

# PEFC N 04:2022

## Requirements for certification bodies and accreditation bodies

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Norway

PEFC N 06  
Procedures for development and  
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certification system

PEFC N 07  
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### Forest certification

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PEFC N 03  
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PEFC ST 2002 Chain of Custody for  
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## **Preface:**

### **Revision of PEFC Norway's forest certification system**

The PEFC forest certification system is revised every 5 years and PEFC Norway started the audit process on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 with an open invitation for input to the process and participation in the working committee.

In the period June 2020 to June 2022, the Working Committee has revised the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard and other standards included in the system.

The working committee has consisted of representatives from the following organisations:

- The United Federation of Trade Unions
- National Association of Outdoor Recreation Councils
- Women in forestry
- Norwegian Association of Heavy Equipment Contractors
- Nature and Youth - Young Friends of the Earth Norway
- Norwegian Forest Owners' Federation
- NORSKOG – forest owner member organization
- The Norwegian Association for Outdoor Organisations
- Statskog SF
- Sabima - umbrella organization for the biological associations in Norway
- Skognæringa Kyst
- Norwegian Pulp and Paper Association
- Norwegian Wood Industry Federation
- WWF Norway
- ZERO - Zero Emission Resource Organisation

In addition, the following have been represented as observers in the working committee:

- The Norwegian Environment Agency
- The Norwegian Agriculture Agency
- NIBIO - Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research
- NINA - Norwegian Institute for Nature Research
- The Forestry Extension Institute
- Statsbygg

Oslo, 30 June 2022

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The official version of the document is Norwegian but is also translated into English. In case of doubt, it is the Norwegian version that is applicable.

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## **1 Introduction**

This document is part of PEFC Norway certification system for sustainable forest management.

PEFC certification and auditing shall be carried out by an objective and independent third party.

Certification organizations cannot be involved in standard setting processes as responsible for the process or for decisions related to these processes.

The requirements are normative for certification organisations that carry out certification of sustainable forest management on individual properties and/or through group certification.

For certification of forest management in accordance with PEFC Norway its certification system, the documents PEFC N 01, PEFC N 02, PEFC N 03 and PEFC N04 apply.

PEFC Chain of Custody certification is done in accordance with PEFC's international traceability certification requirements in the current edition of the PEFC ST 2003 Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard. Criteria for certification bodies that perform certification and auditing of Chain of Custody are set out in the current edition of PEFC ST 2003 Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard.

The use of the PEFC trademark shall take place in accordance with the requirements of the current edition of PEFC 2001 Trademark Rules – Requirements.

## **2 Scope**

This document describes requirements for certification organisations which certify and inspect PEFC forest certification in Norway. The document also defines requirements for certification and accreditation procedures.

This document shall be used in accordance with the PEFC Norway its certification system for:

- a. Certification of sustainable forest management according to the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard, PEFC N 02.
- b. Certification of sustainable forestry according to PEFC Norway's requirements for individual and group certification, PEFC N 03.
- c. Use of the PEFC label in accordance with the applicable international standard PEFC ST 2001 Trademark Rules – Requirements.

## **3 References**

The following documents are included as references to requirements for certification organisations:

- a. Norwegian PEFC Certification System for Sustainable Forestry – PEFC N 01
- b. Norwegian PEFC Forest standard – PEFC N 02
- c. PEFC Norway's requirements for direct and group certification – PEFC N 03

- d. PEFC Norway's requirements for certification bodies and accreditation bodies – PEFC N 04
- e. PEFC Norway's guide to PEFC notification of certification bodies – PEFC N 07
- f. Glossary and definitions - PEFC N 05
- g. PEFC Trademark Rules - Requirements - PEFC ST 2001
- h. Current edition of NS/EN ISO/IEC 17021: Compliance assessment - Requirements for bodies offering audit and certification of management systems
- i. Current edition of NS/EN ISO/IEC 19011 Guidelines for auditing management systems
- j. Current edition of IAF MD 1IAF Mandatory Document for the Certification of Multiple Sites Based on Sampling
- k. Current edition of IAF MD 2IAF Mandatory Document for the Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems

## **4 Definitions**

This document uses definitions described in PEFC N 05 – Glossary and Definitions.

## **5 Certification body requirements**

### **5.1 Accreditation**

Certification bodies that perform forest certification must be accredited for this. Accreditation is issued by Norwegian Accreditation or by the corresponding accreditation body included in the International Accreditation Forum (IAFs) and/or in the EUROPEAN Cooperation for Accreditation (EA) Agreement on Mutual Recognition.

### **5.2 PEFC Notification**

Certification bodies that carry out forest certification in Norway after PEFC Norway's forest certification shall be notified by PEFC Norway in accordance with PEFC N 07 – Guidelines for notification of certification bodies.

### **5.3 Certification of sustainable forestry, including group certification**

The criteria that qualify certification bodies to be able to practice forest certification are based on general norms for quality and environmental certification as well as relevant forest and environmental expertise.

The certification body shall:

- a. Meet the general criteria for certification bodies defined in NS-EN ISO/IEC 17021 as well as supplementary requirements defined in this standard.
- b. Have a good knowledge and understanding of PEFC Norway's certification system for sustainable forestry.

- c. Have relevant expertise on forest management that includes both economic, social and environmental aspects and the effects of forestry.

Professional forestry and environmental expertise are documented by the certification body having experience in the field and/or having personnel who, through education and relevant experience, possess this expertise.

#### **5.3.1 Certificate Termination**

The certificate holder may terminate the certificate in writing during the validity period. The termination has effect from the time the certification organization receives written termination or from the date on which the parties have been reconciled.

#### **5.3.2 Suspension and withdrawal of certificates**

In the event of suspension or withdrawal of individual property certificates or group certificates, the certification organisation must notify PEFC Norway of this immediately.

## **6 Requirements relating to auditors**

The certification organization is responsible for ensuring that competent auditors are used who have relevant knowledge of the certifying process and conditions related to forest certification.

The certification organization shall have procedures for selecting auditors. The competence of auditors shall be in accordance with ISO 17021, Chapter 7 and they shall have up-to-date and satisfactory knowledge of the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard.

The auditors shall:

- a. Meet the requirements set out within the framework for accredited certification of management systems under ISO/IEC 17021 as well as the requirements for auditing management systems stipulated in the NS-EN ISO 19011 standard.
- b. Master the content of PEFC Norway certification system for sustainable forestry.
- c. Have relevant expertise in forest management that encompasses both the economic, social and environmental aspects and the effects associated with active forestry. It is also considered important that the competence includes knowledge of geographical variation.

Competence and experience are important because the work entails a large element of discretion.

To control compliance with the Norwegian PEFC Forestry Standard, the auditor shall have a thorough knowledge of forestry and the impact of forestry on the environment.

When auditing, persons with qualified and relevant forest and environmental expertise shall be used when checking compliance with the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard.

Qualified forest competence means at least bachelor level in forest subjects as well as 4 years relevant practice from forestry or environmental management related to forests. Qualified environmental competence means relevant competence at bachelor's level covering the fields of forest ecology/forest biology and 4 years relevant practice from forestry or environmental management related to forests.

## **7 Certification and audit procedures**

The certification bodies shall establish internal procedures for the implementation of certification and audit of sustainable forestry, including group certification of sustainable forestry. The procedures shall comply with the requirements of NS-EN ISO/IEC 17021 as well as the requirements for auditing management systems stipulated in the standard NS-EN ISO 19011.

The certification bodies shall include relevant information from external parties (e.g. government agencies, organisations, etc.) as part of the audit evidence. Where the certification body has assessed external inquiries that have not been solved by the certificate holder, the assessment of the case shall be handed out on request.

The objective of auditing is, based on evidence, to judge whether the activities of the certificate holder are in line with the requirements for:

- Norwegian PEFC Forestry Certification System for Sustainable Forestry; PEFC N 01 - PEFC N 03.
- Use of the PEFC trademark, in accordance with the current version of PEFC ST 2001 Trademark Rules – Requirements standard, if the certificate holder has a PEFC logo license.

The audit shall, through a risk-based approach, assess how management and monitoring ensure that the certification requirements are met. The auditor's risk assessment as a basis for auditing shall be documented and reproduced briefly in the certification report

### ***7.1 Scope and arrangements for the certification organization's audit upon initial certification***

The procedure for auditing depends on how the certificate holder is organized and what is included in the certificate.

It is assumed that the entire certificate holder's organisation related to forest management and timber sales is covered by the certificate. In their plans for internal auditing, the certificate holder must include all parts of the organisation covered by the certificate and must establish an arrangement with follow-up of work carried out by subcontractors that ensures that timber suppliers comply with the requirements of the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard.

Upon its initial audit, the certification body must verify that the environmental management system has been implemented and that it includes the conditions required by PEFC and the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard. It must also be considered whether arrangements for follow-up of timber suppliers are sufficient. In this connection, it is important to verify that knowledge about forestry measures in relation to ISO 14001 and the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard is communicated to the individual supplier.

It must also be possible to verify that forestry measures in accordance with the Norwegian PEFC Forestry Standard have been carried out in accordance with established requirements before a certificate is issued. Such verifications must take place on a random sample basis in the field and be sufficient to give confidence that the certificate holder's system works in a satisfactory manner. The following conditions must be taken into account when selecting random samples:



- a. Number of district offices. At more than 3, the multi-site enterprise scheme as described in IAF MD 1 can be used.
- b. Geographical variations. Ensure a representative selection of different geographical variations occurring in the certificate holder.
- c. Difficult geographical areas, roads, access etc.
- d. Variations if there are different parties responsible for forest processing.
- e. Variations in types of forest management.
- f. Number of operations and their size.
- g. The certification body's experience with previous certifications and the occurrence of errors.

The certification body must describe how the above conditions are safeguarded.

## **7.2 Frequency and scope of the certification body's follow-up**

The certification body shall annually, and with a maximum interval of 12 months, carry out follow-up audits. Maximum period for recertification audit is 5 years.

ISO 17021, Chapter 9.6.2 describes in detail which conditions will normally be subject to verification in the event of follow-up audits. Similarly, the requirements for recertification are described in Chapter 9. 6.3.

Follow-up audits shall also be based on the requirements set out in the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard and the trade-off made between economic, ecological and social objectives in each individual requirement point.

According to the requirements for follow-up, ISO 17021, Chapter 9.1.3.3 has specified that follow-up audits shall be carried out at least once a year and that the date of the first follow-up audit after initial certification shall be within 12 months from the last day of the audit at stage 2.

It is assumed that the certification body acts in connection with complaints directed to the certification body on the activities exercised by the certified organisation. Such measures may include a new visit, document review, and possibly at the next stage suspension and/or withdrawal. If the complainant does not have the case processed satisfactorily by the certification body, he can appeal to the certification body's accreditation body. The certification body is also obliged to ensure that certified organisations have records of all enquiries related to ISO 14001, and that necessary measures have been implemented (ref. ISO 17021, Chapter 9. 9.2).

In relation to the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard, the certification bodies must, on their follow-up, carry out on a random verifications of forestry measures to a sufficiently large extent. Among the forestry measures to be verified, places must also be selected where the certificate holder himself has carried out verifications to see that this work has been carried out in a satisfactory manner. This is in addition to regular revision of whether the management system is maintained and functioning as intended. The table below indicates the minimum number of samples for follow-up audits.

Annual harvest volume (1000 m3):	<,500	500 - 999	1.000 - 1.499	> 1,500
Min. samples during follow-up audit:	5	7	9	10

Follow-up audits must also include verification of how forest area management takes place at different stages between two logging sites to see if this complies with the requirements of the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard.

### **7.3 Public certification report**

After each certification, recertification and follow-up audits, a summary of the certification body's audit report shall be prepared and published. The summary shall be prepared by the certification body and contain:

- a. Description of which organization and business are certified.
- b. Scope and date of the audit completed.
- c. A general description of conclusions and improvement points.
- d. A summary of non-conformances and observations linked with the practising of the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard for sustainable forestry.
- e. A description of how relevant information from external parties is handled.
- f. A brief reproduction of the auditor's risk assessment as a basis for auditing.
- g. The summary shall not contain tasks of an internal nature or of importance to the certified organization's business activities.

All summaries shall be made publicly available by the certificate holder, and be posted on their website, if they have such. The certification body or certificate holder shall submit the summary to the PEFC Norway for publication on PEFC's website.

## **8 Certificate text**

Certificates issued must clearly describe which activities are included in the certification and who it includes. The specified standards shall be referred to as specified in Chapter 8.1.

The following must appear on the certificate:

"Forest management in accordance with the Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard for Sustainable Forestry"

### **8.1 References on the certificate**

The following references shall be used on the certificate for direct and group certification:

Norwegian PEFC Forest Standard – PEFC N 02:2022

and

Requirements for individual and group certification – PEFC N 03:2022

In addition, in both cases, reference shall be made to the current NS-EN ISO 14001.

It should be stated that the certification has been carried out in accordance with the Norwegian PEFC Forestry Certification System for sustainable forestry.

Accreditation of the relevant accreditation body shall appear on the certificate.

## **9 Criteria for reactions in case of serious errors and deficiencies**

The certification body shall have procedures for informing PEFC Norway about all new certificates, changes in certificates, suspension and withdrawal of certificates.

The certification body's criteria for sanctions in the event of serious errors and defects are regulated in ISO 17021, Chapter 9.6. The certification body shall have a routine for suspension, withdrawal and change of the validity of the certificate. The certification body shall ensure that the certificate holder is familiar with criteria for sanctions in the event of serious errors and deficiencies and keep the certificate holder informed on ongoing information about findings that may have an impact on the validity of the certificate.

If there is a disagreement about the interpretation of standards and requirements, this may be brought before the PEFC Norway, see PEFC N 01 Chapter 13.

If audits or other information reveal persistent and serious breaches of the requirements of the forest management system, despite written information from the certification body, the certification bodies will carry out an assessment of the severity, as well as the extent of the nonconformity and, based on this, possibly implement one of the following measures:

- Certificate Suspension
- Certificate Withdrawal

The certificate holder shall receive written notice of the measure and where it makes sense, with the possibility of rectifying the defect before suspension or withdrawal is initiated.

Both measures mean that the certificate holder no longer has a valid certificate.

Reference is also made to Chapter 8.2.1 in PEFC N 03 (Individual and Group Certification Requirements) describing guidelines for the treatment of certification deviations in forest owners with group certification agreements.

### **9.1.1 Certificate Suspension**

The certificate can be suspended, that is, invalidated for a limited time, usually up to 3 months. There are two main reasons for suspension:

1. Satisfactory corrective measures for given non-conformities in relation to steering documents have not been implemented within given deadlines;
2. Directly as a result of persistent minor or gross individual violations of statutory requirements in the certified entity.

When assessing whether the certificate is to be suspended, it is necessary to differentiate between whether gross individual breaches of statutory requirements are due to obvious defects in the certificate holder's procedures and follow-up of the same, or purely down to human error on the part of the forest owner, a contractor or employee. In the latter case, the reactions must be aimed at the party responsible for the gross breach of statutory requirements.

The suspension will be revoked when the certificate holder has implemented satisfactory corrective measures and these have been confirmed by means of an audit of the certification

body. Suspension and revocation of suspension must be reported immediately to PEFC Norway and be made publicly accessible.

#### **9.1.2 Certificate Withdrawal**

The certificate may be withdrawn when, for example, necessary corrective measures in the event of suspension are not taken within given deadlines, when significant requirements elements of the standards are no longer practiced or often waived in the certified unit, and in case of repetition of gross violations of statutory requirements of the certified entity.

Written notice will be submitted with a request for the return of all copies of certificates. The certification relationship ceases, and notification of revoked certificate is immediately sent to PEFC Norway and relevant databases.

If the organization wants a new certificate, the certification process must be carried out as for initial certification.

## **10 Requirements for accreditation bodies**

The accreditation body shall be a member of the European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA) and/or the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). Furthermore, the accreditation body shall have implemented procedures described in applicable ISO/IEC 17011 and other documents recognised by EA and the IAF.