be covered by the accreditation scope. The accreditation body must be a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and implement processes in compliance with the ISO 17011. The accreditation must be valid for the certification system "PEFC Switzerland". Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
19.	Does the scheme documentation require that an accredited certificate shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body?	Annex 6, 5	YES	VL 001, 6.4. Certificate issuance, validity and withdrawal After the positive evaluation by the certification body, the applicant gets a certificate from the certification body, which displays both the logo of the certification body and the logo of the accreditation body. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.
20.	Does the scheme documentation require that the accreditation shall be issued by an accreditation body which is a part of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) umbrella or a member of IAF's special recognition regional groups and which implement procedures described in ISO 17011 and other documents recognised by the above mentioned organisations?	Annex 6, 5	YES	VL 002-1 4.2. Requirements for certification bodies The certification bodies have to comply with the following PEFC requirements: (...) The accreditation body must be a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and implement processes in compliance with the ISO 17011.
21.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body undertake forest management certification as "accredited certification" based on ISO 17021 and the relevant forest management	Annex 6, 5	YES	VL 002-1 Chapter 4.1 (...) The certification body undertakes forest management certification as "accredited certification" based on ISO 17021. Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.

No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES/ NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	standard(s) shall be covered by the accreditation scope?			
22.	Does the scheme documentation include a mechanism for PEFC notification of certification bodies?	Annex 6, 6	YES	<p>VL 002-1 5.Appointment of certification bodies (admission) The certification bodies, which conduct certifications in Switzerland according to the forest or chain of custody regulations of PEFC Switzerland, shall be appointed by the PEFC Switzerland through the PEFC secretariat..</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>
23.	Are the procedures for PEFC notification of certification bodies non-discriminatory?	Annex 6, 6	YES	<p>VL 002-1 5.Appointment of certification bodies (admission) (...)The appointment of certification bodies is carried out by the PEFC secretariat of PEFC Switzerland based on a non-discriminatory process.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>

Annex B: Results of stakeholder involvement survey

On 26th April 2021 CK Services sent an email to 99 stakeholders from the stakeholder list provided by PEFC Switzerland as part of the submitted documentation, inviting them to participate in a stakeholder survey consisting out of eight questions regarding stakeholders' involvement in the standard setting process by email.

These 99 stakeholders had been identified by PEFC Switzerland during a stakeholder mapping exercise carried out at the beginning of the revision process and were from all stakeholder categories for which seats were available on the revision working group, including key stakeholders which had not responded to PEFC Switzerland's invitation to participate in the revision process, such as ENGOs and trade unions.

The stakeholders were invited to respond to the survey via "SurveyMonkey.com", an online survey tool, by 6th May 2021.

Eight survey responses were received. None of the received responses could be attributed to stakeholder categories that were not represented on the working group, such as environmental NGOs or trade unions.

The responses received have largely confirmed the information provided by PEFC Switzerland on the revision process, including the fact that the interest or willingness of stakeholders to participate in the revision process has been very low.

While some of the stakeholders responded that they had not been aware of communication by PEFC Switzerland at different levels of the revision process, it could be established in the follow-up to the survey that for two of these respondents' colleagues or predecessors in the same stakeholder organisation had been contacted by PEFC Switzerland instead. For another respondent it could be established that the stakeholder had in fact been contacted by PEFC Switzerland, but (s)he had simply not received, read or remembered the email. For another one, no follow-up was possible, as the responses were submitted anonymously.

The questions, possible answers that respondents could choose from and given answers are summarized in Table 12.

Table 12, Survey questions and responses

Question 1: Bevor Sie an der Umfrage teilnehmen sind Sie gebeten, Ihren Namen und Ihre E-Mail-Adresse in das unten stehende Feld einzutragen, damit Sie bei eventuellen Rückfragen kontaktiert werden können. Ihr Name und Ihre Kontaktdaten werden nicht öffentlich zugänglich gemacht, nicht anderweitig verwendet und nicht an Dritte weitergeleitet. /(Before you answer the survey, please provide your name and email address in the field below, so that you can be contacted in case of questions. Your name and contact details will not be made publicly available, used for any other purpose or forwarded to third parties.)
Q2: Gab es Ihres Wissens nach eine öffentliche Ankündigung von PEFC Schweiz zu Beginn der Revision des Schweizer PEFC-Systems, in der Stakeholder zur Teilnahme am Revisionsprozess eingeladen werden? Wenn Sie diese Frage mit "Ja" beantworten, wie/wo wurde die Ankündigung gemacht? (Are you aware of a public announcement by PEFC Switzerland at the start of the revision of the Swiss PEFC System, inviting stakeholders to participate in the revision process? If your answer is "yes", how/where was the announcement made?)

<p>Possible answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ja, auf der Website von PEFC Schweiz (www.pefc.ch) oder einer anderen Website (Yes, on the website of PEFC Switzerland (www.pefc.ch) or another website) 2. Ja, per Pressemitteilung (Yes, by press release) 3. Ja, in einer öffentlichen Zeitschrift oder über andere Medien (Yes, in a public magazine or through other media) 4. Ja, per direktem Anschreiben (Yes, by direct mailing) 5. Nein (No) <p>Anmerkungen (Comments):...</p>	<p>Answered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1x 2. 0x 3. 0x 4. 3x 5. 4x
<p>Q3: Hatten Sie Zugang zu den Leitlinien für das Standardrevisionsverfahren für die Entwicklung des Schweizer PEFC- Waldbewirtschaftungsstandards?/(Did you have access to the standard setting procedures/ rules for the development of the Swiss PEFC forest management standard?)</p>	
<p>Possible answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ja (Yes) 2. Nein (No) 3. Weiss nicht (Don't know) <p>Anmerkungen (Comments):...</p>	<p>Answered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3x 2. 2x 3. 3x
<p>Q4: Wurden Sie direkt oder indirekt eingeladen, einen Vertreter in der Arbeitsgruppe von PEFC Schweiz für die Überarbeitung des Schweizer PEFC-Systems zu benennen? Wenn Ihre Antwort "Ja" lautet, wie/wo wurde diese Einladung bekannt gegeben?/(Have you been invited to nominate a representative to PEFC Switzerland's working group for the revision of the Swiss PEFC System? If your answer is "yes", how/where was the invitation made?)</p>	
<p>Possible answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ja, durch eine allgemeine Einladung auf der Website von PEFC Schweiz oder in anderen Medien (Yes, by general invitation on PEFC Switzerland's website or in other media) 2. Ja, direkt per Mail oder durch andere Kommunikation (Yes, directly by mailing or other communication) 3. Nein (No) <p>Anmerkungen (Comments):...</p>	<p>Answered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 0x 2. 4x 3. 4x
<p>Q5: Haben Sie eine Nominierung bei PEFC Schweiz eingereicht und wenn ja, wurde diese angenommen oder abgelehnt?/(Did you submit a nomination to PEFC Switzerland, and if you did, has it been accepted or rejected?)</p>	
<p>Possible answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nein, wir/ich habe(n) keine Nominierung eingereicht (No, we/I did not submit a nomination) 2. Ja, wir/ich habe(n) eine Nominierung eingereicht, und sie wurde angenommen (Yes, we/I submitted a nomination, and it was accepted) 3. Ja, wir/ich habe(n) eine Nominierung eingereicht, und sie wurde nicht angenommen (Yes, we/I submitted a nomination, and it was not accepted) <p>Anmerkungen (Comments):...</p>	<p>Answered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 8x 2. 0x 3. 0x
<p>Q6: Haben Sie die öffentliche Konsultation zu dem Entwurf des überarbeiteten Waldbewirtschaftungsstandards des Schweizer PEFC-Systems wahrgenommen? Wenn ja, wo/wie? / (Did you notice the public consultation on a draft revised forest management standard of the Swiss PEFC System? If yes, where/how?)</p>	
<p>Possible answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ja, auf der Website von PEFC Schweiz oder einer anderen Website (Yes, on PEFC Switzerland's or other website) 	<p>Answered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 0x

2. Ja, per Pressemitteilung (Yes, through a press release)	2. 0x
3. Ja, in einer Zeitschrift oder anderen Medien (Yes, in a public magazine or other media)	3. 0x
4. Ja, durch eine direkte Einladung per Email oder auf anderem Kommunikationsweg (Yes, directly by mailing or other communication)	4. 3x
5. Nein (No)	5. 5x
Anmerkungen (Comments):...	
Q7: Haben Sie Kommentare in der öffentlichen Konsultation eingereicht und wenn ja, wurden sie berücksichtigt?/(Have you made comments during the public consultation and if you did, have they been considered?)	
Possible answers:	Answered:
1. Nein, wir/ich habe(n) keine Kommentare eingereicht (No, we/I did not submit comments)	1. 7x
2. Ja, wir/ich habe(n) Kommentare abgegeben, und sie wurden berücksichtigt (Yes, we/I submitted comments and they were considered)	2. 0x
3. Ja, wir/ich habe(n) Kommentare abgegeben, und sie wurden nicht berücksichtigt (Yes, we/I submitted comments and they were not considered)	3. 1x
4. Ja, wir/ich habe(n) Kommentare abgegeben, und es ist uns/mir nicht bekannt, ob diese berücksichtigt wurden (Yes, we/I submitted comments and we/I do not know if they were considered or not)	4. 0x
Anmerkungen (Comments):...	
Q8: Haben Sie eine Beschwerde bezüglich des Standardentwicklungs-/revisionsprozesses eingereicht? Wenn Sie eine Beschwerde eingereicht haben, geben Sie bitte weitere Informationen im Kommentarfeld an. / (Have you submitted any complaint relating to the standard setting/revision process? If you did submit a complaint, please provide more information in the comment field.)	
Possible answers:	Answered:
1. Nein (No)	1. 8x
2. Ja (Yes)	2. 0x
Anmerkungen (Comments):...	

Summary of responses:

Question 1. Before you answer the survey, please provide your name and email address in the field below, so that you can be contacted in case of questions. Your name and contact details will not be made publicly available, used for any other purpose or forwarded to third parties.

Responses: 7 stakeholders provided their name/email address, 1 preferred to remain anonymous

Question 2. Are you aware of a public announcement by PEFC Switzerland at the start of the revision of the Swiss PEFC System, inviting stakeholders to participate in the revision process? If your answer is “yes”, how/where was the announcement made?)

Responses: 1 stakeholder noted the announcement on PEFC Switzerland’s website, 3 were invited by direct mail and 4 were not aware of the announcement.

Question 3. Did you have access to the standard setting procedures/ rules for the development of the Swiss PEFC forest management standard?)

Responses: 3 stakeholders confirmed that they had access, 2 claimed they had not, and 3 said they did not know.

Question 4. Have you been invited to nominate a representative to PEFC Switzerland's working group for the revision of the Swiss PEFC System? If your answer is "yes", how/where was the invitation made?

Responses: 4 respondents confirmed that they were invited to nominate a representative to the revision working group by direct email, 4 claimed they were not.

Question 5. Did you submit a nomination to PEFC Switzerland, and if you did, has it been accepted or rejected?)

Responses: All eight respondents answered that they have not submitted a nomination to the working group.

Question 6. Did you notice the public consultation on a draft revised forest management standard of the Swiss PEFC System? If yes, where/how?)

Responses: 3 stakeholders answered that they were invited by direct mail, 5 that they were not aware.

Question 7. Have you made comments during the public consultation and if you did, have they been considered?

Responses: 7 stakeholders answered that they did not submit comments, 1 stakeholder claims to have submitted comments and that they were not considered.

Question 8. Have you submitted any complaint relating to the standard setting/revision process? If you did submit a complaint, please provide more information in the comment field

Responses: None of the respondents has submitted a complaint to PEFC Switzerland.

Annex C: Results of international consultation

No comments were submitted in the international public consultation on the revised Swiss PEFC System.

Annex D: Internal review comments

Report chapter / Page	Assessor's report statement PEFC's	Internal Review comment	Assessor's response
1.1 Assessment Scope, Table 1, SD 001 & SD 003	The system documentation submitted by PEFC Switzerland comprises the documents listed in Table 1. (...) SD 001, Begriffe und Definitionen (...) SD 003 Statuten von PEFC Schweiz	No English version is available for Terms and Definitions [SSD 001] and Statutes [SD 003].	English versions of SD 001 and SD 003 have now been provided by PEFC Switzerland.
7.3 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities, Conformity with PEFC ST 1003, 8.1.4b and PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018), 8.1.4b) The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: (...) entails a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area;	<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: A size limitation for conversions is not defined by legislation. However, it is apparent that permits for conversions are granted by the authorities only in very exceptional cases and on a small scale. As such, the essence of this PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>	<p>Since it's not specified, it's a non-conformity.</p> <p>Given the fact that clear cuttings are also possible up to 10 ha, if there's regeneration (which is not defined what portion of regeneration is available and what species), relying only on assumption is not sufficient.</p>	<p>Assessment decision and justification changed to:</p> <p>Assessment decision: Minor nonconformity</p> <p>Justification: While the conversion of forest to non-forest land is strictly limited by the Swiss Forest Act, a size limitation for conversions of not greater than 5% of forest type within the certified area as required by the PEFC International Benchmark Standard is neither defined by legislation, nor by ND 003. Therefore, this PEFC benchmark requirement cannot be considered as met.</p>
7.3 Assessment result – Selection of Conformities, Conformity with PEFC	Assessment decision: Conformity	It's not specified	Justification changed to:

<p>ST 1003, 8.1.4d and PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018, 8.1.4d) The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: (...) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock;</p>	<p>Justification: Areas of significantly high carbon stock are not specifically covered by legislation on conversions. However, it is apparent that permits for conversions are granted by the authorities only in very exceptional cases and if no serious threat to the environment is caused. As such, the essence of this PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>	<p>However, a possibility would be that High Conservation Value Forests are recognized as “significantly high carbon stock”, thus the requirement can be met with existing definitions.</p>	<p>Justification: High carbon stock” forests and their conversion are not specifically covered by legislation on conversions, nor by ND 003. However, the standard requires that where forests with “high conservation value” are identified, the value identified is improved. Such forests of high conservation value include forests with “with priority function “nature and landscape” (protection of habitats of rare and sensitive animal and plant species, genetic reserves and nationally or regionally representative landscape structures)”. As forests with such environmental values that are to be conserved are very likely to be also forests with high carbon stock, it can be argued that through the requirement for conservation of these values, the essence of this PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>
<p>PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018), 8.1.5a) The standard requires that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: (...) is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning</p>	<p>Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: According to FAO data afforestation in Switzerland is taking place only at an insignificant level, with under 800ha being afforested between 1994 and 2005 and 0ha being afforested between 2005 and 2011. Afforestation in Switzerland has mainly a role as compensation mechanism for authorized deforestation and is regulated in Article 7 of the Federal Forest Act,</p>	<p>This reference doesn't cover afforestation</p>	<p>Assessment decision and justification changed to:</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: ND 003, indicator 2.1.1, endnote V considers afforestation as an “environmental impairment” of forest operations. This indicator is linked to 2.1 of ND 003, which requires that “The environmental impact of forest management operations is evaluated prior to</p>

governed by a governmental or other official authority;	which regulates that afforestation as a compensation for deforestation can be replaced by other compensation methods in order to conserve arable land and areas of ecological or landscape value, or dispensed altogether for the preservation and improvement of biotopes. The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.		commencement. The operations are adjusted based on the evaluation of their effect on the respective natural resource. Evaluations include landscape conservation considerations as well as facilities for on-site processing.” In the Federal Forest Act, afforestation is referred to only as compensation mechanism required for officially authorized deforestations. Taking into account that according to FAO data afforestation in Switzerland is taking place only at an insignificant level, with under 800ha being afforested between 1994 and 2005 and 0ha being afforested between 2005 and 2011, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as sufficiently addressed.
PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018), 8.1.5c) The standard requires that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: (...) does not have negative impacts on threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) nonforest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species or other protected areas	Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: According to FAO data afforestation in Switzerland is taking place only at an insignificant level, with under 800ha being afforested between 1994 and 2005 and 0ha being afforested between 2005 and 2011. Afforestation in Switzerland plays only a role as compensation mechanism for authorized deforestation and is regulated in Article 7 of the Federal Forest Act. The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.	This reference doesn't cover afforestation	Assessment decision and justification changed to: Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: ND 003, indicator 2.1.1, endnote V considers afforestation as an “environmental impairment” of forest operations. This indicator is linked to 2.1 of ND 003, which requires that “The environmental impact of forest management operations is evaluated prior to commencement. The operations are adjusted based on the evaluation of their effect on the respective natural

			<p>resource. Evaluations include landscape conservation considerations as well as facilities for on-site processing.”</p> <p>In the Federal Forest Act, afforestation is referred to only as compensation mechanism required for officially authorized deforestations.</p> <p>Taking into account that according to FAO data afforestation in Switzerland is taking place only at an insignificant level, with under 800ha being afforested between 1994 and 2005 and 0ha being afforested between 2005 and 2011, the PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as sufficiently addressed.</p>
<p>PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018), 8.1.5d) The standard requires that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: (...) entails a small proportion of the ecologically important non-forest ecosystem managed by an organisation</p>	<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: See 8.1.5 c. The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>	<p>This reference doesn't cover afforestation</p>	<p>Justification for 8.1.5c that is referred to was updated.</p>
<p>PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018), 8.1.5e) The standard requires that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless in justified</p>	<p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: See 8.1.5 c. The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.</p>	<p>This reference doesn't cover afforestation</p>	<p>Justification for 8.1.5c that is referred to was updated.</p> <p>Justification for 8.1.5c that is referred to was updated.</p>

circumstances where the conversion: (...) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock			
PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018), 8.1.5f) The standard requires that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: (...) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.	Assessment decision: Conformity Justification: See 8.1.5 c. The PEFC benchmark requirement can be considered as met.	This reference doesn't cover afforestation	Justification for 8.1.5c that is referred to was updated.
PEFC Checklist - Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2018), 8.1.6a) The standard requires that if conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations is being considered, it must add economic, ecological, social and/or cultural value. Precondition of adding such value are circumstances where the conversion: (...) is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority	<p>Plantation management does not occur in the Swiss forest, which is regulated by the Swiss Forest Act. Moreover, this does not involve any additional expenditure for the certified parties. (see Round table protocol) ND003 G 16 <u>The conversion of forest to plantations or non-forest use is not permitted except in cases where a clear felling has been officially evaluated and authorized.</u></p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met</p>	Clear cuts are possible up to 10 ha, where (unidentified amount of) regeneration is available. Is it possible to clarify or cover this?	Clarification: The German original of ND 003, Indicator 2.2.2, bullet point three defines a clear cut as “durch Verjüngungsschläge entstandene, zusammenhängende Waldflächen im Jungwuchs- und Dickungsstadium von über 10 ha” This was translated into English as “Clearing of connected forest areas of over 10 ha containing young growth and thickets resulting from regeneration.” A clearer translation would have been: “Connected forest areas of over 10ha in the stage of young growth and thickets that were created by regeneration cutting.” Such areas should not be considered as meeting PEFC’s definition of forest plantation and as being relevant for this benchmark requirement.

<p>PEFC Checklist - Group Forest Management Certification (PEFC ST 1002:2018), 9.3.1.3) The standard shall define additional sampling requirements in case of participation of pre-existing organisations or group or the members participation, such as a forest owners'/managers' association, SFM programme and submission to tax programming which have their own members.</p>	<p>All participants are sampled equally.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: The PEFC benchmark requirement is met.</p>	<p>Does this mean, that the member organization is considered only as one member and falls under the \sqrt{n}, where n is the number of the group participants OR the members of the group certification member organization should sample the same way its members, so also applies \sqrt{n}, but here n is equal to the number of members of the group certification member organization? Please clarify</p>	<p>The reference to the system's requirements and justification have been updated:</p> <p>4.6.2.4 Sample size</p> <p>For a surveillance audit, the number of participants is determined by the formula: \sqrt{n}, rounded to the upper whole number, where n is the number of certified enterprises.</p> <p>Assessment decision: Conformity</p> <p>Justification: ND 002 specifically defines "n" in the sampling formula as the number of "certified enterprises". All individual organisations covered by the group certification are therefore directly subject to sampling, regardless of whether several organisations have joined the group certification as a "pre-existing group" or not. The intent of the PEFC benchmark requirement can therefore be considered as met.</p>
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