

GENERAL PROCEDURE CERFOAR – PEFC ARGENTINA

Procedure for conducting CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management certification audits that shall be complied with by certification bodies.

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1. Scope

1.1 This Procedure establishes the additional requirements to those established by ISO/IEC 17021: in force and specific to CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina that Certification Bodies (hereinafter CB) shall comply with in order to carry out audits and CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina certification of the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) of an organization or a group of organizations managed under the requirements of group certification.

NOTE: ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies performing management system auditing and certification — Part 1: Requirements contains principles and requirements regarding the competence, consistency and impartiality of auditing and certification of management systems of all kinds

1.2 This General Procedure has been approved by the Board of Directors of the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina Association and is applicable to all those CBs notified by the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina Association that carry out audits and certification of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in accordance with what is established by the Argentine Forest Certification System.

2. Normative references

The following documents are essential for the application of this document. The latest edition of the indicated documents (including any amendments) or the most current and in force document that supersedes any of them applies:

- ISO/IEC 17000: in force Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles
- ISO/IEC 17021-1: in force Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirements
- ISO 19011: in force. Guidelines for auditing management systems
- PEFC ST 2001: in force. — PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements
- PEFC ST 2001: in force. PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements
- IRAM 39801: in force. Sustainable forest management. Criteria and indicators for the management unit.
- IRAM 39805: in force. Sustainable forest management. Group Certification.

3. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this procedure, the pertinent definitions indicated in the standards ISO/IEC 17000, ISO/IEC 17021, ISO 19011, PEFC ST 2001, IRAM 39801 and IRAM 39805 apply.

4. General requirements

4.1 To carry out the audits and the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina certification of SFM, the CB shall develop and implement procedures that meet the requirements defined by the in force ISO/IEC 17021 Standard and with the requirements defined by the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina General Procedure PG 02 in force.

4.2 The CB shall implement its audit procedures in accordance with the guidelines established in the in force ISO 19011 standard.

NOTE: The ISO 19011: in force. Guidelines for auditing management systems provides guidance on auditing management systems, including the principles of auditing, managing an audit programme and conducting management system audits, as well as guidance on the evaluation of competence of individuals involved in the audit process. These activities include the individual(s) managing the audit programme, auditors and audit teams.

It is applicable to all organizations that need to plan and conduct internal or external audits of management systems or manage an audit programme.

The application of this document to other types of audits is possible, provided that special consideration is given to the specific competence needed.

4.3 The CB shall use the audit criteria established in IRAM 39801 standards for forest management audits of the certification client organization (hereinafter the client) and IRAM 39805, PEFC ST 2001 and all other specific criteria established for it by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina.

NOTE: The certification client is considered the organization whose management system is audited for certification purposes. In the case of individual certification, the client is the organization (forest producer) and in the case of group certification, the client is the entity of the forest certification group.

4.5 The CB shall limit the assessment of conformity with requirements, audits and certification decisions to the specific aspects of forest management included in the scope of certification.

4.6 The CB shall establish its policy and procedures related to the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina certification in such a way that they are not discriminatory. The services of the CB shall be accessible to any applicant forest producer or forest organization; shall not prevent any forestry organization from submitting an application for certification and shall not condition the application in any way (financially or otherwise)

4.7 A SFM certificate issued by a CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina notified CB shall provide a credible guarantee that there is no critical failure to comply with the requirements of the current IRAM 39801 and/or IRAM 39805 Standards, in any forest management unit within the scope of the certificate.

In order to provide such guarantees the CB shall:

- a) Analyse and describe the forest area to be evaluated, in terms of one or more forest management units;
- b) Confirm that there is an implemented management system capable of ensuring that all the requirements of current IRAM 39801 and/or IRAM 39805 Standards are met in all forest management units included in the scope of certification;
- c) Carry out the sampling of the sites, the revision of the documents and records of the management; develop interviews, consultations with interested parties and on-site observations so that the information obtained is sufficient to verify that there are no major non-conformities with the requirements specified in the IRAM 39801 and/or IRAM 39805 Standards in force in any unit of forest management within the scope of certification.

5. Documented procedures

5.1 The CB shall develop, document and implement specific procedures to carry out audits and certification of forest management CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina, in accordance with the requirements established by this general procedure.

6. Structural Requirements

6.1 Committee for the preservation of impartiality

6.1.1 The organizational structure of the CB shall preserve the impartiality of its activities. For this reason, the OC shall establish a Committee to ensure the impartiality of its auditing, certification and decision-making processes.

The committee to safeguard impartiality established by the CB may include a representative of CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina and the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina Association shall be informed about this option.

6.2 Resource Requirements

6.2.1 Competence of management and staff

6.2.1 The CB shall ensure that all the people who carry out the key activities of their organization, such as the review of contracts, audits, granting of certification, monitoring of auditors, among others, have the competencies adequate and pertinent corresponding to these activities.

6.2.2 The CB shall have processes that ensure that the staff has a good knowledge of the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina system, its requirements and its accreditation criteria.

6.3 Competence of personnel involved in forest management certification activities CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina

6.3.1 The CB shall ensure that the people who carry out the activities related to the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management certification have technical competence in forest management and its environmental, social and economic impacts and on the forest certification criteria in accordance with the standards of CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina.

6.3.2 Forest auditors

A.- Education

The CB shall ensure that the forestry auditors have a tertiary degree or higher in forestry.

NOTE: The forest auditor is the person with the necessary competence to carry out a forest management audit. The forest auditor is under the direction of a responsible or lead forest auditor.

The CB shall ensure that the lead forest auditors have a bachelor's or post-graduate degree in forestry.

NOTE: The lead forest auditor is a forest auditor with the necessary qualification to direct (lead) the audit team and to be responsible for drawing up the audit plan and conducting the forest management audit.

B.- Training in forest management CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina.

The CB shall ensure that the forest auditors, in the last two years, have participated in a training course recognized by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina on the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina sustainable management system and standards, including the PEFC ST 2001 Trademarks standard.

C.- Training in forest management audits CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina.

The certification body shall ensure that the auditors have completed the training recognized by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina in sustainable forest management audits CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina that includes the guidelines for auditing management systems established in current ISO 19011.

D.- Work experience

For a first qualification, the CB shall ensure that the forest auditor has a minimum of three (3) years of full time experience in forest management organisations.

The number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one (1) year, if the auditor has completed a college forestry education.

The certification body shall ensure that the lead forest auditor has a minimum of two (2) years of full-time experience in the forestry sector.

E.- Audit training and experience

For a first auditor qualification, the CB shall ensure that the auditor, in the last three (3) years, has carried out, as an auditor in training, four (4) forest management audits under the direction of a qualified auditor.

The number of forest management training audits can be reduced to two (2) CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management audits for auditors qualified to perform ISO 14001 and/or ISO 9001 audits in the forestry sector. This practical training shall be developed in a period not exceeding three (3) years.

The CB shall ensure that the responsible or leading forest auditor is a qualified forest auditor, who shows deep knowledge of forest management, its environmental and social impacts, and shall also have carried out, as such, a minimum of three (3) audits completed and shall have participated in one of them as a responsible forest auditor or leader under the direction and guidance of a qualified responsible forest auditor or leader

This practical training shall be developed in a period not exceeding two (2) years.

For the maintenance of the qualification of the forest auditors, the certification body shall ensure that the forest auditors have carried out a minimum of four (4) forest management audits per year, including at least two (2) CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management audits.

F.- Competence

The certification body shall ensure that forest auditors demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- a) The objectives and fundamental processes of the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina system;
- b) The requirements contained in the in force IRAM 39801, IRAM 39805 and ST 2001 Standards;
- c) Knowledge of the socio-cultural aspects of the region where the forest management standards are implemented;

- d) Audit principles, procedures and techniques: that allow the auditor to apply them correctly in the different audits and ensure that they are carried out in a consistent and systematic manner;
- e) Characteristics of the organization to be audited, including scale, structure, functions and relationships with other organizations and the community, aspects of the forestry business, terminology, social and cultural customs, working language: that allow the auditor to understand the operational context of the organization;
- f) Legislation, regulations and other pertinent requirements that allow the auditor to operate in the adequate legal framework and to be aware of the legal requirements applicable to the organization that is the object of the audit;
- g) The principles of forest management based on techniques that include forest management planning, inventories, forest crops, protection and management of forest ecosystems: that allow the auditor to evaluate the forest management system and decide whether to properly implements;
- h) Environmental techniques and the economic principles applicable to forest management: that allow the auditor an understanding of the fundamental relationships between human activities and sustainable forest management;
- i) Technical aspects associated with forest operations: that allow the auditor to understand the activities of the audited organization and its effects on the management of its forest resources and the territory involved.

In turn, the CB shall ensure that the responsible or lead forest auditors have additional knowledge and skills in audit leadership to facilitate the efficient and effective conduct of the audit.

The CB shall ensure that the person in charge or leader of the audit team has the capacity to:

- plan the audit and make effective use of resources during the audit;
- represent the audit team in communications with the client;
- organize and direct the members of the audit team;
- provide direction and guidance to trainee auditors;
- lead the audit team to reach the audit conclusions;
- prevent and resolve conflicts;
- prepare and complete the audit report.

The CB shall provide evidence of annual monitoring by forest management auditors, applying methods such as witness audits, review of audit reports or comment from client organisations, etc., based on the frequency of their use and the level of risk associated with their activities. In particular, OC shall review the competence of its staff in light of its results obtained in order to identify training needs.

Annex 1 presents a summary of the competency requirements established by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina for personnel involved in certification activities and that shall be met by CBs authorized to work with CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management certification.

6.3.3 Technical Experts

A.- Education

The CB shall ensure that the technical experts that make up a specific audit team have a graduate degree with the corresponding field or, failing that, have extensive and proven operational experience that compensates for their academic level.

B.- Training in forest management CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina.

The CB shall ensure that the technical experts, in the last three (3) years, have participated in a training course recognized by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina on the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina sustainable management system and standards.

C.- Work experience

The OC shall ensure that the technical expert has a minimum of three (5) years of experience in the specific area of his competence.

The number of years of total work experience can be reduced by two (2) years, if the technical expert works in the forestry sector.

7. Information Requirements

7.1 Information accessible to the public

7.1.1 The CB shall prepare forest management audit reports for each organization or certification group requesting forest management certification (clients), in accordance with the requirements specified in the General Procedure CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina PG05: in force.

7.1.2 The report of the certification, surveillance and recertification audits shall be constituted by a public part available to interested parties, whose content is specified in the General Procedure CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina PG 05: in force and by confidential documentation annex of characteristics and contents specified in the same general procedure.

7.1.3 The CB shall send a copy of the public reports of the forest management audits to the CERFOAR Association – PEFC Argentina, who will make them available to the public.

7.1.4 The CB shall have a documented authorization from the certificate holder (certified client) to communicate the reference data to the CERFOAR Association – PEFC Argentina and the PEFC Council.

7.2 Certification documents

7.2.1 The CB shall provide the certification documents (certificate) to the certified client.

7.2.2 The CB shall include in the certificate at least the following information:

- a) The identification data of the certificate holder (certified client), including trade name or business name and address;
- b) The IRAM 39801 and/or IRAM 39805 in force standards used to audit the certified client;
- c) The international standard PEFC ST 200 in force, used to audit the use of PEFC Trademarks by the certified client;
- d) The scope of the certificate;
- e) The mark and registration number of the accreditation as determined by the Argentine Accreditation Body (or equivalent accreditation body);
- f) The date of issued, extension or renewal of the certification;
- g) The expiration date of the certification or recertification (expiration date);
- h) The unique registration number of the certificate;
- i) CB identification data;
- j) A means of distinguishing revised documents from obsolete earlier documents, should any revised certificate (certification document) be issued.

7.2.3 The effective date of a certification document (certificate) shall not be earlier than the date of the certification decision.

7.2.4 In the case of group certification, the CB shall issue a single certificate with the name and address of the entity of the forest certification group. The CB in turn shall issue a list of the participants of the certification group that are within the scope of the same together with the certificate or in an annex or mentioned in some other way in the certificate. The scope or other reference of the certificate shall make it clear that the certified activities are carried out by the network of members of the listed forest certification group.

NOTE: The entity of the forest certification group is the legally constituted organization that requests certification on behalf of a group of forest producers who agree to participate in the group (members of the

forest certification group). The entity of the forest certification group, as a legally constituted entity, is the holder of the certificate.

7.2.5 In the case of group certification the CB may issue a sub-certificate for each member of the forest certification group, covered by the certification provided that it contains the same scope or sub-scope and includes a clear certificate reference major.

7.3 Confidentiality

7.3.1 The CB shall notify the client in advance that it has the obligation to provide information to the CERFOAR Association – PEFC Argentina.

7.3.2 The CB shall have a written authorization from the client to provide the information referred to in the authorization to the CERFOAR Association – PEFC Argentina.

8. Process Requirements

8.1 General requirements

8.1.1 Audit program

8.1.1.1 The CB shall develop an audit program for the complete cycle of forest management certification in order to identify the audit activities necessary to verify that the client meets the certification requirements, according to the criteria established in IRAM 39801, IRAM 39805 and PEFC ST 2001 and in all other specific criteria established for it by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina.

8.1.1.2 The audit program shall include an initial certification audit in two stages, two (2) annual surveillances audits, and a certification renewal audit in the last year of the certification cycle, before the expiration of the certification. The period between audits should not exceed one year.

8.1.1.3 The certification cycle begins with the decision to certify or renew the certification.

8.1.1.4 The determination of the audit program and any subsequent modifications shall take into account the size of the client organization, the scope and complexity of its management system, products and processes, as well as the demonstrated level of effectiveness of the audit forest management system and the results of previous audits.

8.1.1.5 In the case of group certification, the determination of the audit program and any subsequent modifications shall take into account the size and structure of the forest certification group, the scope and complexity of the group's management system, the products and processes, as well as the demonstrated level of effectiveness of the forest management system(s) of the members of the forest certification group and the results of previous audits.

8.1.2 Audit plan

8.1.2.1 The CB shall ensure that a plan is established for each audit, identified in the audit programme, which provides the basis for reaching agreement on the conduct and timing of the audit activities. The preparation of the audit plan shall be based on documented procedures of the CB.

8.1.2.2 The CB shall communicate the audit plan to the client well in advance and shall agree with the client on the audit dates in advance.

8.1.2.3 In the case of certifications of multiple management units (group certification), the audit plan shall identify the sites to be evaluated.

8.1.3 Selection of the audit team and assignment of tasks

8.1.3.1 The CB shall have documented procedures for the selection and appointment of the audit team, including the audit team leader.

8.1.3.2 The audit team shall collectively possess competence in the following matters that apply to the forestry sector:

- a) Forest planning, forest management practices and their environmental, social and economic impacts;
- b) Forestry systems and practices;

- c) Forest ecology;
- d) Soil and water conservation;
- e) Social and cultural aspects of local populations, including indigenous communities;
- f) Legal and accounting aspects of forestry activity;

8.1.3.3 The CB shall evaluate the composition of the audit team based on: the characteristics of the forest management to be evaluated, the required competence defined for the auditors in the current ISO 19011 Standard and in the other CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina accreditation criteria.

8.1.3.4 To define the composition of the audit team, the CB shall also consider the following specific aspects:

- a) The objectives, scope, criteria and estimated duration of the audit;
- b) The overall competence of the audit team, necessary to achieve the audit objectives;
- c) The specific (local) characteristics of the forest resources to be audited (native forest, implanted forest or mixed systems)
- d) The specific (local) environmental characteristics of the forest management to be audited;
- e) Legal, regulatory, contractual and accreditation requirements, as applicable;
- f) Ensure the independence of the audit team with respect to the activities to be audited and avoid conflicts of interest;
- g) The ability of audit team members to interact effectively with the auditee and work together;
- h) The language of the audit and understanding of the particular social and cultural characteristics of the auditee.

8.1.3.5 The CB shall designate a forest management auditor, with the necessary competence, as the person in charge or leader of the audit team.

8.1.3.6 In the case of a single auditor, he shall perform all the tasks applicable to the person in charge or leader of the audit team.

NOTE: The audit team may include auditors in training

8.1.3.6 The CB shall include technical experts in the audit team if the necessary competence to achieve the audit objectives is not fully covered by the team's auditors. Technical experts shall act under the direction of the lead auditor or team leader.

NOTE 1: The selection criteria for technical experts are determined on a case-by-case basis according to the needs of the audit team and the scope of the audit. The technical expert brings specific experience or knowledge to the audit team. Specific knowledge or experience is related to the organization, process or activity to be audited, language or cultural orientation.

NOTE 2. A technical expert does not act as a forest auditor.

8.1.3.7 Prior to the start of the audit activities, the CB shall submit to the consideration of the forest producer, client of the certification audit, the composition of the proposed audit team to corroborate the non-existence of conflicts of interest.

8.1.3.8 In the case of group certification and if there is more than one audit team involved in the evaluation/monitoring of the forest certification group, the CB shall appoint a single lead auditor whose responsibility will be to consolidate the audit findings of all audit teams to produce a single report summarizing all.

8.1.4 Determination of audit time

8.1.4.1 The CB shall have documented procedures to determine the audit time. For each client, the CB shall determine, with the contribution of the audit team, the time needed to plan and execute an efficient audit of the client's forest management unit(s).

8.1.4.2 The CB shall allocate sufficient time for auditors in forest management audits to fully comply with the requirements as specified in the CB's procedures. The amount of time spent by the CB to audit the compliance of forest management with the requirements of current IRAM 39801 and/or IRAM 39805 and PEFC ST 2001 standards varies in each case according to:

- a) The number of forest management units selected for on-site audit;
- b) The complexity of forest management and social and environmental conditions,
- d) The complexity of the structure and management system of the certification group, in the case of group certification;
- e) Audited records and documents, and
- f) Interviewed stakeholders.

The methodology for assigning time for the development of audits is included in Annex 1 of this procedure.

8.1.5 Audit report

8.1.5.1 The CB shall provide the client with a documented report of each audit.

8.1.5.2 The CB shall present to the client a Stage 1 audit report (initial certification audit), which includes at least a summary of the conclusions of the audited documentation and, if applicable, a summary of the conclusions of the organization's sites audited

8.1.5.3 The CB shall prepare the Stage 2 audit reports (initial certification audit) and the annual surveillance and re-certification audits in accordance with the requirements established in the General Procedure CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina PG 05: in force.

8.2 Initial audit and certification

8.2.1 Application

8.2.1.1 The client shall provide the CB with, at a minimum, the following information as part of the GFS certification request:

- a) the client's identification data, including trade name or business name, legal status, address and contact person (organization requesting the certification);
- b) The proposed scope of certification;
- c) General information relevant to the scope of the requested certification: management unit or units to be included in the scope of the certification. In the case of group certification, the entity of the forest certification group shall present a description of the structure of the certification group, the management units included in the group, and the components of the group, including the responsibilities and obligations of each one. In the case of a single forest producer with a set of management units under its control, it shall present the description of the structure of its centralized management system and the list of management units under its control and to include in the scope of the certificate;
- d) A summary of the forest management plan(s);
- d) General information regarding managed forest resources and the area where forestry activities are carried out;
- e) Information regarding all outsourced processes used by the organization that could affect conformance to requirements;
- f) Information regarding the stakeholders identified by the client organization and how to contact them during the public consultation process.

8.2.2 Initial certification audit

8.2.2.1 Audit Stage 1

8.2.2.1.1 The Stage 1 audit has the function of an evaluation of the documentation and the forest management system and the preparation of the initial Stage 2 certification audit. The scope of this audit includes:

- a) Confirmation of the scope and objectives of the certification audit;
- b) Evaluation of the documentation of the client's forest management system(s);
- c) The evaluation of the certification group management system documentation, in the case of a group certification;

- d) The evaluation of the performance evaluation procedures and improvement of the forest management system established and implemented by the organization;
- e) The evaluation of the performance evaluation and improvement procedures of the forest certification group management system and of the forest management system of the group members, in the case of group certification;
- f) Evaluation of the integrity of the forest management system(s) and the effectiveness of their implementation at each site, within the scope of the certificate;
- g) The evaluation of the specific conditions of the forest management area (characteristics of the forest management unit or units);
- h) The evaluation of the organization's conformity with the rules of use of PEFC Marks and their effective application, including the use of sub-licenses in the case of group certification;
- i) The adjustments and confirmation of the audit plan of the Stage 2 Audit.

8.2.2.1.2 The CB shall make a Stage 1 Audit report available to the certification client.

8.2.2.1.3 The CB shall include the following items in the preparation of the Stage 2 audit:

A.- Analysis of forest management units

The CB shall carry out a comprehensive analysis of the area included in the scope of the audit considering the existence of separate forest management units and the existing structures and systems for their management.

NOTE: the results of this analysis are necessary as a basis for the subsequent evaluation of the management structure and for the sampling of the forest management units included in the scope of the audit.

B.- Checklist

Based on the information obtained in Stage 1 of the initial certification audit, the CB shall review its checklist so that it allows it to assess unequivocally conformity with each requirement of the current IRAM 39801 in situ. In turn, the CB shall review its checklist so that it allows it to assess unequivocally conformity with each requirement defined in the current IRAM 39805, in the case of group certification.

NOTE: A verifier is the source of information for the indicator or for the reference value of the indicator.

C.-Documents and records

The CB shall have access to copies of important documents or records to be used in the preparation and conduct of the Stage 2 audit (certification audit), such as management plans, inventory results, management system documentation, maps, legal documents, among others.

D.- Applicable legislation

The CB shall identify and have knowledge of national and local laws and national, provincial and local legal and administrative requirements applicable in the assessment area.

E.- Interested parties and enforcement authorities

The CB shall identify and make a list of individuals and organizations that can be contacted as interested parties during the certification audit. If possible, the CB shall obtain the contact details of those interested parties and should define the appropriate mechanisms to contact them.

The CB shall identify all local and national enforcement authorities that shall be contacted during the certification audit.

The CB shall initiate, during the preparation of the Stage 2 audit, the consultation process with the interested parties in accordance with the General Procedure CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina PG 03: in force. Stakeholder's consultation to be implemented by certification bodies during forest management certification.

F.- Selection of forest management units to be audited on site.

The CB shall develop and implement a procedure for the selection of the forest management units to be audited on site in each audit (certification, surveillance and re-certification audit) that ensures an appropriate evaluation of the forest management system.

8.2.2.2 Audit Stage 2

8.2.2.2.1 In Stage 2 of the initial certification audit the CB shall assess the implementation, including the effectiveness of the forest management system in the defined forest management area.

8.2.2.2.2 The CB shall carry out the Stage 2 audit at the client's offices and management unit(s). The audit plan for the Stage 2 audit should be based on the results of the Stage 1 audit.

8.2.2.2.3 The CB shall include in the Stage 2 audit the following items:

A.- Evaluation of the management system(s)

The OC shall carry out a complete and exhaustive analysis of the critical aspects of forest management, necessary to ensure that the requirements of the current IRAM 39801 standard are implemented in:

- a) In the total of the management units included within the scope of the audit;
- b) In the total number of operations and activities included in the evaluated forest management.

In the event that the client is a certification group, the CB shall also assess the conformity of the management of the forest certification group with the current IRAM 39805 standard..

The CB shall assess the organization's ability to implement a consistent and effective management system. This evaluation shall include:

- a) The technical resources available (type and quantity of machines and tools, communication and support equipment, among others);
- b) The human resources available (people involved in management, level of training and experience, existence of external consultants, service provider companies, among others).

The audit should include an analysis of the documentation and records applicable to each level of management, sufficient to confirm that management is operating effectively and as described in the system documents.

B.- Audit at forest management unit level (on-site)

The audit at the management unit level shall include the following elements:

- a) Documents and records;

In each management unit selected for audit (on-site), the audit team shall identify and assess management documentation and a sufficient number and variety of records to verify compliance with applicable requirements.

NOTE: The documents and management records are verifiers in accordance with the respective requirements, defined in the IRAM 39801 standard.

- b) Sites

Within each management unit selected for the on-site audit, the audit team shall visit a variety and a sufficient number of sites necessary to make direct and objective observations of conformity with all the requirements of the IRAM 39801 standard that are being evaluated in that management unit, and for which said observation is a necessary means for verification in the range of specific management conditions of the producer requesting certification.

It is recommended that the audit team select the sites for observation based on an assessment of critical and risk points in the management system.

- c) Interested parties

The audit team shall interview a variety and a sufficient number of people affected by and involved in the assessed forest management necessary to make direct and objective observations of conformity with all the requirements of the IRAM 39801 standard that are applicable and for which such consultation is a necessary means for the verification of conformity, in the range of specific management conditions of the producer requesting forest certification.

The OC shall consult the interested parties in accordance with the General Procedure CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina PG 03. In force. Stakeholder's consultation to be implemented by certification bodies during forest management certification.

8.2.3 Conclusions of the initial certification audit

8.2.3.1 The CB shall analyse all the information and audit evidence obtained during the Stage 1 and 2 audits, to review the audit findings and agree on the audit conclusions.

8.2.3.2 The audit findings shall be classified into major nonconformities, minor nonconformities, and observations.

8.2.3.3 The OC shall analyse each nonconformity identified with the requirements of the current IRAM 39801, to determine if it is a minor or major non-compliance.

8.2.3.4 The OC shall analyse each nonconformity with the requirements of IRAM 39805 in force to determine if it is a minor or major non-compliance.

8.2.3.5 The CB may identify a minor problem or the initial stage of a problem, which in itself does not constitute a nonconformity, but from its evaluation, it is considered that it could lead to a future nonconformity, if it is not addressed for the client. These observations should be written in the evaluation report as "Observations" for the benefit of the client.

8.2.3.6 A nonconformity shall be considered Minor if:

- a) Is temporary, or
- b) Is of unusual (non-systematic) occurrence, or
- c) The impacts of the nonconformity are limited in their temporal and spatial scale, or
- e) Does not mean a critical failure to achieve the objective of the related IRAM 39801 criterion or other applicable certification requirements, including those defined in IRAM 39805.

8.2.3.7 A nonconformity shall be considered Major if (either alone or in combination with other nonconformities) it results in, or is likely to result in, a critical failure:

- a) To achieve the objectives of the related IRAM 39801 criterion or other applicable certification requirements, including those defined in IRAM 39805, or
- b) In a significant part of the implemented forest management system.

NOTE 1: The cumulative impact of a series of minor nonconformities may represent a critical or complete failure of a system and thus constitute a major nonconformity.

Note 2: A failure is considered critical and constitutes a nonconformity when:

- continues for a long period of time, or
- is repeated or systematic, or
- affects a wide area and/or causes significant damage, or
- is determined by the absence or complete failure of the forest management system, or
- is not corrected or adequately answered by the applicant for certification once identified, or
- affects the credibility and trust of the sustainable forest management certification obtained by the client organization.

8.2.3.8 The CB shall consider the impact of a non-conformity, taking into account the fragility and uniqueness of the assessed forest resources and the strength of the group's management system, in the case of group certification.

8.2.3.9 Each nonconformity identified by the CB shall give rise to a request for Corrective Action, Suspension Action or Certificate Revocation.

8.2.3.10 The CB shall establish the following deadlines for corrective action requests:

- a) Minor nonconformity shall be fully corrected within a period not exceeding one year;

NOTE: The term for the correction of a Minor nonconformity may be extended once and for a maximum period of one year, if the full application of the corrective measures was not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the forest producer requesting the certificate.

b) Major nonconformity shall be fully corrected within three (3) months of being identified.

NOTE 1: The term for the correction of a Major nonconformity may be extended once and for a maximum period of three months, if the full application of the corrective measures was not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the forest producer requesting the certificate.

NOTE 2: A Major nonconformity may require an immediate action to be taken by the forest producer, for example, immediate cessation of the use of a prohibited agrochemical, immediate cessation of dangerous activities or activities that cause serious environmental damage.

8.2.3.11 In the case of group certification, when the CB finds nonconformities at any individual site, either through internal audits of the client organization or its own audits, an investigation shall be carried out to determine if the other sites were affected. Therefore, OC shall require the client to review the nonconformities to determine if they indicate a general deficiency in forest management that applies to all sites or not. If found to be yes, corrective action shall be taken at both the group and individual sites. If found not, the client organization shall be able to demonstrate to the certification body justification for limiting surveillance actions. The certification body shall require evidence of said actions and increase the sampling frequency until it is sufficient and control is re-established.

8.2.3.12 The CB shall determine if the corrective action taken has been adequate and implemented within the designated period. If the corrective action implemented is not considered adequate or was implemented outside the established period:

a) A major nonconformity results in the suspension of the certificate, and

b) A minor nonconformity becomes a major nonconformity that shall be corrected within a maximum period of three months.

8.2.3.13 Corrective action requests shall not be closed if the corrective action has not been fully implemented as requested.

8.2.3.14 The CB shall not issue the certificate to the applicant for certification if there is any major nonconformity with the requirements of the applicable forest management standards.

8.2.3.15 The CB shall not issue the certificate to the applicant for certification if there is a high number of minor nonconformities, or the cumulative effects of these nonconformities represent a critical failure or the total breakdown of a system and therefore constitute a major nonconformity.

8.2.3.16 The CB, in the case of group certification, shall not issue the certificate to the applicant for certification (entity of the forest certification group) when there are nonconformities that show a general deficiency in forest management applicable to the entire management of the forest group certification.

8.2.3.17 In order to solve the obstacle caused by a non-conformity in a site, the client is not permitted to exclude the "problematic" site from the scope during the certification process.

8.2.3.18 The CB shall investigate any complaint of non-compliance with the requirements of the applicable forest management requisites, shall evaluate the validity of the complaint and information received, if this constitutes a major or minor non-conformity and the CB shall then act accordingly.

8.2.4 Information for the initial issue of certification

8.2.4.1 The CB shall make the certification decision based on its evaluation of the conformity of the forest management of the applicant for certification with the requirements specified in the applicable forest management standards (IRAM 39801 and/or IRAM 39805) and on the remaining requirements defined in the audit criteria

8.2.4.2 The CB shall make its certification decision based on the available reports and all relevant information.

8.2.4.3 The CB shall record in the certification audit report and in the associated checklist, all nonconformities identified during the audits.

8.2.4.4 The CB shall communicate to the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina Association the initial decision of certification or recertification within a period of time not exceeding 10 days from the decision making. Attached to the communication, the CB shall send a copy of the issued

certificate, a copy of the audit report and the completed CERFOAR – PEFC Argentine certification report form.

8.3 Surveillance activities

8.3.1 The CB shall develop its surveillance activities in such a way that the representative areas and functions, covered by the scope of the forest management system, are regularly monitored, and changes in the client and in its forest management system are taken into account. Surveillance activities shall include on-site surveillance audits.

8.3.2 In the case of group certification, the OG shall carry out its surveillance activities in order to confirm the continuous compliance of the group's management system with the requirements of IRAM 39805 and the continuous compliance of the management forest system(s) of the members of the group with the requirements of IRAM 39801.

8.3.3 The CB shall carry out surveillance audits no more than once a year to verify the continued compliance of the certificate holder with the specified certification requirements..

8.3.4 The CB shall develop and implement procedures to carry out surveillance audits that at least include the following items:

A.-. Review of documentation and records

a) During each surveillance audit, the CB shall review at least the following documents and records:

- Modifications of the forest area included in the scope of the certificate (including additions, exclusions and changes in the limits of the forest management unit or units);
- Conformity with relevant laws and regulations;
- Changes in the forest management system of the certificate holder;

NOTE: The OC evaluates the capacity of the certificate holder's management system to manage any change in the scope of the certificate, including increases in the number, size or complexity of the management units covered by the certificate, or the increase in the number of members in a certification group.

- The complaints received;
- Accident records;
- Training records;
- The operational plan for the next 12 months;
- Inventory records;
- Harvest records;
- Chemical use records;
- Records of sales and/or transfers of products made with PEFC claims (copies of invoices, invoices, shipping documents, packing slips),
- The procedures and registers of use of the PEFC Trademarks.

b) In the case of group certifications, the CB shall also review the following documents and records, as a minimum:

- Of the group management system;
- The updated list of group participants, including contact details, identification of the forest property and its size;
- The documents sent (formal communication) to the group members by the forest certification group entity and/or the forest certification group manager, since the previous surveillance assessment;
- Records of internal audits carried out by the forest certification group entity and/or the forest certification group manager;
- Records of corrective actions issued by the forest certification group entity and/or forest certification group manager and records of their implementation and follow-up.

B.- Evaluation at the forest management unit level

a) The CB shall carry out on-site audits of the forest management unit(s) included in the scope of the certificate no more than once a year. The date of the first surveillance audit after initial certification shall not be more than 12 months from the last day of the Stage 2 audit. The date of the first surveillance audit after recertification shall not be more than 12 months from the last day of the recertification audit.

b) The number of forest management units to be audited on site by the CB in a surveillance audit shall comply with the procedure established by the CB for sampling.

c) Surveillance audits of a forest certification group in all cases shall include an on-site evaluation of the entity of the forest certification group.

d) The on-site surveillance audit shall include:

- The evaluation of the conformity of the certificate holder, with all the conditions (corrective actions) on which the certification is based (conclusions of the previous audit);
- The progress of planned activities aimed at continual improvement, including performance evaluation;
- Review of any changes to the management system(s);
- Compliance with relevant legislation and regulations in the areas and functions selected for the surveillance audit;
- Consultation with stakeholders
- The evaluation of complaints or allegations of nonconformity with any aspect of the applicable forest management regulations;
- Evaluation of the use of PEFC trademarks and claims;
- Evaluation of a sample of sites and documents, and interviews with affected stakeholders, sufficient to verify that the management system continues to operate effectively.

NOTE: The CB can focus its verifications during the annual surveillance audit on specific elements of the applicable standard, ensuring that all aspects of the standard are evaluated during the validity period of the certificate. The CB can thus focus on particular aspects of the forest management system, reducing the time and costs of monitoring activities.

8.3.5 In surveillance audits, the CB shall base its evaluation of the conformity of the forest management of the certification client with the requirements of the applicable forest management standards, taking into account the previous evaluations and observations of the interested parties.

8.3.6 In the surveillance audits, the CB shall suspend the certificate in the presence of multiple major nonconformities that imply the collapse of the forest management system implemented by the forest producer responsible for the certificate.

8.3.7 The CB shall withdraw the certificate to the certification group if the entity of the forest certification group or a significant number of group participants do not meet the necessary requirements to maintain the certificate.

8.4 Recertification

8.4.1 Before the end date of the certification cycle is reached, the CB shall plan and carry out a recertification audit to evaluate the continuous compliance with all the requirements of the IRAM 39801 and / or IRAM 39805 standards in force and of the PEFC ST 2001 standard in force.

NOTE: The date of the recertification audit will not be more than 12 months from the last day of the last surveillance audit of the certification cycle.

8.4.2 The purpose of the recertification audit is to confirm the continuing conformity and effectiveness of the forest management system as a whole and of the group management system in the case of group certification, as well as its continuing improvement and scope applicability of certification.

8.4.3 The CB shall perform an on-site recertification audit that includes the following items:

- a) Continuous conformity with the current requirements of the PEFC ST 2001, IRAM 39801 and/or IRAM 39805 Standards in force and with the remaining certification criteria;
- b) The effectiveness of the forest management system(s) as a whole, in the light of internal and external changes and its continuing relevance and applicability to the scope of certification;
- c) The effectiveness of the certification group's forest management system;
- b) The certificate holder's demonstrated commitment to maintaining the effectiveness and continual improvement of the forest management system in order to enhance overall performance;
- c) Whether the operation of the certified forest management system contributes to the achievement of the organization's policy and objectives;
- d) Consultation with interested parties.

8.4.5 In cases where nonconformities or lack of evidence of conformity is identified, during a recertification audit, the certification body shall set deadlines for the implementation of corrective actions before the expiration of the certification.

8.4.6 The CB shall not reissue a certificate to the recertification applicant if there are major nonconformities with the requirements of the applicable forest management standards.

8.4.7 The CB shall prepare a forest management recertification audit report that has the same characteristics as the certification audit report, including the part that is public and available to interested parties and the accompanying documentation of a nature confidential in accordance with the General Procedure CERFOAR _ PEFC Argentina PG 05 in force.

8.4.8 The number of forest management units to be audited on site by the CB in a recertification audit shall comply with the procedure established by the CB for sampling.

ANNEX 1: Summary of competency requirements for personnel involved in certification audits

Parameter	Technical Expert	Forest Auditor	Lead Forest Auditor
Education	The CB shall ensure that the technical experts that make up a specific audit team have a graduate degree with the corresponding field or, failing that, have extensive and proven operational experience that compensates for their academic level.	Tertiary degree or higher in forestry	Bachelor's or postgraduate degree in forestry
Training in CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management	Training course recognized by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina on the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina sustainable management system and standards, (the cerfoar forest management training course shall be completed within the last 3 consecutive years)	Training course recognized by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina on the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina sustainable management system and standards, including the PEFC ST 2001 Mark standard (the cerfoar forest management training course shall be completed within the last 2 consecutive years)	
Training in CERFOAR- PEFC Argentina forest management audits	NA	Training course recognized by CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina in CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina sustainable forest management audits that includes auditing techniques based on ISO 19011.	
Work experience	Minimum of 5 years in the specific area of their competence	Minimum of full-time experience in forest management organizations If the auditor has a university degree in forestry this experience can be reduced to 1 year	Minimum of 2 years of full-time experience in the forestry sector
Audit training and experience	NA	The forest auditor, in the last three (3) years, has carried out, as an auditor in training, four (4) forest management audits under the direction of a qualified auditor. It can be reduced to two (2) CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management audits for qualified auditors to perform ISO 14001 and/or ISO 9001 audits in the forestry sector. This practical training shall be	The Lead Forest Auditor shall have carried out a minimum of three (3) full audits and shall have participated in one of them as a Lead Forest Auditor under the direction and guidance of a Responsible Forest Auditor or Qualified Leader. This practical training shall be developed in a period not exceeding two (2) years.

Parameter	Technical Expert	Forest Auditor	Lead Forest Auditor
		<p>developed in a period not exceeding three (3) years.</p> <p>Maintenance of qualification: a minimum of four (4) forest management audits per year, including at least two (2) CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management audits.</p>	<p>Maintenance of qualification: a minimum of four (4) forest management audits per year, including at least two (2) CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina forest management audits and having participated in two (2) as lead auditor.</p>

ANNEX 2: Methodology for assigning forest management audit times

1. Object

This Annex describes the methodology for allocating audit times that CBs shall implement to carry out audits for the CERFOAR – PEFC Argentina certification of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM).

2. Scope

The methodology described is applied to the allocation of time to carry out the initial certification audit, the surveillance audits and the recertification audit of a management unit or a group of management units managed under the guidelines of the group certification.

3. General requirements

3.1 The CB shall prepare a forest management audit plan taking into account the following characteristics of the management unit or units that have a direct impact on the allocation of audit times:

- a) The requirements defined by IRAM 39801 and/or 39805 and ST 2001 in force;
- b) The total area defined in the scope of the certificate;
- c) The distribution of the area defined in the scope of the certificate (concentrated in a single management unit or disaggregated into multiple management units);
- d) The number of members in the case of group certification;
- e) The complexity of forest management;
- f) Any outsourcing of any activity included in the scope of the forest management standard, and
- f) The complexity of the forest resources to be evaluated (native or planted forest, among others).

3.2 The CB shall also consider, when preparing the audit plan, the times necessary to:

- a) Consult the interested parties;
- b) Carry out evaluations of the management units in situ;
- c) Travel time (both to reach the assessment area and to travel between sites).

4. Time allocation for on-site audits

4.1 The following table provides guidelines that the CB shall follow for the allocation of the total time of the audit team to carry out on-site audits (field audit activities):

GUIDE FOR ALLOCATION OF ON-SITE AUDIT DAYS				
Total area	Initial Audit		Surveillance audit	Recertification audit
	Etapas 1	Etapas 2		
0-1000	1	1	1	1 ½
1.000-5.000	1	1 - 2	1-2	1 - 2
5,001-10,000	1* ¹	2	2	2
10,001-25,000	2* ¹	2 - 3	2	2 - 3
25001 - 50000	2* ¹	3	2 - 3	3
50.001 – 100.000	2* ¹	3 - 4	3	3 - 4
100,001 +	3* ¹	4* ² -	3* ³ -	4* ² -

* 1: Add ½ day in case of group certification

* 2: Add 3 days for every 100,000 ha, above 100,000 ha

* 3: Add 1.5 days for every 100,000 ha, above 100,000 ha

4.2 When assigning audit times, the CB shall consider the following aspects that may increase the number of days needed:

a) Access difficulties

Additional travel time may be necessary in places where infrastructure is limited. The OC shall justify this increase over the times recommended by the table.

b) Spatial dispersion of management units

Additional travel time may be required for the audit of management units (group certification or certification of a single forest producer with multiple management units) dispersed over a large geographical area and distant from each other. The OC shall justify this increase over the times recommended by the table.

c) Complex stakeholder context

Additional audit days shall be considered in a very difficult social context, or when stakeholders need to be visited individually. The OC shall justify this increase over the times recommended by the table.

d) Significant number of complaints

Every complaint shall be thoroughly investigated. Appropriate additional time may be allotted to investigate all relevant complaints received. The OC shall justify this increase over the times recommended by the table.

e) Number of major nonconformities

Any corrective action of an identified major nonconformity shall be evaluated in terms of the documented plan for its implementation, and may also require a performance evaluation in the field. The OC shall justify this increase over the times recommended by the table.

d) Extension of the scope of the certificate

Adding new members to a certification group or adding forest area to an individual certification may require additional audit days. The OC shall justify this increase over the times recommended by the table.

4.3 When assigning audit times, the CB shall consider the following aspects that can reduce the number of days needed:

- a) Large sectors of the area to be included or included in the scope of the certificate that are not actively used or managed;
- d) Low management impact;
- e) Reduced number of staff and subcontracted operations;
- f) Reduced number of stakeholders;
- g) The organization or the entity responsible for the management of the certification group implements systematic internal audits or has a well-defined monitoring and control system that regularly evaluates all management areas;
- h) Geographic or management homogeneity.