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PEFC Conformity Assessment

PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System



Client

Name	PEFC Council
Contact person	Mr. H. Inhaizer and Mr. M. Berger
Address	Case Postale 636 CH-1215 Genève 15 Switzerland
Telephone	+41 22 799 45 40
Fax	+41 22 799 45 50
Email	michael.berger@pefc.org
Website	www.pefc.org

Form international B.V.

Contact person	Mr. Rutger de Wolf
Address	Eijerdijk 87 8051 MS Hattem Netherlands
Telephone	+31(0) 384448990
Email	info@forminternational.nl
Website	www.forminternational.nl
Authors	Mr. Rutger de Wolf, Ms. Esther Boer, Ms. Ronja Knippers, Mr. Dieter Mullemeister, Ms. Anke Scheper
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Acronyms

CAR	Corrective Action Request
CB	Certifying Body
CoC	Chain of Custody
IAF	International Accreditation Working Group
ILO	International Labour Organization
N.A.	Not applicable
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NGB	National Governing Body
PEFC GD	Guidance Document of PEFC International
PEFC IGD	PEFC Informative Guide
PEFC ST	Standard Document of PEFC International
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
PEFCC TD	PEFC Council Technical Document
Req.	Requirement
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management



1. Introduction

The Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) admits national schemes for Sustainable Forest Management to the PEFC system, after the national schemes are endorsed based on a positive evaluation by an independent Assessor. Every five years, the endorsed national schemes need to be revised after which an independent Assessor assesses whether the revised scheme is in conformity with the PEFC Council's standard and system requirements.

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System against PEFC Council requirements for forest certification schemes. The application for PEFC endorsement was submitted in July 2021.

PEFC Council appointed Form International as the independent Assessor to carry out the conformity assessment. This assessment report will be the basis for the decision of the PEFC Council and provides a recommendation to the PEFC Board on the formal endorsement of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM).

1.1. Form International

The assessment benefited from Form International's specific experience and expertise in certification and SFM. Form International has implemented many studies in which national or international certification standards were assessed against another standard or scheme, for example for the Forest Stewardship Council and Keurhout. Moreover, Form International has carried out conformity assessments for PEFC, such as the Certification Schemes of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Congo Basin, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, UK, Uruguay, USA and Canada.

The conformity assessment team consisted of Mr. Rutger de Wolf, Ms. Esther Boer, Ms. Ronja Knippers, Mr. Dieter Müllemeister and Ms. Anke Scheper (Forestry Experts and Registered PEFC Assessors) and is referred to as the Assessor in this report.

1.2. Scope of the assessment

The scope and process of the assessment follow the assessment of a new system, as elaborated in PEFC GD 1007:2017 chapter 6.3.1, which means a "full assessment". The conformity of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System is assessed against the PEFC standards and system requirements as presented in PEFC IGD 1007:2017.



1.3. Documents and resources used

Various documents and resources were used in this conformity assessment. The documents received from National Governing Bodies (NGBs) from North Macedonia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, respectively the Council for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republic of Macedonia, the Institute for forest certification in Slovenia, and the Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma” of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter jointly referred to as the PEFC Balkan NGBs) are shown in Table 1.1. Table 1.2 lists the documents used from PEFC Council. Besides these documents, the websites used by the PEFC Balkan NGBs was consulted during the assessment.

Table 1.1 Documents used for the conformity assessment

Number	Title
PEFC BS 01:2021	Description of PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System
PEFC BS 02:2020 V2	Standard setting and revision procedures (as received in January 2022)
PEFC MK 03:2021 V2	PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in North Macedonia (as received in January 2022)
PEFC SL 03:2021 V2	PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in Slovenia (as received in February 2022)
PEFC B&H 03:2021 V2	PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina (as received in January 2022)
PEFC BS 04:2021	Certification and accreditation procedures
PEFC BS 05:2021	Notification of Certification Bodies for Chain of Custody and Forest Management Certification
PEFC BS 06:2021 V2	Group Forest Management Certification Rules and Procedures (as received in January 2022)
PEFC BS 07:2021	Issuance of PEFC trademarks license procedures
PEFC BS 08:2020	Complaints and appeals procedures
PEFC ST 2001:2020	PEFC Trademark Rules - Requirements
PEFC ST 2002:2020	Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products - Requirements
PEFC ST 2003:2020	Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard
(none)	Development report
(none)	PEFC Checklists for • Standard-setting Procedures and process for all three countries; • Sustainable Forest Management for all three countries; • Group Forest Management Certification; • Scheme Administration; • Certification and Accreditation Procedures.
(none)	Documents providing evidence of the standard setting process



Table 1.2 The PEFC Council Technical documents used.

#	PEFC Council document	Date
1	PEFC GD 1007:2017 Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Systems and their Revision	1 November 2017
2	PEFCC TD Annex 1: Terms and Definitions	27 October 2006
3	PEFCC TD Annex 6: Certification and Accreditation Procedures	5 October 2007
4	PEFCC TD Annex 7: Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their Revisions	5 October 2007
5	PEFC ST 1001:2017 Standard-setting – Requirements	15 November 2017
6	PEFC ST 1002:2018 Group Forest Management – Requirements	28 November 2018
7	PEFC ST 1003:2018 Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements	28 November 2018
8	PEFC ST 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules - Requirements	14 February 2020
9	PEFC ST 2002:2020 Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products - Requirements	14 February 2020
10	PEFC ST 2003:2020 Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard	14 February 2020
11	PEFC GD 1005:2020 Issuance of PEFC trademarks usage licences by the PEFC Council	12 February 2020
12	PEFC Checklist – Standard-setting Procedures and process	30 November 2019
13	PEFC Checklist – Group Forest Management Certification	30 November 2019
14	PEFC Checklist – Sustainable Forest Management	30 November 2019
15	PEFC Checklist – Certification and Accreditation Procedures (Annex 6)	30 November 2019
16	PEFC Secretariat's clarification concerning the content of the assessment report (clarification 30/10/12).	30 October 2012

1.4. Methodology adopted

The work consisted of a desk study and field assessment in which an evaluation of the conformity was conducted. The assessment enabled the Assessor to identify any missing information, similarities and differences between the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System and the PEFC Council's standards and system requirements. Next to a general analysis of the structure of the system, the assessment consisted of:

1. Assessment of the Standard-setting Procedures and process

This aspect is evaluated on the basis of PEFC ST 1001:2017 Standard-setting - Requirements. The PEFC Checklist has been used to assess the compliance of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System with the requirements of PEFC concerning the Standard-setting Procedures and the actual process. The criteria for the Standard-setting Procedure have been assessed in two stages:

1. compliance of the scheme documented procedures ('Procedures')
2. compliance of the standard-setting process itself with the procedures ('Process')



To assess the standard-setting process, the standard development report, explanations from the PEFC Balkan NGBs, additional evidential records and results of stakeholder consultations are used to evaluate compliance of the standard-setting process.

The PEFC Council conducted an international public consultation on the scheme, and a stakeholder survey was organized by Form International through questionnaires that were sent out to members of the Working Groups and other relevant stakeholders identified by the PEFC Balkan NGBs during the standard-setting process.

2. Assessment of the Sustainable Forest Management standard

The compliance of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System with PEFC ST 1003:2018 Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements (including Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) was assessed based on the PEFC Checklist.

3. Assessment of the Chain of Custody standard

The compliance of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System with PEFC ST 2002:2020 – Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products - Requirements was assessed based on the PEFC Checklist.

4. Assessment of the Group Certification model

The compliance of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System with PEFC ST 1002:2010, Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements was assessed based on the PEFC Checklist.

5. Assessment of the Certification and Accreditation Procedures

The compliance of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System with PEFC TD Annex 6 (Certification and accreditation procedures) and PEFC ST 2003:2012 was assessed based the PEFC Checklist.

6. Other aspects regarding functions and efficiency of the scheme

The functions and efficiency of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System were evaluated on the basis of descriptions and information obtained in correspondence with the PEFC Balkan NGBs and stakeholders.

7. Field assessment to the Republic Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

As this is the initial assessment of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System and the first assessment of the SFM standard of the Republic Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, a field visit was conducted to meet the people who have been involved in the standard-setting process. By consulting various stakeholders, Form International obtained vital information on the way the standard was developed, revised and how it is received by stakeholders. Interviews were held with a wide range of stakeholders, including public and private forest managers, and NGOs.



This mission enabled the Assessor:

- The clarification of any outstanding issues highlighted during the initial assessment;
- Discussions with the various stakeholders, involved in the standard setting process, and other external organisations who provided input and feedback to the Assessor.

The field visit was conducted during the commenting period of the PEFC Balkan NGBs. The actual planning of the field visit was done in close consultation with the Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma” of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The report is written in line with the guidelines of the PEFC Council, PEFC GD 1007:2017 Appendix 2 for the content of an assessment report, and the additional PEFC Secretariat’s clarification of 30 October 2012.

1.5. Assessment process

The conformity assessment process consisted of the following steps:

1. Public consultation

The international public consultation was held from 5 August to 2 October 2021. No comments were received (Annex 3).

The national stakeholder survey was held from 10 to 26 November. Form International sent out questionnaires to all stakeholders that were members of the Working Groups and a selection of additional stakeholders that were invited and/or participated in public consultation meetings during the revision process. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, in total 30 questionnaires were sent out, 13 responses were received. For North Macedonia, in total 43 questionnaires were sent out, 7 responses were received. For Slovenia, in total 18 questionnaires were sent out, 2 responses were received.

2. Technical desk study

The technical desk study was carried out on the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System documentation. It comprised of a review of the documentation and a verification of the elaborated PEFC Checklist. During the assessment additional information was requested from the PEFC Balkan NGBs.

3. Elaboration of draft report

The draft report was sent to the PEFC Balkan NGBs and PEFC Council Secretariat on 21 December 2021.

4. Commenting period

Based on the draft report, the PEFC Balkan NGBs will provide responses, additional references, information and clarifications to the draft report.



5. Field visit to the Republic Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

During the commenting period, a field visit was conducted to the Republic Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina to interview individuals and organisations regarding the standard setting process and specific issues and concerns.

6. Elaboration of final draft report

Based on the responses and additional references and clarifications to the draft report, a final draft report was developed and was sent to PEFC Council Secretariat on 3 February 2022.

7. Internal review of the final draft report

The PEFC Council Secretariat conducted an internal review and contributed to the final report by providing Form International with their feedback and comments.

8. Final analysis and reporting

Based on the feedback and comments from PEFC Council Secretariat's internal review, a final report was developed and was sent to the PEFC Council Secretariat on 5 April 2022.

A timetable of the assessment process is presented below.

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7*	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1a. International public consultation	**														
1b. Stakeholder survey															
2. Technical desk study															
3. Elaboration of draft report															
4. Commenting period The PEFC Balkan NGBs															
5. Field visit to the Republic Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina															
6. Elaboration of final draft report															
7. Internal review															
8. Elaboration final report															

* This period included an additional two weeks break, due to holiday season.

** Already finished at the start of the Assessor's assessment process.



1.6. Report structure

The structure of the report follows the guidance of PEFC GD 1007:2017:

Chapter 2	Explicit statement in the form of a recommendation on whether the Board of Directors of PEFC should endorse the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System.
Chapter 3	Summary of the findings.
Chapter 4	Overview of the key structures of the scheme.
Chapter 5	Standard-setting Procedures – assessment results.
Chapter 6	Bosnia & Herzegovina standard-setting process – assessment results.
Chapter 7	North Macedonia standard-setting process – assessment results.
Chapter 8	Slovenia standard-setting process – assessment results.
Chapter 9	Bosnia & Herzegovina Forest management standard – assessment results.
Chapter 10	North Macedonia Forest management standard – assessment results.
Chapter 11	Slovenia Forest management standard – assessment results.
Chapter 13	Group certification requirements – assessment results.
Chapter 14	Chain of Custody standard – assessment results.
Chapter 15	Certification and accreditation procedures – assessment results.
Chapter 16	Other aspects related to the System.

The PEFC Checklists are enclosed in Annex 1. Results of the stakeholder survey and international consultation are presented in respectively Annex 2 and Annex 3. Feedback and comments of the internal review are presented in Annex 4.



2. Recommendation

Based on the results of this conformity assessment, Form International recommends the PEFC Board of Directors **to endorse the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System**, on the condition that the remaining fourteen (14) nonconformities in the System shall be corrected within six (6) months after endorsement:

- three (3) nonconformities in the Standard-setting Procedures;
- two (2) in the Forest Management Standard of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- four (4) in the Forest Management Standard of North Macedonia
- five (5) in the Forest Management Standard of Slovenia.

All nonconformities are classified as minor.

In relation to the standard-setting processes, fourteen (14) nonconformities are found:

- five (5) in the standard-setting process of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- two (2) in the standard-setting process of North Macedonia;
- seven (7) in the standard-setting process of Slovenia.

With regards to the standard-setting process of Slovenia, there is a risk that stakeholders were insufficiently aware of their opportunities to participate in the process and/or comment on the enquiry draft. Therefore, there is insufficient confidence that stakeholders have taken their opportunity to comment on the revised standard. Form International recommends the PEFC Board of Directors to request a corrective action from the Institute of Forest Certification (Slovenia), to give all stakeholders in Slovenia another opportunity to provide their comments and input on the Forest Management Standard of Slovenia.

The nonconformities found in the process of Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia did not undermine or negatively affect the standard-setting process.



3. Summary of the Findings

3.1. Overall

The PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System is in general quite complete and clear. However, there were three (3) nonconformities found in the Standard-setting Procedures, five (5) in the standard-setting process of Bosnia and Herzegovina, two (2) in the standard-setting process of North Macedonia, seven (7) in the standard-setting process of Slovenia, two (2) in the Forest Management Standard of Bosnia and Herzegovina, four (4) in the Forest Management Standard of North Macedonia, five (5) in the Forest Management Standard of Slovenia. This is in total 28 nonconformities, all classified as minor.

3.2. Structure of the System

The PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System currently covers three countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina (only Republic Srpska), North Macedonia and Slovenia. These three countries all have their own national governing bodies: The Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma”, The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republic of Macedonia and The Institute of Forest Certification respectively. The NGBs are responsible for standard setting and administration of the certification scheme. The scheme has several common procedures applying to all three countries, such as standard-setting procedures, group certification requirements, chain of custody standard, and certification and accreditation procedures. Additionally, country specific forest management standards are developed. As such, the standard-setting processes were three separate (country specific) processes.

3.3. Standard-setting Procedures

The Standard-setting Procedures are regulated in PEFC BS 02:2020 V2. It is a clearly structured document. There are three (3) non-conformities found, all of which are classified as minor. The non-conformities relate to:

1. Public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process (req. 6.3.1);
2. Decision-making thresholds that quantify consensus during votes (req. 6.4.6);
3. Initiation of dispute resolution in accordance with procedures (req. 6.4.8).

3.4. Standard-setting process – Bosnia and Herzegovina

The standard-setting process in Bosnia and Herzegovina went relatively well, however, five (5) non-conformities are found:

1. Risk assessment in the proposal for the creation of a new standard (req. 6.1.1d);
2. Announcement and invitation with access to the proposal for the standard (req. 6.3.1b);
3. Identification of stakeholder groups (req. 6.4.3);

4. Announcement of the start and end dates of the public consultation (req. 6.5.1a);
5. Establishment of a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard (req. 8.2.1).

Based on the assessment it is concluded that the nonconformities found in the standard-setting process did not undermine or damage the review process. It would therefore not be adequate to redo the standard-setting process based on the nonconformities found in the process.

3.5. Standard-setting process – North Macedonia

The standard-setting process in North Macedonia went relatively well, however, two (2) non-conformities are found:

1. Establishment of a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard (req. 8.2.1);
2. Feedback received through all channels (req. 8.2.2).

Based on the assessment it is concluded that the nonconformities found in the standard-setting process did not undermine or damage the review process. It would therefore not be adequate to redo the standard-setting process based on the nonconformities found in the process.

3.6. Standard-setting process – Slovenia

The standard-setting process in Slovenia went relatively well, however, seven (7) non-conformities are found, all classified as minor:

1. Opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process, requests to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) or themselves for the WG, and explicit invitation and instruction on submitting feedback on the scope and standard setting process (req. 6.3.1c-e);
2. A direct invitation to comment on the enquiry draft (req. 6.5.1b);
3. The approval date and the date of the next periodic review (req. 7.2.2d);
4. Establishment of a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard (req. 8.2.1);
5. Application date and transition period of revised standard (req. 9.4.1);
6. Application date shall not be more than one year after the publication of the standard (req. 9.4.2);
7. Transition period not exceeding one year (req. 9.4.3).

Based on the assessment it is concluded that the nonconformities found in the standard-setting process did not undermine or damage the review process. It would therefore not be adequate to redo the standard-setting process based on the nonconformities found in the process.



The nonconformities found in especially requirement 6.3.1 (invitation to participate in the standard review process) and 6.5.1 (invitation to comment on the enquiry draft), although separately minor issues, together might have risked that stakeholders were insufficiently aware of their opportunities to participate in the process and/or comment on the enquiry draft. Therefore, it remains a weakness in the process and gives insufficient confidence that stakeholders have taken their opportunity to comment on the revised standard.

3.7. Forest Management Standard – Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Sustainable Forest Management requirements for Bosnia and Herzegovina are stipulated in PEFC BS-RS 03:2020 V2. The standard is structured in different chapters, containing the specific forest management requirements. The standard is well elaborated, only two (2) non-conformities are found in the Forest Management Standard, which are classified as minor. The non-conformities relate to:

1. Conversion of coppice forest and definition of small forest (req. 8.1.4b-e);
2. Reaction, control and correction of non-conformities (req. 10.1.1).

3.8. Forest Management Standard – North Macedonia

The Sustainable Forest Management requirements for North Macedonia are stipulated in PEFC MK 03:2020 V2. The standard is structured in different chapters, containing the specific forest management requirements. The standard is well elaborated, four (4) non-conformities are found in the Forest Management Standard, all classified as minor. The non-conformities relate to:

1. Conversion of small proportion of forest types (req. 8.1.4b)
2. Afforestation of ecologically important non forest ecosystems (req. 8.1.5f);
3. Emergency procedures for accidental oil spillage (req. 8.2.5);
4. Reaction of the organisation to non-conformities (req. 10.1.1).

3.9. Forest Management Standard – Slovenia

The Sustainable Forest Management requirements for Slovenia are stipulated in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2. The standard is structured in introductory chapters, followed by criteria and indicators, containing the specific forest management requirements. Although the standard is in general quite well elaborated, five (5) non-conformities are found in the Forest Management Standard:

1. Forest conversion in case of high carbon stock and long-term conservation benefits in case of forest conversion (req. 8.1.4d-e);
2. Decision-making for conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations, the effect of conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations on carbon sequestration and on protective functions, forest conversion due to deliberate poor forest management, and in recovered or recovering areas (req. 8.1.6b,c,e,g h);
3. Emergency procedures for accidental oil spillage (req. 8.2.5);
4. Scientific evaluation of introduced species, provenances, varieties (req. 8.4.5);
5. Sharing of the benefits arising from utilization of local knowledge (req. 8.6.5).

3.10. Group Certification Requirements

The Group Certification Requirements are regulated in PEFC BS 06:2021 V2. It is a clearly structured document. The requirements comply with the PEFC Council requirements, no nonconformities are found.

3.11. Chain of Custody Standard

The PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System adopts the PEFC ST 2002:2020. The standard complies with the PEFC Council requirements, no nonconformities are found.

3.12. Certification and Accreditation Procedures

The requirements for certification and accreditation are regulated in PEFC BS 04:2021, and include references to ISO 17021, and ISO 19011. PEFC ST 2003:2012 is furthermore adopted. The standard complies with the PEFC Council requirements, no nonconformities are found.

3.13. Other aspects

With regards to Scheme Administration Procedures, the following procedures are found:

- Notification of Certification Procedures (PEFC BS 05:2021);
- Logo Usage Rules (PEFC BS 07:2021 and PEFC ST 2001:2020);
- Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedures (PEFC BS 08:2020).

These are not further assessed in detail, in accordance with the tender document for this assignment. Further assessment of these procedures is conducted by the Technical Unit of PEFC Council.



4. Structure of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System

4.1. Introduction to the forestry sector in the Balkan

Each of the respective countries of the PEFC Balkan system have their own specific forestry sector as described below. Yet, there are similarities in the way the forestry sector is regulated and governed.

Republic of Srpska – Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has abundant forest lands, which occupy more than 50% or 2.8 million hectares of the country. Following peace agreements in 1995, the country was split into three administrative divisions: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) in the centre, the Republic of Srpska (RS) in the North and along the eastern border, and the small Brčko district in the Northeast (Figure 1).¹ Each entity has their own respective government. The PEFC Balkan system only applies to the RS, because at the time the PEFC scheme was developed in BiH there had not been enough interest of private forest owners in FBiH to join the system. Yet, it was indicated that FBiH was welcome to join the scheme at any point.

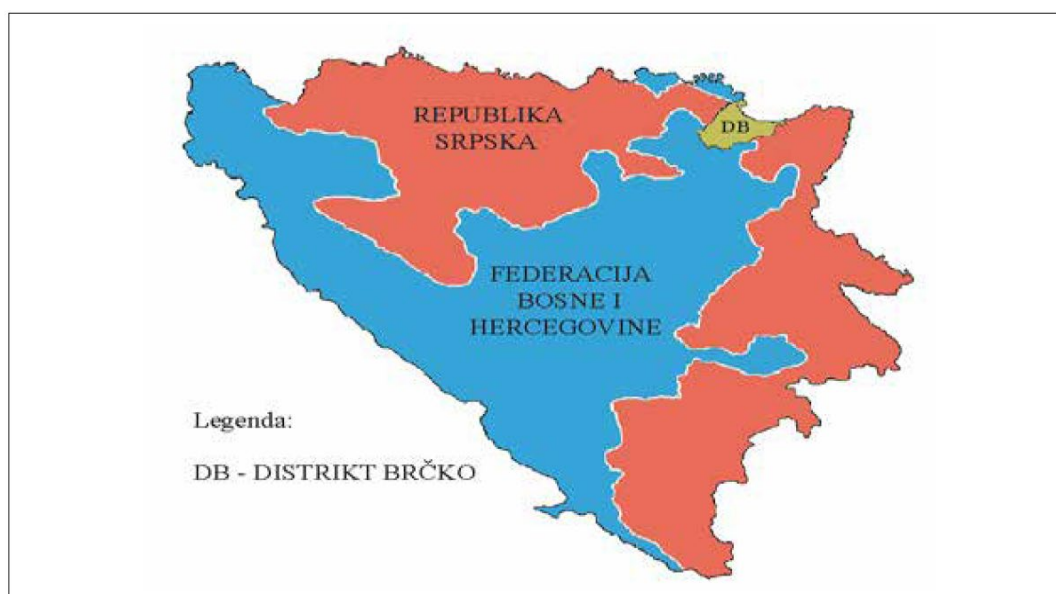


Figure 1: Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2014

The forest lands of BiH are divided relatively equally over the entities of FBiH and RS and have remained stable over the last 30 years according to FAO data. FBiH has a forest area of 1.5 million hectares, 82% of which is public or state-owned property and 18% of which is private forest. RS has a forest area of about 1.3 million hectares, 78% of which is state owned and 22% of which are private land (Table 1). Private forest

¹ FAO (2015) The Forest Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, available at: <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/8f594e6b-5d7e-42c1-85db-534e8745b3f9/>

ownership in BiH consist of a large number of plots (1.4 million) and a very small average plot size of about 0.4 ha. In total there are an estimate 700,000 forest owners who own on average 0.8 ha. RS has an estimated 464,000 forestry plots with approximately 250,000 forest owners. Next to state and private forests, a very small percentage of the forests in BiH are found in national parks, or are industrial plantations. Most of the state forest in BiH has FSC certification, but this is not the case for the country's private forest, which was the main reason to start the PEFC scheme in support of private forest owners (Table 1). As the plot size of forest owners is small, private forests owners are seeking group certification to cut the costs of certification.²

Table 1: Forest ownership and certification in BiH³

Ownership type	Area (ha)	Certified (ha)*	Certified (%)
State forests RS	1,000,447	982,673	98%
State forests FBiH	1,242,997	550,421	44%
Total State Forest BiH	2,243,444	1,533,094	68%
Private forests RS	281,965	0	0%
Private forests FBiH	277,000	0	0%
Total Private Forest FBiH	558,965	0	0%
District Brčko (90% private)	11,247	0	0%
Total forests in BiH	2,813,656	1,533,094	54%

* Currently this only covers FSC certified forests

BiH has some of the most diverse forests in Europe with a wide variety of tree species. The forests are an important source of rural employment, for fuelwood used for heating, and for NTFPs like mushrooms, berries, and herbs. The combined agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector added 6.1% to the country's GDP in 2020, and employed 20,278 people in 2021, out of a total labour force of 831,300 people (2.4%). The most common tree species found in BiH are fir, spruce, black and Scots pine, beach and various oak species. In 2020 BiH produced 3.8 million m³ of wood, in particular coniferous species (2.0 million m³), broad leaf species (1.9 million m³) and logs (coniferous) (1.3 million m³).⁴ BiH processes most of its wood products and is a big importer of logs from neighbouring countries like Croatia and Serbia. Wood products from BiH are mainly sold to Germany, Serbia, Croatia, Italy and Slovenia.

Several challenges in BiH impact the state of the forests and its management. One challenge is a high amount of abandoned land, which is the consequence of an urbanization trend and population decline. Land ownership documentation and land use documentation is another challenge for which the BiH government is trying to find a solution by improving the registration of land ownership. Some ownership of land is different on paper as compared to practice. There are also instances where land is

² Data provided by APFO Nasa Suma.

³ Data provided by APFO Nasa Suma.

⁴ Agency of statistics of BiH, available at: bhas.gov.ba.



registered for a specific land use type like agriculture while they are in fact forest. Another challenge are land mines remaining from the war in the 1990s. An estimated 956.00 km² (nearly 2%) of the country's land surface are still a risk area for land mines. Clearance of the mines is slow and the target of a mine-free BiH is continuously pushed back. Other reported difficulties are illegal cuttings of wood, which take place mostly on abandoned lands and on lands of which ownership is disputed.

North Macedonia

The Republic of North Macedonia (MK) has a forest area of 10,014 km² or 38,9% of its land area. This area has slowly increased from 9,124 km² in 1990. The total growing stock is 76 million m³, with a carbon stock of nearly 43 tonnes/ha. About 89% of the forests in MK are publicly (state) owned, while the remaining 11% is privately owned.⁵ MK's forests have a rich biodiversity with 319 types of trees and bushes, and more than 80 subtypes and varieties. The country has a wide variety in climate, relief, geological structure and hydrologic features and a variety of endemic species. In addition to forest, MK also has significant non-timber forest resources including medicinal plants, mushrooms, forest fruits and diverse wildlife. Threats to the forests include illegal logging, forest fires and climate change which is leading to increasing droughts in forests, diseases and forest die back.

The timber sector in MK employed an estimated 2235 people in 2020. Commonly produced timber species are coniferous species like spruce, fir, black pine and Scots pine; and broad-leaved species like various types of oak, beech, and black locust. MK felled 125,000 m³ of industrial wood, 572,000 m³ of fuel wood and 38,000 m³ of residue in 2020. About 89% of this were broad-leaved species, especially oak and beech, and 11% coniferous species, in particular pine. MK afforested 569 ha in 2020, and has a yearly average of 1132 ha/year over the last 10 years.⁶ In 2020, import value of wood and articles of wood⁷ to MK was about USD 100 million, which mostly came from Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey. The exports value was significantly lower at USD 6.9 million, with most products sold to Serbia and Greece.⁸

Slovenia

Slovenia has approximately 1.25 million hectares of forest which cover 60% of the country. In terms of percentage forest cover, this places Slovenia third in the European Union, behind Sweden and Finland. Slovenia's forests are actually expanding due to overgrowing of abandoned farmland, meadows and pastures. Privately owned forest land constitutes nearly 78% of the overall forest ownership, the rest being public forest lands. Private forest ownership is usually small with an average property size of approximately 3 hectares. As a result of the extensive privately owned forest lands and small property sizes, about one in four Slovenians is

⁵ FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment of 2020.

⁶ Data found on the database of the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia: makstat.stat.gov.mk

⁷ Product code 44 of UNComtrade data, as found on trademap.org

⁸ Data found on the Trade Map database of ITC: trademap.org



a forest owner. However, this fragmentation of public forest land and the large number of owners hinder professional work and optimum wood utilisation.

Although forest management is considered both a right and duty of private forest owners, it is the ultimate responsibility of the Slovenia Forest Service to manage all forests. The Forest Service works closely with landowners to assist them with forest management practices and oversee harvesting and other activities.

Many Slovenians make use of forest resources, including timber and non-timber forest products such as mushrooms and chestnuts. The forestry sector contributes to around 1.5% of GDP. This number has been relatively stable since 2005, but before that the GDP share of the forestry sector had been steadily declining for decades.

Despite the fact that Slovenian forest area is expanding, it does deal with various threats. Namely, climate change and the introduction and dispersal of invasive species such as Japanese knotweed. Moreover, a report written by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the Slovenian Forest Service and the Slovenian Forestry Institute in 2018 states that although forest area is expanding, the quality of stands was deteriorating. As such, the allowable cut was lowered to mitigate this and migrate towards healthier stands.

4.2. Organisation of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System

The initiative for creation of the BFCS was launched in February, 2018. The present PEFC stakeholders from Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina exchanged their views on the PEFC developments in their countries and idea for creation of the BFCS was launched as facilitation tool to secure sustainability of the PEFC processes in these countries. Three of these countries decided to participate in this process: Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia. Other countries that belong to or are neighboring to the Balkan Region can join the BFCS if they also accept the principles and scheme documentation of the BFCS.

The BFCS overall objective is to contribute to overall development and contribution of the forestry sector in the countries that belong to this system and at the same time to comply with the global efforts for mitigation of climate changes, nature conservation, maintenance of forest ecosystem services and community development.

The institutional arrangement of PEFC Balkan system consists of the three NGBs of the participating countries, which are responsible for standard setting and the administration of the BFCS; the Certification Bodies, which are independent institutions that assess the client's conformity with the standards of the PEFC Balkan scheme; and Accreditation Bodies, that provides assessments and surveillance of the



certification bodies to ensure their impartiality and competence. The organisations of the three NGBs is described below.

Republic of Srpska – BiH: The Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma”

The Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma” was founded in 2006 and was formed as a voluntary group of people that work for the purpose of improving and achieving their shared interests and objectives as private forest owners in the territory of the RS/BiH. The organisation has five main bodies:

- The Assembly of the association, as the highest governing body
- The steering Board of the Association as the executive body
- Chairman of the Steering Board as the managing body,
- Supervisory Board as the supervisory body,
- And the Sustainable Forest Management Council (SFM) under PEFC standards

Of these bodies the SFM council is the certification body responsible for sustainable forest management in accordance with the requirements of the PEFC Council. The SFM council consists of two permanent bodies: representative members of the organisations that acceded the SFM Council, and the Chairman; and three temporary bodies: the appeals body; the Working Group (WG) and other commissions. Members of the SFM council are nominated by the organisations that acceded the SFM council for a term of 2 years. The SFM council is responsible, amongst other tasks, to appoint the WG for the preparation and analysis of SFM measures and indicators; for the establishment of temporary commissions; and to vote on the acceptance of the certification system. The Chairman of the SFM council is primarily responsible for the organisation and management of the activities of the SFM council and for representing them at the PEFC Council.

The appeals body is formed by members of the SFM council when needed and consists of three members. Among its tasks, the Appeals body shall take into account all received remarks on the preparation of the SFM standards under the PEFC scheme. Finally, temporary commissions and working bodies can be established for special tasks by the SFM Council.

North Macedonia: The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republic of Macedonia

The Council for SFM is an NGO for the promotion of sustainable forest management according to the requirements of PEFC. It does so through:

- Maintenance and development of the Macedonian certification scheme for sustainable forest management in accordance with the PEFC Council;
- Promotion of the PEFC scheme among relevant stakeholders;

The Council for SFM has two permanent bodies: the Assembly and the Chairperson, and three temporary bodies: the disputes/appeal resolution body, the Working Group



(WG) and other commissions. The Assembly manages the Council for SFM and consists of members of the Council for SFM member organizations which are appointed for a period of two years. Amongst other tasks, the Assembly is responsible for selecting the Chairperson and SFM president; to carry out the Council for SFM programme and implementation, appointing WG members and members of the dispute resolution body, and voting on the acceptance of the PEFC certification scheme.

The Appeal Resolution Body can be formed by the Assembly when needed, and the body takes into consideration all received remarks on the standards preparation, implementation of individual or group certification, interpretation of requirements according to the certification scheme, use of PEFC logo, complaints referring to the chain of products supervision certificate. The WG is appointed by the Assembly and is in charge of analysing and developing criteria and indicators for SFM. For specific tasks, the Assembly can form temporary commissions and working bodies. There is also a president of the Council for SFM elected from the Assembly members who represents the Council for SFM and is responsible for the legality of its operations.

Slovenia: The Institute of Forest Certification

The Institute of Forest Certification in Slovenia (IFC) is an NGO established in 2006. It was founded by the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia and the Forest Interest Grouping for Forestry. The ultimate purpose of the organization is promoting sustainable forest management in conformance to the requirements established by the PEFC Council. It functions as the national governing body; PEFC Slovenia. The IFC performs various activities, including supporting and promoting sustainable forest management in Slovenian forests through implementation of the PEFC scheme and conformation to all PEFC requirements, as well as promoting participation in the scheme by forest owners.

The organization is led by a five-member Board of Directors. Four of the members are named by the two founding organizations and the fifth member is from the “service users.” This representative is elected through a process overseen by the Board in which five user-groups of the Slovenia PEFC logo can put forward their candidates on a ballot. The user-groups then vote on their representative. The candidate with the greatest amount of votes is declared the new Board member.

Members serve for a period of four years. The Board elects its own president and operates under the statutes set forth in the Articles of Association. Among its duties, the Board is responsible for appointing a Director of the Institute, granting PEFC logo usage, instituting the standard revision process, approving the revised standard, overseeing chain of custody requirements and overseeing the complaints and dispute resolution process.

The Board has the authority to appoint three “non-obligatory bodies.”: the Dispute Settlement Body, the Committee for the development and analyses of measure and



indicators for sustainable management of forests and the Committee for the development of methods and procedures and for analysing the execution of the following supervision over the wood origin in the whole production chain. These are independent bodies working as committees to address the issues related to their charge. The bodies are temporary and are instituted when needed and dismissed when their objectives have been met. The Board also appoints a Director who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the organization, budget development, work plans, etc. In addition to these duties the Director provides administrative support to the “Non-obligatory Committees” when convened.

4.3. The PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System

The scheme currently contains regional procedures, country specific standards for sustainable forest management (for Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Slovenia) and a chain of custody standard. It shall be noted that the forest management standard for Bosnia and Herzegovina is only applicable for the autonomous area of Republic of Srpska, and does not cover forest areas in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brčko District. The PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System provides for independent assessment of forest management practices and audit of timber product manufacturers or exporters to ensure that timber products manufactured or exported are sourced from sustainably managed forests and meet the criteria for certified timber products.

The PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System scheme is based on a number of documents, which define the requirements for forest and traceability certification. The document structure is shown in the figure below.

Standards for operators	Standards for certifying bodies	Scheme governance
PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in North Macedonia	PEFC BS 04:2021 Certification and accreditation procedures	PEFC BS 01:2021 Description of PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System
PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in Slovenia	PEFC BS 05:2021 Notification of Certification Bodies for Chain of Custody and Forest Management Certification	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 Standard setting and revision procedures
PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina	PEFC ST 2003:2020 Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard	PEFC BS 07:2021 Issuance of PEFC trademarks license procedures
PEFC BS 06:2021 V2		PEFC BS 08:2020 Complaints and appeals procedures
		PROC-005-2020



Standards for operators	Standards for certifying bodies	Scheme governance
Group Forest Management Certification Rules and Procedures PEFC ST 2002:2020 Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products – Requirements PEFC ST 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements		Licensing of PEFC registered trademarks



5. Standard-setting Procedures

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the Standard-setting Procedures. There are three (3) nonconformities found, all classified as minor. They can all be addressed by providing additional evidence and/or adjusting the procedures. The PEFC Checklist related to the Standard-setting Procedures can be found in Annex 1 part IA, which presents all the conformities, nonconformities and related references.

5.1. Analysis

The procedures for standard-setting are regulated in PEFC BS 02:2020 V2. This is a clearly structured document and largely follows the structure, approach and content of the PEFC benchmark standard. However, three (3) nonconformities are found, all classified as minor.

5.2. Results: Nonconformities

The nonconformities found in the Standard-setting Procedures are presented in the tables below.

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.2.1 The initiation of the documentation development process or its revision shall be announced on the website of the NGB’s from the Balkan Region and other appropriate media in order to enable the stakeholders to actively contribute to the process. The announcement shall contain: b) information on the opportunity for participation of the stakeholders in the process, d) invitation for submitting comments on the scope and process of setting standards and The WG shall ensure that the format of the invitation to the marginalized and key stakeholders is understandable and delivered in a way which guarantees they have received it, for instance, registered post, a confirmation for received electronic mail, etc.”
Assessors’ comments	It is insufficiently ensured that the announcement shall be made public at least 4 weeks before the start of the standard setting process, as indicated in the footnote of the requirement.
Result	Does not conform - minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the procedures



Requirement	6.4.6 Where a vote is used in decision-making, the standard-setting procedures shall determine and include decision-making thresholds that quantifies 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.
Evidence	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “3.1 Consensus General agreement characterized by absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests or by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and the need to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Note: The need to reach a consensus needs not imply unanimity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)”
Assessors' comments	No reference is found where thresholds are determined (that quantify consensus).
Result	Does not conform - minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the procedures

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.2 In case of a negative vote which represents permanent and sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests and to substantial issues, at least one of the following mechanisms shall be used: d) process of disagreement resolution by mediation”
Assessors' comments	It is insufficiently ensured that the dispute resolution shall be initiated in accordance with PEFC Balkans complaints and dispute resolution procedures (PEFC BS 08:2020).
Result	Does not conform - minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the procedures

5.3. Results: Selection of Conformities

In the tables below, a selection of conformities is presented that are considered sensitive issues in the forest context of the Balkan countries and/or illustrative examples of the Standard-setting Procedures.

Requirement	5.1.1 The standardising body shall have written procedures for standard-setting activities describing: (e) the mechanism for reaching consensus,
Evidence	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.2 In order to reach consensus, the WG can employ the following: a) face to face meetings with voting by stating yes or no, raising hand; b) formal secret voting, etc.,



	c) voting by e-mail when the members are asked to vote for or against in writing. In case of a negative vote (...) the following mechanisms shall be used: a) discussions and talks (...) in order to reach a compromise, b) direct negotiations (...) to reach a compromise, c) additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary) d) process of disagreement resolution by mediation. If the process of resolution of disputes is not executed within 4 weeks from beginning, then the threshold for consensus building will be at least that there shall be majority of votes positive in every single stakeholders interest group”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.2.3 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders and address any constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities.
Evidence	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “4.4 Identification of relevant stakeholders will include affected, disadvantaged and key stakeholders, including description of their interests for participation in the process. The NGB's from the Balkan Region shall analyze constraints about participation of the key and disadvantaged stakeholders and shall develop actions to minimize the risk of non-participation.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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: (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.,
Evidence	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.2 Building consensus The WG decision to suggest publishing the working draft version for public consultation or publishing the final version for formal approval shall be brought with a consensus. In order to reach consensus, the WG can employ the following: a) face to face meetings with voting by stating yes or no, raising hand; b) formal secret voting, etc.,”
Assessors' comments	(none)

Result	Does conform
Requirement	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 input.
Evidence	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.1 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 input.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform



6. Bosnia & Herzegovina standard-setting process

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the standard-setting process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are five (5) nonconformities found, which are all classified as minor. The PEFC Checklist related to the standard-setting process can be found in Annex 1 part IA, which presents all the conformities, nonconformities and related references.

6.1. Analysis

The process of developing the BFCS started in May 2020 and involved a regular revision of the SFM standards of Slovenia and North Macedonia, and the establishment of a new SFM standard and PEFC system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The NGBs also developed joint system documentation for the three countries.

For Bosnia and Herzegovina a new standard had to be developed. The process for the development of a standard already started before the country decided to join the Balkan system. BiH first announced this process in November 2018 and established its WG in March 2019. The WG met five times between June 2019 and May 2020 and a first and second consultation period were held between November 2019 and February 2020. Following the decision of establishing the regional BFCS in May 2020, a new process was started and another public announcement, WG formation and public consultation period followed. The working group remained unchanged and consisted of the following members:

- Boris Markovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
- Milan Tepic, director of forest utilization at the Public Forest Enterprise
- Dragan Čomić, assistant professor of the Faculty of Forestry in Banja Luka
- Dubravka Kršić, "Suma Plan" (planning, production and service enterprise)
- Aleksandar Mrkobrada, APFO "Naša Šuma", President of the WG

These members were supported in practice by members of the Council of SFM. The WG met an additional three times between July 27 and November 17, to discuss and re-analyse all thematic areas from SFM standard that were adopted in 2019. All decisions in the WG were made by consensus. The third and fourth public consultation periods were held between December 2020 and March 2021. The final version of the standard and the other documents of the BFCS were accepted by the SFM Council on 1 June 2021.

In general, the process was conducted according to the Standard-setting Procedures. Two observations⁹ are made:

⁹ Observations are weaknesses found in the Scheme, which are not considered to be a nonconformity.



- The Council for SFM has identified “marginalised” stakeholders and not disadvantaged stakeholders. Yet, considering the context, marginalised stakeholders here can be assumed to be disadvantaged stakeholders.
- The WG for drafting the SFM standard only consisted of 5 people, which despite their relevance and experience is a low number of people to achieve a balanced representation of a WG. These 5 people were also part of the SFM Council. However, in practice, other members of the SFM Council were also able to give input into the standard. Various members of the Council for SFM have done this, which was made clear during stakeholder interviews in RS/BIH. Their considerations were provided by email and through informal talks on the phone or in person. All interviewed stakeholders which were not part of the WG were further satisfied with the WG and the process and all felt they had been able to include their considerations into the standards.

Additionally, five (5) non-conformities are found in the standard-setting process, all classified as minor.

6.2. Results: Nonconformities

The nonconformities found in the standard-setting process are presented in the tables below.

Requirement	6.1.1 For the creation of a new standard, the standardising body shall develop a proposal including: (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 (b) access to the proposal for the standard (refer to 6.1),
Evidence	(None)
Assessors' comments	APFO has explained that risks for standard setting were discussed during a meeting. However, no evidence was found of minutes of this meeting and/or a risk assessment in the proposal for the standard
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include: (b) access to the proposal for the standard (refer to 6.1),
Evidence	(None)
Assessors' comments	No reference was found in the public announcement or in the invitations to stakeholders to the proposal for the standard.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	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.
Evidence	(None)
Assessors' comments	In the WG, representation was found of the following stakeholder groups: forest owners; business and industry; NGOs; scientific and technological community. The interest of workers and trade unions was represented through the Chamber of Commerce by SFM Council member Lazo Sinik, who commented during an interview that he had been able to put their interests and considerations into the standard. APFO explained that their goal was to have representation of each key stakeholder groups and to include the stakeholders with the most relevant experience. APFO explained that they actively sought participation of key stakeholders through the public announcement, personal e-mail invitations and through phone calls. Stakeholders interviewed in RS/BiH, which came from all stakeholder groups, also found that there had been a balanced representation of the stakeholders and that the participation of key stakeholders was actively sought. However, no evidence is found that actual targets were set for the participation of key stakeholders.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	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,
Evidence	Announcement of the third public consultation 25 December 2020 (available on the website of APFO "Naša Šuma" http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) "The third public discussion lasts 60 days from the date of publication on December 25, 2020."
Assessors' comments	The public announcement is made on the same day as the start of the public consultation period. Also, no reference to an end date of the public consultation period is found in the announcement.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	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.
Evidence	Statute of APFO Nasa Suma "Article 39 The Appeals Body shall be formed by members of the SFM Council when needed. In the process of creating SFM standards, the body shall take into account all received remarks on preparing the standards, applying



	individual or group certification, interpreting the requirements under the certification scheme, using PEFC logo, appeals relating to the Chain of Custody (CoC). Article 41 Representative of the group which files an appeal should file the appeal with the SFM Council in writing. The form for the written application and information about the contact person are available at the webpage of the SFM Council. An appeal filed by e-mail shall be deemed properly filed. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Appeals Body shall notify the sender of the appeal that the appeal has been received and that they shall respond to the appeal within 60 days. In some cases, this period may be extended by 30 days. Decision of the Appeals Body shall be made by majority of votes. The SFM Council shall keep record of appeals under investigation. Decision of the Appeals body shall be final.”
Assessors' comments	Although a mechanism is found for receiving feedback in the Statue of the APFO, this is not a permanent mechanism, as the Appeals body shall only take into account received remarks during the process of creating the SFM standards. Further, this mechanism was not found on the website of APFO. APFO further explained that this mechanism will be put into place once the standard is endorsed by PEFC International.
Result	Does not conform - minor

6.3. Results: Selection of Conformities

In the tables below, a selection of conformities is presented that are considered sensitive issues in the forest context of Bosnia and Herzegovina and/or illustrative examples of the standard-setting process.

Requirement	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.
Evidence	Stakeholder mapping document “In order to meet the requirements of the PEFC standard (ST 1001: 2017), the SFM Council identified legal entities as stakeholders in the creation, revision and implementation of sustainable forest management standards in the Republika Srpska / Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mapping includes: • Defining key actors • Defining marginalized actors • Explain the relevance of a particular group • Main issues important for each group • The way of communicating with stakeholders in order to involve them in the process



	KEY STAKEHOLDERS ECONOMIC SECTOR: (...) Private Forests (...); Wood industry (...); Mushroom association (...); Hunting association (...). ECOLOGICAL SECTOR: (...) National parks (...); Citizen's associations (...); Social sector and youth (...). EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, STATE AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS (...); MARGINALIZED STAKEHOLDERS Pickers of forest non-wood products of mushrooms and berries, seasonal workers in forestry LOCAL GOVERNMENT Municipalities and cities that have private forests on their surface. MANNER OF COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS The announcement of the beginning of the process of creating national SFM standards will be published in the daily press and on the websites of the project partners: PFOA "Naša Šuma", Čelinačke novine, radio stations. All convenient means of communication will be used to invite interested parties: e-mail, telephone calls or a written call by post if the previous two methods did not work."
Assessors' comments	A stakeholder mapping document was found in which stakeholders relevant to the subject matter of the standard were defined. The document describes per stakeholder group the types of stakeholders typically categorised under this group, what their main interests and functions as stakeholders are, whether they are key or marginalised stakeholders and the ideal means of communication to reach these stakeholders. In total 12 of 13 respondents to the stakeholder survey confirmed that all stakeholders that are relevant to the standard-setting process have been proactively identified and invited, including disadvantaged stakeholders.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.2.3 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders and address any constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities
Evidence	Stakeholder mapping document "KEY STAKEHOLDERS ECONOMIC SECTOR: (...) Private Forests (...); Wood industry (...); Mushroom association (...); Hunting association (...). ECOLOGICAL SECTOR: (...) National parks (...); Citizen's associations (...); Social sector and youth (...). EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, STATE AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS (...); MARGINALIZED STAKEHOLDERS Collectors of forest non-wood products: this number is quite large, but at the same time informal. (...) As this part of the sector is informal and organized representatives cannot be identified, they will be invited to join the process by public disclosure in the press and on the website.



	Seasonal forestry workers: are mostly people who come from or live in rural areas of Republic of Srpska and have the skills and tools to work in the forest during cutting, logging and transport. These workers are mostly employed by companies that provide forestry services, but in most cases informally or for a short time, for a few days. The forestry union usually does not represent their interests. As this part of the sector is informal and organized representatives cannot be identified, they will be invited to join the process by public announcement in the press and through the website. Facing the threat that there are marginalized actors who do not participate in the process, efforts are being made to ensure their participation in order to avoid the risk of not being informed, such as pickers of forest non-timber products. The current tool of the association of buyers and processors of non-timber forest products will be used as a medium for the transfer of information as the initial phase of the process of creating criteria indicators for sustainable forest management. MANNER OF COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS The announcement of the beginning of the process of creating national SFM standards will be published in the daily press and on the websites of the project partners: PFOA "Naša Šuma", Čelinačke novine, radio stations. All convenient means of communication will be used to invite interested parties: e-mail, telephone calls or a written call by post if the previous two methods did not work. Public Announcement 26 May 2020 (available on the website of APFO "Naša Šuma" http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) "With this announcement, we especially encourage to include in this process: seasonal workers in forestry, collectors of other forest products as well as other interested parties."
Assessors' comments	The APFO has explained that marginalised stakeholders (NTFP collectors and seasonal workers) are unorganised and informal groups and are therefore hard to reach. The APFO has taken efforts to reach NTFP collectors through the association of buyers and processors of NTFPs and through the public announcement. Seasonal workers have no formal representation and were invited to join by public announcement in the press and through the APFO website.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	Minutes from the 1st meeting of the SFM council 19 March 2019



	“Delegated representatives of institutions (stakeholders), now members of the Council of SFM, agreed that in accordance with the possibilities and procedures of PEFC, the members of the WG (Working Group) for drafting the Standards for SFM according to PEFC methodology, which can be expanded if necessary, will be: - Boris Markovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Milan Tepic, director of forest exploitation at the Public Forest Enterprise - Dragan Čomić, assistant professor of the Faculty of Forestry in Banja Luka - Dubravka Kršić, "Suma Plan" (planning, production and service enterprise) - Aleksandar Mrkobrada, APFO "Naša Šuma", President of the WG” Minutes of the 4th meeting of the SFM council “Conclusion 2 TDR: The members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, decided to accept all previously nominated members of the Working / Expert Group.”
Assessors' comments	APFO explained that on 3 July 2020 the NGB voted for the final confirmation of all previous nominations of the WG, and clarified that there had been no new nominations for the WG. APFO further explained that the justification for the WG members was based on the fact that these members were found to have the most experience; were in key positions at important institutions (e.g. at the ministry, at the Private Forest Enterprise, and at the Faculty of Forestry), and that these members were willing and able to working on the standard. Other members were also allowed to join the WG, but APFO explained that some people were unwilling to work on the standard without receiving a salary for their work, and that people were satisfied with the small WG. Respondents to the stakeholder survey as well as interviewed stakeholder during the field visit in RS/BiH found that there was a balanced representation of stakeholders in the WG.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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
Evidence	Minutes from the 1st meeting of the SFM council 19 March 2019 “Delegated representatives of institutions (stakeholders), now members of the Council of SFM, agreed that in accordance with the possibilities and procedures of PEFC, the members of the WG (Working Group) for drafting the Standards for SFM according to PEFC methodology, which can be expanded if necessary, will be: - Boris Markovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Milan Tepic, director of forest exploitation at the Public Forest Enterprise



	- Dragan Čomić, assistant professor of the Faculty of Forestry in Banja Luka - Dubravka Kršić, "Suma Plan" (planning, production and service enterprise) - Aleksandar Mrkobrada, APFO "Naša Šuma", President of the WG
Assessors' comments	The 5 members of the WG represented the following stakeholder groups: forest owners; government; social sector and youth; research community; other economic sector, and the environmental sector. APFO explained that some of these members represented multiple interest, e.g. both forests owners and the environment. None of the groups were dominating the process. Despite the relevance and experience of these member, this is a low number of people to achieve a balanced representation of a WG. However, in practice, other members of the SFM Council were also able to give input into the standard. Various members of the Council for SFM have done this, which was made clear during stakeholder interviews in RS/BiH. Their considerations were provided by email and through informal talks on the phone or in person.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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: (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.,
Evidence	See assessors' comments below
Assessors' comments	APFO explained that voting took place in a face-to-face meeting with a verbal yes/no vote. This was confirmed by the interviews with members of the WG.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.4.6 Where a vote is used in decision-making, the standard-setting procedures shall determine and include decision-making thresholds that quantifies 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.
Evidence	Minutes of the WG 1 June 2021 (Translated by Google Translate) "Present: Mr. Boris Markovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management Milan Tepic, PE "Forests of RS" Dr. Dragan Čomić, Faculty of Forestry in Banja Luka-Justifiably absent Dubravka Kršić, Šuma Plan Aleksandar Mrkobrada, UPS "Our Forest" Activity Coordinator Conclusion 2: Members of the expert Working Group for drafting the PEFC standard for RS / BiH adopted by Consensus the Decision to adopt the PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republika



	Srpska / BiH, which was in the form of a draft at two public hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 (30 days), at the proposal of the Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints.”
Assessors' comments	Almost all members of the WG attended this meeting and all agreed to the final standard.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.5.1 The standardising body shall organise public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that: (f) all feedback is considered by the working group in an objective manner,
Evidence	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM RS/BiH “No suggestion received during the process.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	7.1 The standardising body shall approve the standard(s)/normative document(s) formally when there is evidence of consensus among the working group.
Evidence	Minutes of the Appeals Commission 28 March 2021 “The Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints stated that during the Public Hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 on the working draft of the National Standard for SFM for RS / BiH, by mail or by published mail. no suggestions, comments or complaints were received at the address. For that reason, the commission, by consensus and unanimously, decided that the proposed version of the Working Draft of the National Standard for SFM for RS / BiH prepared by the Expert / Working Group in the proposed form can be sent for adoption to the SFM Council.” Minutes of the WG 1 June 2021 (Translated by Google Translate) “Conclusion 2: Members of the expert Working Group for drafting the PEFC standard for RS / BiH adopted by Consensus the Decision to adopt the PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republika Srpska / BiH, which was in the form of a draft at two public hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 (30 days), at the proposal of the Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints.” Minutes of the 5th meeting of the SFM council of RS/BiH on 1 June 2021 (translated by Google Translate) “Conclusion 2: Members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, adopted a Decision to accept and adopt a package of documents from the PEFC Balkan system, related to the already adopted Republika Srpska / BiH standard for sustainable forest management of CSOs, as follows: - Document PEFC BS 02: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 03: 2021



	- Document PEFC BS 04: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 05: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 06: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 07: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 08: 2021 Conclusion 3: The members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, made the Decision to adopt the PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republika Srpska / BiH, which was in the form of a Draft at two Public Hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 (30 days), at the proposal of the Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints.”
Assessors' comments	The appeals commission has recommended that the working draft of the SFM standard should be adopted by the Council for SFM. The WG first approved the final version of the standard by consensus on 1 June 2021. This was an unchanged version since their approval in December 2020. In the meeting of the SFM council, which followed on the same day the SFM Council approved this final standard.
Result	Does conform



7. North Macedonia standard-setting process

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the standard-setting process in North Macedonia. There are two (2) nonconformities found, which are both classified as minor. The PEFC Checklist related to the standard-setting process can be found in Annex 1 part IB, which presents all the conformities, nonconformities and related references.

7.1. Analysis

The North Macedonia Forest Certification System was already operational and will be replaced by the new BFCS once it is endorsed. The system was endorsed recently in 2018. After the decision to establish the BFCS was made, North Macedonia established a WG in June 2020 and the first work session was held (online) on 18 June 2020. In five interactive sessions from 20-29 July 2020, the WG worked on the national SFM standard, until consensus was reached. A public consultation period was held between 31 July 2020 – 9 October 2020 in which no objections or comments were received. The SFM standard was therefore officially approved by the NGB in October 2020.

In general, the process was conducted according to the Standard-setting Procedures. One observation¹⁰ is made:

- No targets were set for the participation of key stakeholders. However, the Council for SFM did proactively seek their participation and all identified stakeholder groups in the stakeholder mapping, namely forest owners; business and industry; NGOs; Scientific community; workers and labour union; institutions and managers responsible for protected areas were represented in the WG (evidence 14).

Additionally, two (2) non-conformities are found in the standard-setting process, both classified as minor.

7.2. Results: Nonconformities

The nonconformities found in the standard-setting process are presented in the tables below.

Requirement	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.
Evidence	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM

¹⁰ Observations are weaknesses found in the Scheme, which are not considered to be a nonconformity.



	“The Council for SFM does not yet established very precisely permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. But, on the web page there is statement that: (...) means for any question there is possibility to call on specific mobile phone.”
Assessors' comments	The Council for SFM has currently no permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. The organisation notes that such a mechanism will be implemented once the new standard is endorsed.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	8.2.2 All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.
Evidence	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The Council for SFM does not yet established very precisely permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. But, on the web page there is statement that (...) means for any question there is possibility to call on specific mobile phone.”
Assessors' comments	The Council for SFM has currently no permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. The organisation notes that such a mechanism will be implemented once the new standard is endorsed.
Result	Does not conform - minor

7.3. Results: Selection of Conformities

In the tables below, a selection of conformities is presented that are considered sensitive issues in the forest context of North Macedonia and/or illustrative examples of the standard-setting process.

Requirement	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.
Evidence	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The new PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 was adopted by the Council for SFM in April 2020. By that date the previous document PEFC MK 02:2017 was in force (from September 2017). (...) it is worth to say that no any feedback was received from the period of 2017 until these days. The Macedonian PEFC system and forest certification is something new and there are no clients yet for forest certification. The main stakeholders become more familiar with the system in 2019 with the pilot certification. Anyway, the new PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 was placed on the webpage after adoption of the NGB in April 2020, with clear instructions how to submit any feedback on the document or on the process”
Assessors' comments	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 could be found on the PEFC MK website (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/).
Result	Does conform



Requirement	6.1.2 For the revision of a standard the proposal shall cover at least (a) and (e) of clause 6.1.1.
Evidence	Public Announcement on the Development of PEFC regional standard for Slovenia, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated by the Council for SFM) “National PEFC governing bodies of Republic of Slovenia (SI), Republic of North Macedonia (NMK) and Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH) (referred countries) are starting the process for development of the PEFC Regional forest certification system that will include separate national standards for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). (...) Every single national SFM standard will be in compliance with PEFC meta standard PEFC 1003:2018 and current legal framework related to forest management in referred country. The content of National SFM standard is unique for every participating country in this regional Standard. The scope of the standard is only for forest and forest land. Trees outside the forests and forest plantations were not considered as part of this Standard. Other documents of the Regional Standard are identical and applicable for all participating countries. This standard proposal is applicable for individual and group certification. Forest managers and forest owners are responsible to ensure full compliance to forest management standard including activities that are conducted by contracted forest operators in certified forest area. (...) The process of adopting a regional standard will take place in several stages: • Update of the stakeholders list • Public announcement of the process • Invitation for stakeholders to get involved in the process • Defining the composition of the working group • Working sessions for discussion on the proposed draft Standard for SFM • First public consultation on the content of the draft Standard for SFM lasting 60 days and revision of the received comments and suggestions • Second public consultation on the draft Standard for SFM lasting 30 days • Building consensus on the content of the SFM Standard within the working group • Acceptance of the final version of the SFM Standard by the National PEFC Governing Body” The entire process of adopting the SFM standard, until its submission to the PEFC Council for approval, is expected to last until the end of 2020. The process of inspections and consultations by the PEFC Council until the recognition of the regional standard is expected to be completed in the fall of 2021.
Assessors' comments	(none)



Result	Does conform
Requirement	6.2.2 Identification of stakeholder groups shall be based on nine major stakeholder groups as defined by Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At least the following groups shall be included in the stakeholder mapping: • forest owners, • business and industry, • indigenous people, • non-government organisations, • scientific and technological community, • workers and trade unions. Other groups shall be added if relevant to the scope of standard-setting activities.
Evidence	See assessors' comments
Assessors' comments	In the stakeholder mapping document the following stakeholder groups are defined: A) Forest owners B) Business and industry C) NGOs D) Scientific community E) Workers and labor union F) Institutions and managers responsible for protected areas G) Other It shall be noted that there are no indigenous peoples in North Macedonia.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	Minutes of the 10th Session of the Assembly of the Council for SFM 10 June 2020 (translated by the Council for SFM) "After the adoption of the Stakeholder Mapping document, electronic invitations were sent to all identified parties. Some of them responded immediately, some later, but there are stakeholders who did not send any response. To my great disappointment, despite a series of additional invitations and telephone calls, PE National Forests did not nominate a member of the Working Group for the initiated process. Additional explanation provided by the Council for SFM "All procedural steps in nomination of the WG members are part of the document PEFC BS 02:2020 V2, Chapter 4.4. No any of these steps



	was violated. All nominations were received, no any party was against and consensus was reached by all votes positive.” When all nominations were received, during assessment we (the President of the Council for SFM and me in the role of technical secretary) found that all nominated person were on relevant positions in invited organizations or were relevant experts in their organization. Only the ZELS (association of municipalities) representative did not have any relevant position, but after phone call with President of ZELS (Dushica) we decided to accept it. As explained above, there is no space in our procedures that any party would have possibility to overrule the process. Official policy for WG composition is in chapter 4.4.”
Assessors' comments	The Council for SFM identified all stakeholders in its stakeholder mapping document after which it received nominations for the WG, which were accepted, none was rejected. Received nominations for the WG were found. With regards to gender balance, it shall be noted that the working group had 2 female participants. Respondents to the stakeholder survey confirmed that the WG had balanced representation of all stakeholder groups.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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									
Evidence	14.List of received nominations for the WG (as found translated in the development report) <table><tr><td>“Forest owners Ministry for agriculture, forestry and water economy Association of private forest owners Forest police</td><td>Business and industry The Hunting association PE National Forests</td></tr><tr><td>NGOs Macedonian ecological society WWF Adria Macedonian association of forest engineers Federation of mountain sports Dren</td><td>Scientific community Faculty of forestry</td></tr><tr><td>Institutions and managers of protected areas Ministry for environment and physical planning National Park Mavrovo Municipality of Vevchani”</td><td>Workers and labour union Labour union of forest workers</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Other Association of municipalities ZELS</td></tr></table>		“Forest owners Ministry for agriculture, forestry and water economy Association of private forest owners Forest police	Business and industry The Hunting association PE National Forests	NGOs Macedonian ecological society WWF Adria Macedonian association of forest engineers Federation of mountain sports Dren	Scientific community Faculty of forestry	Institutions and managers of protected areas Ministry for environment and physical planning National Park Mavrovo Municipality of Vevchani”	Workers and labour union Labour union of forest workers		Other Association of municipalities ZELS
“Forest owners Ministry for agriculture, forestry and water economy Association of private forest owners Forest police	Business and industry The Hunting association PE National Forests									
NGOs Macedonian ecological society WWF Adria Macedonian association of forest engineers Federation of mountain sports Dren	Scientific community Faculty of forestry									
Institutions and managers of protected areas Ministry for environment and physical planning National Park Mavrovo Municipality of Vevchani”	Workers and labour union Labour union of forest workers									
	Other Association of municipalities ZELS									
Assessors’ comments	(none)									
Result	Does conform									

Requirement	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: (c) e-mail request to the working group for agreement or objection where the members provide a formal (written) response (vote),



Evidence	7.Email sent to all WG members to accept the standard (translated by Council for SFM) “The decision of the WG to recommend the publication of a working version for public consultation or the final version for formal approval should be taken on the basis of consensus. To reach a consensus, WG can apply the following ways: a) face-to-face meetings where voting yes or no will be applied, by raising the hand; b) formal secret ballot, etc. c) voting by e-mail asking members to vote for or against in writing. I invite you within 7 days (until 16.00, July 27) to declare by e-mail to accept the content of the working version, which we should further submit to a public consultation for a period of 60 days.”
Assessors' comments	As no comments were received during the public consultation period, this concerns the final draft of the standard. E-mail confirmations of acceptance of the draft were found from all WG members (evidence 7).
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.4.6 Where a vote is used in decision-making, the standard-setting procedures shall determine and include decision-making thresholds that quantifies 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.
Evidence	(none)
Assessors' comments	All WG members accepted the final draft of the standard in July 2020. E-mail confirmations of acceptance of the final draft were found from all WG members (evidence 7).
Result	Does conform

Requirement	7.1 The standardising body shall approve the standard(s)/normative document(s) formally when there is evidence of consensus among the working group.
Evidence	Invitation to the 11th Session of the Council for SFM to be held on 28 October 2020 (translated by the Council for SFM) “Pursuant to Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Council for SFM in the Republic of Macedonia, I convene the 11th session of the Assembly, which will be held electronically on 28.10.2020 starting from 12 o'clock. For the session of the Assembly, I propose the following: 1. Adoption of the Minutes from the 10th Session of the Assembly of the Council for SFM in MK 2. Adoption of a draft standard for SFM, in addition to the agenda the information on the completed process of the Macedonian standard for sustainable forest management is shared. 3. Miscellaneous Explanation provided by Council for SFM



	“Formal approval of the standard from the NGB on 28.10.2020. Currently there are 5 members in the Assembly of the NGB: - Ministry – forestry sector, Goran Lichovski; - Private Forest Association, Vojo Sokolovski; - Chamber of commerce, Ljupka Hadzi Ristova; - Forestry Faculty, Pande Trajkov; - REFORD (NGO), Sasho Petrovski;”
Assessors’ comments	E-mail confirmations were found of all Assembly members, in which they accepted agenda item 2 of the 11th session (adoption of the draft standard) in October 2020. Consensus by the WG had already been reached in July 2020. As no changes were made to this draft after the public consultation period, this can be considered the version of the standard on which consensus was reached among the working group.
Result	Does conform



8. Slovenia standard-setting process

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the standard-setting process in Slovenia. There are seven (7) nonconformities found, which are all classified as minor. The PEFC Checklist related to the standard-setting process can be found in Annex 1 part IC, which presents all the conformities, nonconformities and related references.

8.1. Analysis

The Slovenian PEFC System was already operational and will be replaced by the new BFCS once it is endorsed. The Slovenian Forest Certification System was first endorsed in 2007 and re-endorsed in 2015. The renewal of the Slovenian standard started in 2019 when the WG was formed. The WG met three times between 10 December 2019 and 15 January 2021. A public consultation period was held between 19 January 2021 and 20 March 2021. As no complains or comments were received, the Slovenian NGB unanimously adopted the new SFM standard and the other documents developed for the BFCS on 10 June 2021.

In general, the process was conducted according to the Standard-setting Procedures. Yet, seven (7) non-conformities are found in the standard-setting process, which are all classified as minor. The nonconformities found in especially requirement 6.3.1 and 6.5.1, although separately minor issues, together might have risked that stakeholders were insufficiently aware of their opportunities to participate in the process and/or comment on the enquiry draft:

- There was no explicit invitation to participate in the standard review process, nor an explicit request to nominate representatives for the working group, and there was no explicit invitation nor clear instructions to submit feedback on the proposed process.
- A few stakeholders were not invited to comment on the enquiry draft. Although this was done to respect communication from these stakeholders earlier in the process, it is still incorrect and did not give these stakeholders a clear option to comment on the enquiry draft.

Therefore, it remains a weakness in the process and gives insufficient confidence that stakeholders have taken their opportunity to comment on the revised standard.

8.2. Results: Nonconformities

The nonconformities found in the standard-setting process are presented in the tables below.

Requirement	6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include: c) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,



Evidence	Public announcement 29 October 2019 on the website of the IFC (pefc.si) “The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020.” E-mail invitation on the renewal of the Slovenian PEFC Scheme 8 November 2019 (Translated by Google Translate) “The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020.” Explanation provided by the IFC “I confirm that in invitation there was no mention on how working group will work in detail in the general invitation (to general public and in mail), however this was sent to members of working group and later agreed in document procedures of working group. In Slovenia there is a general understanding that stakeholders in working group can contribute their views and expertise in the process of drafting any documents of any working group, as in this case PEFC scheme. Working group was open to new stakeholders if the interest in participation would occur.”
Assessors' comments	No explicit reference is found in the public announcement on opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include: (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,
Evidence	E-mail invitation sent on 15 November 2019 “Please acknowledge receipt of the email with a response regarding your interest in participating. A more detailed agenda and documents will be sent to applicants.” Explanation provided by the IFC “Preliminary mail to appoint representatives was sent on 15.11.2019 Mails were sent to all identified stakeholders as to some other relevant stakeholders. After received answers with expression of interest we concluded that elections in a stakeholder group were not needed, and that each organization could appoint representatives to the meeting.



	Representatives that came to first meeting were then noted as stakeholder representatives and members of working group. At the first meeting we also concluded that working group is open to new members (especially from the side of NGO's representing nature) as it was later also implemented by cooperation of two organizations.” Development report “Key stakeholders were contacted also by phone.”
Assessors' comments	From the evidence provided it is clear that the invitation was sent to all organisations identified in the stakeholder map. However, the invitation does not include a specific request to nominate a representative.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include: (e) explicit invitation and clear instruction on how to submit feedback on the scope and standard-setting process, and
Evidence	Explanation provided by the IFC “PEFC has strict rules on the process procedures and it must be followed. Process timetable could be discussed but we did not put a fixed timetable of the process as we were not in a hurry and the process was finished as it was. The process was also influenced by Corona epidemic. Scope of standard can be understood from the name of the process that is certification of forests. As in Slovenia forest plantations are marginal by hectares and economic importance, and fall under agricultural land, certification of forest plantations is not relevant for Slovenia. The scope of the standard was discussed this at first meeting of working group as was previously discussed by council of IFC before starting revision process. Standard setting process was discussed as a main point of first meeting of the working group and all present members of the working group also signed the document Procedures of working group.”
Assessors' comments	No evidence was found of an explicit invitation and clear instruction to stakeholders to submit feedback on the scope and standard setting process. It shall be noted that the requirement does not refer to the procedures, rather to the proposed scope and process, on which stakeholders shall be invited to submit feedback.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	6.5.1 The standardising body shall organise public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that: (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,
Evidence	Explanation provided by IFC “There are close to 30.000 NGO's in Slovenia, including all societies. Around half could have some link with nature, sustainable development or are doing recreation activities in the forest and could count as stakeholder. From this vast pool of organizations, we identified stakeholders that act at national level or are umbrella organization and have direct or indirect link with forestry and nature protection. Two stakeholders have sent an answer



	that they do not have time or human resources and they do not see this in their priorities and that they will not participate. After their lack of interest and possibility of replacement they were not anymore considered as key stakeholder. Following their answer, we respected their decision and did not invite them again for comments and did not send them the final draft of the standard. (Additional evidence of mails was provided.) After initial meeting of working group, we had unbalanced representation of working group. Organization Umanotera was contacted by phone* and financial compensation was proposed for their participation. A proposal was made from their side to include organization Cipra and we consequently succeeded for them and for Pro Silva that they joined. With these two members from NGO's that represent nature protection interests were added to the working group in key stakeholder group. An initial stakeholder mapping was not changed but a list of relevant stakeholders that we included in working group as replacement had changed consequently. We must emphasize that Cipra is together with Umanotera are a member of Plan B umbrella organization and that Umanotera is stated as contact of plan B and as we know also acting as manager for Plan B. In a way Umanotera was replaced and represented by Cipra and they both represent the same NGO group gathered under Plan B under Umanotera management. We therefore ensured that all stakeholder members and all stakeholder groups participated and got the inquiry draft and could contribute."
Assessors' comments	The invitation was not sent to all stakeholders from the stakeholder identification mapping, and therefore not all relevant stakeholders were invited to comment on the enquiry draft. It shall be noted that efforts have been made to get NGOs involved in the process.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	7.2.2 Standard(s) shall include: (d) The approval date and the date of next periodic review
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "Approved by: Institute for Forest Certification in Slovenia on 10.06.2021 Endorsed by PEFC council: Date of entry into force: application date and transition period" Explanation provided by IFC "Final date will be added after endorsement."
Assessors' comments	No reference is found in the standard of the date of the next periodic review.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	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.



Evidence	Explanation provided by the IFC “Permanent feedback is to be collected by director of IFC. Description is on www.pefc.si Institute for forest certification is currently working on new website. The launch of new website was postponed due to consistency in the revision process. Feedback was mentioned regarding the new website that will have the appeal to the general public similar to the one on PEFC international website. Currently there is no separate mechanism than mail and phone contact, but this will be met with the new website.”
Assessors' comments	No evidence is found of a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on the standard (also in the coming years). Only contact details are available on the website of PEFC Slovenia (pefc.si). However, as explained by IFC such mechanism will be in place on their new website.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	9.4.1 A revision shall define the application date and transition period of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s).
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Approved by: Institute for Forest Certification in Slovenia on 10.06.2021 Endorsed by PEFC council: Date of entry into force: application date and transition period Date of next revision:” Explanation provided by IFC “The document was edited. The final document will have this date.”
Assessors' comments	No application date and transition period are found in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2.
Result	Does not conform - minor

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Approved by: Institute for Forest Certification in Slovenia on 10.06.2021 Endorsed by PEFC council: Date of entry into force: application date and transition period Date of next revision:” Explanation provided by IFC “The document was edited. The final document will have this date.”
Assessors' comments	No application date is found in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2.
Result	Does not conform - minor



Requirement	9.4.3 The transition period shall not exceed one year. The standardising body may determine a longer period when justified by exceptional circumstances.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Approved by: Institute for Forest Certification in Slovenia on 10.06.2021 Endorsed by PEFC council: Date of entry into force: application date and transition period Date of next revision:” Explanation provided by IFC “The document was edited. The final document will have this date.”
Assessors' comments	No application date and transition period are found in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2.
Result	Does not conform - minor

8.3. Results: Selection of Conformities

In the tables below, a selection of conformities is presented that are considered sensitive issues in the forest context of Slovenia and/or illustrative examples of the standard-setting process.

Requirement	6.1.2 For the revision of a standard the proposal shall cover at least (a) and (e) of clause 6.1.1.
Evidence	E-mail on the revision of the standard sent to stakeholders on 8 November 2019 “On behalf of the Forest Certification Institute, we invite you to participate in the renewal of the Slovenian scheme for forest certification according to the PEFC system. The scheme includes documents required for the international certification of the Slovenian system of sustainable and sustainable forest management. The renewal of the scheme will take into account national legislation and the new international standard 1002: 2018, which describes the group certification of forests, and PEFC ST 1003: 2018, which describes sustainable forest management. The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjaska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized proposal of the scheme is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. After approval, the scheme will be submitted for international approval. The Slovenian forest certification scheme is available on the website www.pefc.si.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform



Requirement 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.

Evidence **Stakeholder mapping document (Translated by Google Translate)**
 “The purpose of this document is to describe the stakeholders involved by their characteristics and organizations.

1.1 Key stakeholders for each sector

Stakeholder group	Organizations representing stakeholders
Forest owners (including public and private)	KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG
Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	GZS, ZZS, SloLes
NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace
Scientific and technological community	University of Ljubljana, GIS
Workers and trade unions	Forestry and timber workers' union

1.2 Description and interests of relevant sectors

Stakeholder group	Interest in cooperation
Forest owners (including public and private)	implementation of simple and affordable forest certification
Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	Certified forests and the possibility of purchasing certified timber in case of demand
NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Sustainable development, meeting all forest functions.
Scientific and technological community	Professional implementation of certification and incorporation of new findings into practice
Workers and trade unions	Ensuring workers' rights, adequate pay and safe work

1.3 Key issues for each relevant sector

Stakeholder group	Key issues
Forest owners (including public and private)	• How to ensure easy and at the same time credible certification?
Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	• How to ensure greater involvement of owners in certification?
• NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	How are the ecosocial functions of forests ensured in certified forests?
• scientific and technological community	How to take into account and implement professional starting points?
Workers and trade unions	• How to ensure improvements in work and safety at work through certification?

Explanation provided by IFC

“Regarding stakeholders: We have identified and invited by mail only key stakeholders in order to have balancer representation. In case of more stakeholders of in one group that would mean unbalanced presentation we predicted elections but it was not needed to put in the rules and procedures.

Decision on how to contact stakeholders was on director of institute for forest certification. In this age as also common in Slovenia mails are considered also as official correspondence. In case of stakeholder that did



	not reply or was important to have balanced representation (NGO's) I made additional phone calls. In Slovenia there are more than 20.000 NGO's of which probably around half have some interest in nature or in using forest as recreation activities. Stakeholder mapping has identified stakeholders that work at national level and their work deals also in the field of forestry. Invitation was sent out to all identified stakeholders from stakeholders mapping. Working group was all the time open for new stakeholders wanting to join the process, as we also made effort to have additional NGO's present at second meeting."
Assessors' comments	A stakeholder mapping document was found in which key stakeholders relevant to the subject matter of the standard were defined. The document describes per stakeholder group the main stakeholders categorised under this group, their main interest and their key issues. Based on the explanation provided by IFC, the stakeholder mapping document did not include all stakeholders, but only key stakeholders. IFC has clarified that this selection of the key stakeholders was made because of the high number of relevant stakeholders, and has noted that the WG was open to additional input.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include: (a) overview of the standard-setting process,
Evidence	Public announcement 29 October 2019 on the website of the IFC (pefc.si) "The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. Once approved, the scheme will be submitted for international approval." E-mail invitation on the renewal of the Slovenian PEFC Scheme 8 November 2019 (Translated by Google Translate) "The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. A coherent proposal is expected of the scheme will be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. After approval, the scheme will be submitted for international approval. The Slovenian forest certification scheme is available on the website www.pefc.si
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform



Requirement	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.
Evidence	Explanation provided by IFC “All nominations were accepted, and working group remained open for new members, as Pro Silva and Cipra joined in second part of process. We knew from experience from previous revision of scheme that we would not have a problem of too much members but too little interest was predicted. If in a case of too many organisations would apply we would have to have some instrument of election or selection in a group of stakeholders. This was not needed and the rules and procedures did not include this part. Due to lack of engagement of Green NGO's we also left working group open and later after additional effort got new members of working group. As we had an open working group, we could not implement any selection procedures on gender balance or expertise of members. Openness of the working group has in our case resulted in balanced representation of stakeholders with relevant expertise and approximately gender balanced working group.”
Assessors' comments	Some justification is given on why the WG members were accepted. The relevance of the organisations is justified as these were identified in the stakeholder map.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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						
Evidence	Development report (Showing stakeholders in the WG) <table border="1"> <tr> <td> Forest owners: Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry State forests company SIDG Association of Forest Owners </td> <td> Wood based industry: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cooperative union of Slovenia </td> </tr> <tr> <td> NGO CIPRA Pro Silva </td> <td> Scientific community University of Ljubljana </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> Public interest representatives Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MKGP) State forest Service (ZGS) </td> </tr> </table>	Forest owners: Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry State forests company SIDG Association of Forest Owners	Wood based industry: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cooperative union of Slovenia	NGO CIPRA Pro Silva	Scientific community University of Ljubljana	Public interest representatives Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MKGP) State forest Service (ZGS)	
Forest owners: Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry State forests company SIDG Association of Forest Owners	Wood based industry: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cooperative union of Slovenia						
NGO CIPRA Pro Silva	Scientific community University of Ljubljana						
Public interest representatives Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MKGP) State forest Service (ZGS)							
Assessors' comments	The IFC explained that the WG was balanced: Forest owners 3 members, industry, 2 members, Scientific community and government 2						



	members, forest workers 1 member. There were in total 10 members in the WG divided over all five stakeholder categories, none of which were dominant.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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: (b) telephone conference meeting(s) where there is a verbal yes/no vote,
Evidence	Minutes of the third WG Meeting 15 January 2021 “Decision: The members unanimously agree that the document PEFC SLO 01 - 2021 Standard for Sustainable Forest Management, with the discussed and included changes, be submitted to the Council of the Forest Certification Institute for further processing.”
Assessors' comments	Explanation provided by the IFC “Meeting was on zoom conference call with screen sharing mode of document. As there was no proposals that would not be accepted (only one was withdrawn) there was no need for methods to reach consensus. All members agreed with no abstentions.”
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.5.1 The standardising body shall organise public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that: (f) all feedback is considered by the working group in an objective manner,
Evidence	See assessors' comments
Assessors' comments	IFC explained that no feedback was received during the public consultation period.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	7.1 The standardising body shall approve the standard(s)/normative document(s) formally when there is evidence of consensus among the working group.
Evidence	Minutes of the third WG Meeting 15 January 2021 “Decision: The members unanimously agree that the document PEFC SLO 01 - 2021 Standard for Sustainable Forest Management, with the discussed and included changes, be submitted to the Council of the Forest Certification Institute for further processing.” Minutes of the second correspondence session of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute 19 January 2021 “Decision: The members of the board of the Forest Certification Institute unanimously agree to submit the document PEFC SLO 01: 2020 for a two-month public hearing.” Minutes of the fourth correspondence session of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute 10 June 2021



	“Members voted on the question Do you certify documents marked BS01 to 08 and SLO03? Members voted by e-mail and telephone. Decision: Members of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute approve documents and submit them for further certification. Decision: The members of IFC council are approving the documents and members and is submitting them for further processing and approval.” Development report “In Slovenia SFM standard did not receive any comments or objections. SFM standard for Slovenia was unanimously adopted by Council of Institute for Forest Certification on 10.06.2021.”
Assessors’ comments	Evidence is found of the approval of the standard for the public consultation by the WG. No comments were received during the public consultation period after which the standard was approved by the standardising body on 10 June 2021.
Result	Does conform



9. Bosnia and Herzegovina Forest Management Standard

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the Sustainable Forest Management Standard of Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two (2) nonconformities are found, which are classified as minor. Corrective action requests are formulated for the nonconformities raised. The PEFC Checklist related to the Sustainable Forest Management Standard can be found in Annex 1 part IIIA, which presents all the conformities, nonconformities and related references.

9.1. Analysis

General forest management standard

The Sustainable Forest Management Certification requirements are stipulated in PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in Republic of Srpska/B&H. The standard is structured in seven different chapters, which are subdivided in thematic areas. These contain the specific forest management criteria and their corresponding indicators; their connection with legislation; sources of verification; and the minimum requirements to comply with the criteria. The chapters contain the following subjects:

1. Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle
2. Maintenance of forest ecosystem's health and vitality
3. Maintenance and support of forest productive functions (wood and non-wood forest products)
4. Maintenance, conservation and enhancement of biological diversity of forest ecosystems
5. Maintenance and enhancement of forest protective functions (notably soil and water)
6. Maintenance of socio-economic functions and conditions
7. Organizational aspects

In general, PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 is clearly structured, performance based and auditable. Six observations¹¹ are made:

- The use of the English language is not always clear. There are various spelling mistakes, incorrect use of grammar and words.
- The monitoring and analysis of management in requirement 1.1 are conducted each 10 years (and thus form a cycle), the length of this cycle is considered quite long to allow for adequate response in the meantime, especially when forest operations are adjusted compared to what was planned initially.
- Clause 6.1 is written as an explanatory note ("are basic tools"), without a clear normative direction. It's only the indicator that makes the clause normative.

¹¹ Observations are weaknesses found in the Scheme, which are not considered to be a nonconformity.



- Requirement 8.1.5a of the PEFC benchmark standards prescribes that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur, unless in certain justified circumstances. However, requirement 1.3 of PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 requires that afforestation shall be implemented under certain conditions. Although the outcome is similar, it is remarkable that the standard seems to encourage such conversion, whereas the benchmark standard is discouraging such conversion.
- No explicit reference is found to safeguard the capacity of the forest to store and sequester carbon (in accordance with PEFC International benchmark requirement 8.1.2). However, it is concluded that the several management techniques and measures provided for in criteria 1.3; 1.4; and 3.1 will have a positive effect on retaining the forests capacity in storing and sequestering carbon.
- It is assumed that the wording “utilization activities” includes harvesting operations (in accordance with PEFC International benchmark requirement 8.4.10).

Additionally, two (2) non-conformities were identified, which are classified as minor.

9.2. Results: Nonconformities

The nonconformities found in the Forest Management Standard are presented in the tables below.

Requirement	8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: b) entails a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area;
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3 a) (...) and if conversion of forest area is lower than 1%; 4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.”
Assessors' comments	It is insufficiently ensured that the 1% will be of the forest type within the certified area. Furthermore, the requirement for coppice forest is too general. It is unclear whether the law requires conversion to entail only a small proportion of the forest type; else it might also induce misinterpretation / interpretation disputes for conversion of coppice forests, as the relationship between clauses 1.3 and 4.8 is unclear.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion:



	c) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas;
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3. b) does not have negative impact on the threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species and other protected areas; 4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.”
Assessors' comments	The requirement for coppice forest is too general. It is unclear whether the law requires conversion not to have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; else it might also induce misinterpretation / interpretation disputes for conversion of coppice forests, as the relationship between clauses 1.3 and 4.8 is unclear.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock;
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3 d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; 4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.”
Assessors' comments	The requirement for coppice forest is too general. It is unclear whether the law requires conversion not to destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; else it might also induce misinterpretation / interpretation disputes for conversion of coppice forests, as the relationship between clauses 1.3 and 4.8 is unclear.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: e) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3. c) contribute to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits; 4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and



	economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.”
Assessors' comments	The requirement for coppice forest is too general. It is unclear whether the law requires conversion to make a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits; else it might also induce misinterpretation / interpretation disputes for conversion of coppice forests, as the relationship between clauses 1.3 and 4.8 is unclear.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	10.1.1 The standard requires that when a nonconformity occurs, the organisation shall: a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: i. take action to control and correct it; ii. deal with the consequences;
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.4. As part of internal regulation, the organization shall prepare procedures to deal with non-conformities in written. As part of it, the content shall provide: a) the way organization reacts if non conformity appears; b) description of corrective actions and the ways to deal with the consequences;”
Assessors' comments	The clause requires forest management to prepare procedures which include description of corrective actions and ways to respond to non-conformities. However, the PEFC benchmark requires the Scheme to develop this, not the organisation. From the standard it must be clear that organisation shall react, take action and deal with the consequences when a nonconformity is raised.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

9.3. Results: Selection of Conformities

In the tables below, a selection of conformities is presented that are considered sensitive issues in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina and/or illustrative examples of the Forest Management Standard.

Requirement	4.2 The standard requires that the organisation shall determine: b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2. General requirements Forest managers and forest owners shall determine: b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders”
Assessors' comments	(None)
Result	Does conform



Requirement	5.3 The standard requires that responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BIH 03:2020 V2 “7.2.(...) The management of the organization shall define and secure necessary structure among employees and service providers and to have clearly defined responsibilities for implementation of SFM. Update on the roles of all persons in the system shall be implemented on annual level through written instructions and training provision. This includes all resources and documented information to place, implement, maintain, and improve system efficiency. The organization has to define main responsible person that will prepare and keep records of all the documented information is relevant, and updated as appropriate, to the activities of the organisation.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.2.5 The standard requires that management plans specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation and damage to forest ecosystems
Evidence	PEFC RS-BIH 03:2020 V2 “2.2. In forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are defined measures for maintenance of health and vitality, minimizing the risk of forest degradation or appearance of damages, as well as measures for eventual revitalization of degraded forest ecosystems. Indicator 1. Selection of protection measures is in function for supporting the health and vitality of forest ecosystems with priority on application of biological measures”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property 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. 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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BIH 03:2020 V2 “6.3. Property rights and land tenure arrangements are clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. The legal, customary and traditional rights related to forest and forest land are recognized and respected in accordance with national regulations.”



Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.6.(...) This includes national regulations and international obligations accepted by the country. Guaranteed are rights of the International Labor Organization and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”
Assessors' comments	Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.5. Activities in forests are planned, organized and carried out in such a way as to identify possible risks to health and accidents and apply all reasonable measures to protect workers. The owner or user of the forest is obliged to inform all employees about the existence of risks related to their work and to organize and conduct training in occupational safety.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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. 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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.6. The forest owner or user is obliged to (...) comply with applicable regulations in the field of (...) health and safety at work, labor law and collective agreement (where applicable and for migrant forest workers and contractors) (...). This includes national regulations and international obligations accepted by the country and by Law on Labor. Guaranteed



	are rights of the International Labor Organization and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The forest owner or user and service providers must provide a fair salary to employees at a level that is at least in accordance with the requirements of national legislation.”
Assessors' comments	Evidence was found in the Labor Law that employees also include migrant and contract workers. During the field visit in BiH/RS it became clear that in general the minimum wage in BiH/RS is lower than the living wage. However, this is not the case for the forestry sector. The sector pays comparatively well, because workers in forestry are scarce and are known to work abroad if they are not paid well.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.1.(...) Effective and continuous communication and consultation with local population and other stakeholders are basic tools for resolving potential complaints in regards to forest management. Indicator 3. Consultative meetings among the forest managers and local community for issues of interest to the local community related to forestry.”
Assessors' comments	It shall be noted that there are no indigenous peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Republic of Srpska.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.7. It is not allowed to light a fire in the forest and its vicinity”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.2. Protected and endangered species of forest plants, mushrooms and forest animals shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where



	necessary, measures is shall be taken for their protection, nursing and increase of their population.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.2. Forest are natural good of public interest and all citizens have the right of free access in forests for enjoyment and recreation, on their own responsibility for their safety and with an obligation to respect legal provisions. The free entrance can be limited or prohibited in protected parts of the forests, in forest parts where the human safety is in danger, in period of year of existing threat of forest fires or performance of harvesting, silviculture and forest protection activities. For informing about restriction of free access to forests, all appropriate tools for information are used (local media, municipal info, web-site, info boards on the field).”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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 indigenous peoples.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Forest management shall consider its positive impact to local economy including opportunities for employment of local population and cooperation with local service providers. Indicator 1. When labor force has to be engaged, priority is given to inhabitants from the rural municipalities from forest area.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	10.2 Continual improvement 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.
Evidence	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2



	“7.1. Indicator 1. The established system for SFM is efficient, well elaborated and understood among employees, is regularly monitored and improved where possible.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform



10. North Macedonia Forest Management Standard

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the Sustainable Forest Management Standard of North Macedonia. In total four (4) nonconformities are found, all classified as minor. Corrective action requests are formulated for each of the nonconformities raised. The PEFC Checklist related to the Sustainable Forest Management Standard can be found in Annex 1 part IIIB, which presents all the conformities, nonconformities and related references.

10.1. Analysis

The Sustainable Forest Management Certification requirements are stipulated in PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in North Macedonia. The standard is structured in seven different chapters, which are subdivided in thematic areas. These contain the specific forest management criteria and their corresponding indicators; their connection with legislation; sources of verification; and the minimum requirements to comply with the criteria. The chapters contain the following subjects:

1. Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle
2. Maintenance of forest ecosystem's health and vitality
3. Maintenance and support of forest productive functions (wood and non-wood forest products)
4. Maintenance, conservation and enhancement of biological diversity of forest ecosystems
5. Maintenance and enhancement of forest protective functions (notably soil and water)
6. Maintenance of socio-economic functions and conditions
7. Organizational aspects

In general, PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 is clearly structured and requirements are performance based and auditable. Five observations¹² are made:

- The use of the English language is not always clear. There are various spelling mistakes, incorrect use of grammar and words.
- The monitoring and analysis of management in requirement 1.1 are conducted each 10 years (and thus form a cycle), the length of this cycle is considered quite long to allow for adequate response in the meantime, especially when forest operations are adjusted compared to what was planned initially.
- Clause 6.1 is written as an explanatory note ("are basic tools"), without a clear normative direction. It's only the indicator that makes the clause normative.
- Requirement 8.1.5a of the PEFC benchmark standards prescribes that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur

¹² Observations are weaknesses found in the Scheme, which are not considered to be a nonconformity.



unless in certain justified circumstances. However, requirement 1.3 of PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 requires that afforestation shall be implemented under certain conditions. Although the outcome is similar, it is remarkable that the standard seems to encourage such conversion, whereas the benchmark standard is discouraging such conversion.

- It is assumed that the wording “utilization activities” includes harvesting operations (in accordance with PEFC International benchmark requirement 8.4.10).

Additionally, four (4) non-conformities were identified, all classified as minor.

10.2. Results: Nonconformities

The nonconformities found in the Forest Management Standard are presented in the tables below.

Requirement	8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: b) entails a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area;
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “a) (...) and if conversion of forest area is lower of 1%,”
Assessors’ comments	It is insufficiently ensured that the 1% will be of the forest type within the certified area.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	8.1.5 The standard requires that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: f) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.3. Increasing the forest areas through conversion of abandoned agricultural and bare lands into forest land shall be always taken in consideration whenever it enrich economic, long-term conservation and social and/or cultural values.”
Assessors’ comments	It is not ensured that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless it makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits. it is insufficiently ensured that 1.3 also covers all types of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.3. During forest harvesting, skidding and transport in forests, the risk of oil spillage is strictly avoided and indiscriminate disposal of waste. Non-organic waste is collected (...) stored (...) and later on disposed on locations designated for that purpose. Indicators Indicator 1. Prescribed rules and measures for minimizing the risk of oil spillage and waste disposal are provided to conductors of forest operations and are implemented. Indicator 3. The existence of materials and absorbents for oil in the cutting area and in the forest machinery that is in use in forest operations.”
Assessors' comments	The references include rules and measures meant to minimize the risk of oil spillage and waste disposal, however, the clause makes no mention of emergency measures for when spillage has already taken place.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	10.1.1 The standard requires that when a nonconformity occurs, the organisation shall: a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: i. take action to control and correct it; ii. deal with the consequences;
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.4. 7.4. As part of internal regulation, the organization shall prepare procedures to deal with non-conformities in written. As part of it, the content shall provide: a) the way organization reacts if non conformity appears; b) description of corrective actions if non compliance with the SFM standard is identified and the ways to deal with the consequences;”
Assessors' comments	The clause requires forest management to prepare procedures which include description of corrective actions and ways to respond to non-conformities. However, the PEFC benchmark requires the Scheme to develop this, not the organisation. From the standard it must be clear that organisation shall react, take action and deal with the consequences when a nonconformity is raised
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

10.3. Results: Selection of Conformities

In the tables below, a selection of conformities is presented that are considered sensitive issues in the context of North Macedonia and/or illustrative examples of the Forest Management Standard.



Requirement	4.2 The standard requires that the organisation shall determine: d) require record-keeping that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the forest management standards;
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. Forest managers and forest owners shall secure record-keeping procedures that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of this Standard. Minimum period for keeping records and documents that are relevant as evidence is 5 (five) years.”
Assessors' comments	(None)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	5.3 The standard requires that responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.2.(...) The management of the organization shall define and secure necessary structure among employees and service providers and to have clearly defined responsibilities for implementation of SFM. Update on the roles of all persons in the system shall be implemented on annual level through written instructions and training provision. This includes all resources and documented information to place, implement, maintain, and improve system efficiency. The organization has to define main responsible person that will prepare and keep records of all relevant and updated information related to activities implemented by the organization.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.2.5 The standard requires that management plans specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation and damage to forest ecosystems
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2. In forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are defined measures for maintenance of health and vitality, minimizing the risk of forest degradation or appearance of damages, as well as measures for eventual revitalization of degraded forest ecosystems. Indicator 1. Selection of protection measures is in function for supporting the health and vitality of forest ecosystems with priority on application of biological measures.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform



Requirement	6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property 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. 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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.3. Property rights and land tenure arrangements are clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. The legal, customary and traditional rights related to forest and forest land are recognized and respected in accordance with national regulations.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.6.(...) That includes national legislation and and international agreements accepted by the country. Fundamental rights of ILO and UN Declaration of Human Rights are integral part of this criterion.”
Assessors' comments	North Macedonia has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.5. Forest management activities shall be planned, organized and applied on the way that identify all possible risks for health and accidents and at the same time taking all resonable measures to protect forest workers. The forest manager/owner shall inform all employees and service provider's staff about existence of the risks that are attached to their working position and to organize and conduct training for safety measures at work.”



Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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. 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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "2. Forest managers and forest owners are responsible to ensure full compliance to forest management standard including activities that are conducted by contracted forest operators in certified forest area. 6.6. Forest manager/owner shall (...) comply with legislation related to (...) occupational health and safety; labor law and collective agreement (where is applicable) (...). That includes national legislation and and international agreements accepted by the country. Fundamental rights of ILO and UN Declaration of Human Rights are integral part of this criterion. Forest manager/owner and service providers as well shall provide fair salaries for the employees and engaged forest workers on level that is at minimum in accordance with the national legislation." Labour regulations law "Article 4 Application of the law (1) The present law shall apply to labour relations between employers established or residing in the Republic of Macedonia and their employees when they continually pursue the activity on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as in cases when the employer temporarily assigns the employees to work abroad. Article 5 Definitions 2. "Employee" shall mean any natural person who has established a labour relation by virtue of entering into an employment contract; 3. „Fixed term employee" shall mean a person with employment contract entered into directly between the employer and the employee, where the termination of the employment contract is defined by the fulfilment of objective conditions and the arrival of a specific date, completion of a specific task or the occurrence of a specific event; 4."Permanent employee" shall mean a person who has entered into an employment contract for an indefinite period of time; 5."Assigned employee" shall mean an employee who has been temporarily assigned to work on the territory of a member state other than the state where the person has regular employment.
Assessors' comments	The Council for SFM explained that the minimum wage in MK is lower than the living wage in the country, especially in urban areas. However, this is not the case for the forestry sector. The sector pays comparatively well, because workers in forestry are scarce and are known to work abroad if they are not paid well.



Result	Does conform
Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.1.(...) Effective and continuous communication and consultation with local population and other stakeholders shall be maintained and are basic tools for resolving potential appeals and complaints in regards to forest management. Indicator 3. Consultative meetings among the forest managers and local community for issues of interest to the local community related to forest management are regularly organized.
Assessors' comments	It shall be noted that there are no Indigenous peoples in North Macedonia.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion 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 including consultation with affected stakeholders; and
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.3. It is prohibited to decrease the area of forest and forest land through conversion to other types of land use, including conversion of primary forests to forest plantation unless in justified circumstances where the conversion is in compliance with: a) national legislation relevant for land use and is a result of government authorities planning and decision including consultations with materially and directly affected people and organizations (...)” Annex 1 to PEFC National standard for sustainable forest management in North Macedonia “3.8 Forest plantation represents afforested surface of (forest/non forest) land with forest tree species that are distinguished by their ability of fast growing, quality and other characteristics that are viable for intensive growth and use.” 3.23. Primary forest Naturally regenerated forest of native species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed.” Macedonian Law on Forests “Article 6 (1) Forest, in the sense of this Law, is a forest ecosystem that exists on forest land overgrown with forest species of trees and shrubs, bare land adjacent to the forest, as well as other bare land and meadows inside the forest, forest nurseries, forest roads, seed plantations, forest



	fire belts, windbreaks over an area of more than two acres, as well as forests in protected areas. A forest also consists of young stands and forest cultures with an area of more than two acres, as well as areas that are an integral part of the forest, and are temporarily unforested as a result of human impact or natural disasters on which natural regeneration has begun. (2) Forest does not mean separate groups of trees and an area of less than two acres, border trees between agricultural land, plantations of fast-growing tree species, as well as coastal vegetation outside the forest, tree lines and parks in settlements.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2. In forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are defined measures for maintenance of health and vitality, minimizing the risk of forest degradation or appearance of damages, as well as measures for eventual revitalization of degraded forest ecosystems. Forest management is based on natural processes and in determining the measures to maintain the health of forests primary is taken care for utilization of preventive biological measures in cases where it is feasible and economically justified.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.4. It is not allowed starting the fire in forest.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.7. Standing and fallen dead trees, monumental trees, trees with holes, old trees and rare tree species are left in the stand in quantity and composition necessary for preserving biodiversity, taking in consideration potential impact on health and stability of the forest and neighboring ecosystems. Min. requirements - Minimum 3 trees per hectare according to criterion description are left in the stand. - The wood waste after cutting thinner than 3 cm remains at harvesting area with respect to the provisions for conduction of forest order.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “5.1. Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance protective forest functions, such as erosion protection; wind protection; protection of water resources; protection from harmful effect of water (floods, avalanches); and infrastructure protection. Silviculture and protection measures are adapted to maintain or enhance their protective function.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.2. Forests are natural resource of public interest and all citizens have the right of free access in forests for enjoyment, vacation and recreation, on their own responsibility for their safety and with an obligation to respect legal provisions and ownership rights. The free entrance can be limited or prohibited in protected parts of the forests, in forest parts where the human safety is in danger, in period of year of existing threat of forest fires or performance of harvesting, silviculture and forest protection activities. Information related to restriction of free access to forests shall



	be provided by all appropriate means for information (local media, municipal info tab, web-site, info boards on the field)."
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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 indigenous peoples.
Evidence	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "6.1. Forest management shall consider its positive impact to local economy including opportunities for employment of local population and cooperation with local service providers. Indicator 1. When labor force has to be engaged, priority is given to inhabitants from the rural municipalities from forest area."
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform



11. Slovenia Forest Management Standard

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the Sustainable Forest Management Standard of Slovenia. In total five (5) nonconformities are found, all classified as minor. Corrective action requests are formulated for each of the nonconformities raised. The PEFC Checklist related to the Sustainable Forest Management Standard can be found in Annex 1 part IIIC, which presents all the conformities, nonconformities and related references.

11.1. Analysis

The Sustainable Forest Management Certification requirements are stipulated in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management at the Regional Level. The standard is structured in eight introductory chapters which already contain normative requirements for forest organisations, followed by the criteria and indicators tables, structured along the following 6 main criteria:

- Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest funds
- Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality
- Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forest (wood and non-wood)
- Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems
- Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management
- Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions

These are further elaborated in subcriteria and indicators (deviating between descriptive and quantitative indicators).

In general, PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 is clearly structured and requirements are performance based and auditable. Ten observations¹³ are made:

- The title of PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 refers to criteria and indicators at the Regional Level. Such a reference is amongst others also made in chapter 1 and 8. It is however unclear why the reference to region is made, the more since the note in chapter 1 defines Slovenia as one region (although from its description it seems the word eco-region is meant). This makes the interpretation of the standard a bit unclear.
- Chapter 8 provides twice an explanation of the criteria and its different components (criterion, sub-criterion, descriptive indicator, quantitative indicator, unit, source of data, comment).
- Use of the English language is not always correct or concise, which creates room for different interpretations, such as in:

¹³ Observations are weaknesses found in the Scheme, which are not considered to be a nonconformity.



- clause 3.2 "Planning and forest management must permanently provide for optimal wood yield from forest without diminishing the biotic diversity of the forest, its **life potential**".
- Moreover, parts of the standard almost entirely copy the PEFC benchmark wording, but the phrasing "the standard requires" has not always been removed, such as in clause 9.1.1: "**The standard requires** that monitoring of forest resources (...) shall be periodically performed (...)". It shall be noted that this is typically a benchmark standard, for the assessment of another standard, and as such would not be included in standard requirements for forest operators.
- Clause 4. h) (benchmark requirement 4.h): it is remarkable that 1) no specific information is required, unless it is requested by the PEFC chain of custody certified customer, and 2) that in such cases only information regarding the copy of a certificate shall be provided. It would have been more logic to also include information on product quantity, identification, and the claim "100% PEFC certified".
- Clause 4 (benchmark requirement 4.i): a list of applicable legislation is found. No specific reference is found to benchmark requirements which are not reflected in the standard, as they are already addressed through the legislation.
- Clause 6.3.1.3 (benchmark requirement 6.3.1.3): the exact copy of the PEFC benchmark standard is strange, as the NGB shall know whether there is anti-corruption legislation in Slovenia. An adjusted requirement would have been expected that fits the Slovenian context.
- Clause 7.4.1 (benchmark requirement 7.4.1): the clause also provides requirements for the national governing body, whereas the applicability of the standard does not cover national governing bodies, and forest owners/ organisations are not in the legal position to fulfil this requirement for the national governing bodies, rather only for their own organisation.
- Clause 7.5.2 (benchmark requirement 7.5.2): as "regularly updated" is not further defined, it is hard to audit.
- Clause 1.1.a.5 (benchmark requirement 8.1.4c): The clause is quite strict, and factually excludes any possibility for forest conversion, as it must not have negative impacts on forest eco-system (which are all forests, not only ecologically important forest areas) and no negative impacts on cultural and social functions (which again are almost all forests, not only culturally and socially significant areas).

Additionally, five (5) non-conformities were identified, all classified as minor.

11.2. Results: Nonconformities

The nonconformities found in the Forest Management Standard are presented in the tables below.

Requirement	8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5 Deforestation of a certified forest which is aimed at converting land into agricultural or other non-forest land use, including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - does not destroy larger areas of forests with significantly high carbon stock”
Assessors' comments	The use of the word ‘larger’ indicates that deforestation of smaller areas of significantly high carbon stock would be accepted, which is not in agreement with the requirement.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: e) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5 Deforestation (...) shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when it contributes to the long-term preservation of economic and social benefits.”
Assessors' comments	No reference is found requiring that forest conversion must contribute to long-term conservation benefits.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	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: 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
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when agreement has been reached with materially and directly interested persons and organisations;” Additional explanation provided by NGB “Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest



	plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees. Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.”
Assessors' comments	It is insufficiently ensured that agreement shall be reached in a process where affected stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making on conversion through transparent and participatory consultation processes.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	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: c) has a positive impact on long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - does not destroy larger areas of forests with significantly high carbon stock” Additional explanation provided by NGB “Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees. Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.”
Assessors' comments	It is not ensured that long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation will not only not be destroyed, but also positively impacted.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	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: e) safeguards protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and



Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when it contributes to the long-term preservation of economic and social benefits.” Additional explanation provided by NGB “Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees. Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.”
Assessors' comments	It is insufficiently ensured that the conversion shall safeguard protective functions of forests as well as other regulating or supporting ecosystem services.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	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: g) has a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices; and
Evidence	Explanation by NGB “Degraded forests are forest land by spatial planning legislation. Deforestation for the purposes of agricultural land can be done to the size of 0,5 ha based on Forest act article 21 paragraph 6. Deforestation and land use change other than agriculture, or agricultural larger than 0,5 ha, is regulated by spatial legislation that is subjected to public debate and consultation. Planned changes are made only in public interest (constituting of economical, ecological and social interests) A collection of legislation can be found on the site of Ministry responsible for spatial planning: https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-okolje-in-prostor/zakonodaja-ministrstva-za-okolje-in-prostor/”
Assessors' comments	No reference is found ensuring that conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations may only take place given a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard



Requirement	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: h) is based on credible evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.
Evidence	Explanation by NGB “Degraded forests are forest land by spatial planning legislation. Conversion of degraded forest is described in forest Act definitions. Conversion of severely degraded forest can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure that can include planting but all possibilities of natural regeneration are considered beforehand as part of Slovenian forestry tradition and national strategies and consequently forest management plans. Forest act article 3 paragraph 10 http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO270# Deforestation for the purposes of agricultural land can be done to the size of 0,5 ha based on Forest act article 21 paragraph 6. Deforestation and land use change other than agriculture, or agricultural larger than 0,5 ha, is regulated by spatial legislation that is subjected to public debate and consultation. Planed changes are made only in public interest (constituting of economical, ecological and social interests)”
Assessors' comments	No reference is found ensuring that conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations must be based on evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “2.5. In operations carried out in forests with machines and equipment, residues of fuels and lubricants must be removed. Any disposals of waste in forests that would pose a threat to the growth and the fertility of earth, the stability or sustainability of forest or jeopardizing its function, subsistence and purpose, shall be avoided and is prohibited. The spillage of oil or fuel during forest management operations shall be prevented. Any such instance must be recorded and reported to a suitable institution or organisation.”
Assessors' comments	No reference is found ensuring that emergency procedures shall be in place.



Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.4. For the needs of artificial regeneration of forests and reforestation a preference is given to domestic species and their local provenances, a constant supervisory care with quality reproductive material of different types and provenances must be provided. The planting of those tree species shall be encouraged which are more resilient to climate change and which fit to the local climate conditions. Planting and sowing of foreign tree species and tree species (allochthonous) and not adaptable to the site (non-appropriate provenances) shall be prohibited, unless such activities are foreseen in the forests-management or silvicultural plans and negative impacts of introduction can be avoided or minimized.”
Assessors' comments	It is insufficiently ensured that any used introduced species, provenances or varieties are scientifically evaluated.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.6. The know-how on good practices and innovations including knowledge obtained by forest owners and non-governmental organisations as well as the existing traditional know-how present in local communities shall be taken advantage of. Benefits arising from the utilization of local and traditional knowledge shall be encouraged. Forest work must be carried out in compliance with fundamental international conventions by the International Labour Organisation.”
Assessors' comments	No mention is made of the sharing of the mentioned benefits arising from utilization of local knowledge.
Result	Does not conform – minor
CAR	Provide evidence to show conformity or update the standard



11.3. Results: Selection of Conformities

In the tables below, a selection of conformities is presented that are considered sensitive issues in the context of Slovenia and/or illustrative examples of the Forest Management Standard.

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property 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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property 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.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	6.3.3.1 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall comply with fundamental ILO conventions.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.3.3.1 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall comply with fundamental ILO conventions.”
Assessors' comments	Slovenia has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	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.
Assessors' comments	It shall be noted that SLO 03:2021 does not allow any exceptions to the use of the WHO Class 1A and 1B pesticides.
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.2. When planning and managing forests, the ecologically significant, typical, rare and sensitive forest biotopes, habitat types and species must be preserved, especially within the scope of the network of special areas of conservation (the so-called NATURA 2000 areas and ecologically significant areas - ESAs).”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.10. The impact of game wildlife on regeneration, growth and biodiversity of forests must be monitored regularly. The results of the



	monitoring process must be observed when planning measures for game wildlife management.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.2 Rare tree species shall be left in quantities and distribution to safeguard biological diversity. 4.7. In forest management, it shall be necessary to systematically preserve and not to remove the suitable quantity and distribution of standing, fallen dead trees and hollow trees, as this ensures the preservation of favourable conservation status of plant and animal species in forests. When drying coniferous trees are not removed, the potential impact on the health and stability of forests has to be considered.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “5.2. In forest planning and management, a special attention must be paid to on sensitive soils and erosion-prone areas and forests with water protection function to prevent harmful impact on the quantity and quality of water resources. Inappropriate use of chemicals and other harmful substances as well as other activities having an adverse impact on the quality of water must be prevented.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.5. Free access and movement of forest visitors for the purpose of recreation and other similar activities must be enabled, whereby ownership and other rights, impact of recreation and other similar activities on the forest ecosystem as well as compatibility of such activities with other forest functions must be taken into account. Management and visits in forest with particularly emphasised social functions are adapted to such functions so as not to have a negative impact on forest resources and soil. Forest visitors are informed that relevant codes and forest visiting etiquettes must be observed during visits in nature.”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Not applicable



12. Group Certification Requirements

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the Group Certification Requirements. No nonconformities are found. The PEFC Checklist related to the Group Certification Requirements can be found in Annex 1 part II, which presents all the conformities and related references.

12.1. Analysis

The requirements for the Group Certification are regulated in PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 Group Forest Management Certification Rules and Procedures. The PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 is a clearly structured document and almost entirely follows the structure and wording of the PEFC benchmark requirements. One observation¹⁴ is made:

- Observation: It is noted that the words 'Group member' and 'Participant' are both used throughout the procedures, whereas they refer to the same.

12.2. Results: Nonconformities

The group certification requirements comply with the PEFC requirements. No nonconformities are found.

12.3. Results: Selection of Conformities

In the tables below, a selection of conformities is presented that are considered sensitive issues in the forest context of the Balkan countries and/or illustrative examples of the procedures for group requirements.

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "4.2. Determining the scope of the group management system Regional or group representative must provide written justification for decision of establishment of group certification, scope of the group management system the geographical boundaries and applicability of the group management system."
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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:

¹⁴ Observations are weaknesses found in the Scheme, which are not considered to be a nonconformity.



	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; 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 mandate to represent the participants and where its commitment and the terms and conditions of the contract are enforceable.
Evidence	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "5.1.1 Functions and responsibilities of the group entity 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; 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 mandate to represent the participants and where its commitment and the terms and conditions of the contract are enforceable."
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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 12 months after exclusion. 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.
Evidence	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "5.1.2 Function and responsibilities of participants 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"
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	5.1.2 Function and responsibilities of participants The standard requires that the following functions and responsibilities of the participants shall be specified: 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;
Evidence	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "5.1.2 Function and responsibilities of participants 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"
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform

Requirement	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.
Evidence	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "9.3.2.1 The size of the sample should generally be based on the square root of the number of participants: ($y=\sqrt{x}$), rounded to the upper whole number 9.3.2.2 Internal assessments of a group representative The group or regional representative shall audit at least: • At first assessment: $y = \sqrt{x}$ • At annual supervisory audits: $y = 0.6 * \sqrt{x}$



	• Upon reassessment or transfer of the certificate: $y = 0.8 * \sqrt{x}$ y = number of controlled owners x = number of owners involved”
Assessors' comments	(none)
Result	Does conform



13. Chain of Custody

The Description of PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System (PEFC BS 01:2021) provides further explanation on systems documentation and lists all the documents included in the system. This list includes PEFC ST 2002:2020, Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products – Requirements. The system fully adopts the PEFC Benchmark standard for chain of custody.

The Chain of Custody Standard of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System does therefore comply with the PEFC Council requirements, no further assessment was carried out.



14. Certification and Accreditation Procedures

This chapter presents the findings of the assessment of the Certification and Accreditation Procedures. No nonconformities are found, which are all classified as minor. The PEFC Checklist related to the Certification and Accreditation Procedures can be found in Annex 1 part IV, which presents all conformities and related references.

14.1. Analysis

The requirements for accreditation and certification are regulated in PEFC BS 04:2021 Certification and accreditation procedures. PEFC BS 01:2021 provides further explanation on systems documentation and lists all the documents included in the system. This list includes PEFC ST 2003:2020 Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard.

This sufficiently ensures that the requirements of PEFC ST 2003:2020 are met by the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System.

The following steering documents are included as references for requirements for certification organizations:

- ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies)
- ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 (Requirements for certification bodies providing forest management certification)
- ISO 19011:2011 (Competence requirements for chain of custody certification auditors)

14.2. Results

The Certification and Accreditation Procedures comply with the PEFC requirements. No nonconformities are found.



15. Other aspects

This chapter presents other findings of the assessment of the Scheme. With regards to Scheme Administration Procedures, the following procedures were found:

- **Notification of Certification Procedures**

These procedures are elaborated in PEFC BS 05:2021 Notification of Certification Bodies for Chain of Custody and Forest Management Certification;

- **PEFC Logo Usage Licensing**

These procedures are elaborated in PEFC BS 07:2021 Issuance of PEFC trademarks license procedures, with compliance reference to the PEFC requirements as stipulated in PEFC ST 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements;

- **Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedures**

These procedures are elaborated in PEFC BS 08:2020 Complaints and appeals procedures.

It shall be noted that the conformity of these procedures with respectively chapter 5, 6 and 8 of PEFC GD 1004:2009 Administration of PEFC scheme is not further assessed in detail, in accordance with tender document for this assignment. Further assessment of these procedures is conducted by the Technical Unit of PEFC Council.



Annex 1 PEFC Checklists

The tables below present the PEFC Checklists, in which the following formatting is applied in the “reference” column:

- **Bold text** – Source of the quotation
- “Text between quotation marks” – Quotation from either standard, procedures, legislation, response from Applicant Scheme, minutes etc.
- *Italic text* – Comments made by the Assessor.

Part IA: PEFC Checklist for Standard-setting Procedures and process – Bosnia and Herzegovina

1 Scope

Part I covers the requirements for Standard-setting Procedures and process as defined in the revised 2017 issue of PEFC ST 1001, Standard-setting – Requirements.

Checklist

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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “4.1 National Governing Bodies - NGB's The NGB's of the Balkan Region are PEFC standardization bodies responsible for formal acceptance (approval) of documents. The composition and decisions brought by the Balkan Region NGB's are in compliance with their Statute. The NGB's shall be organized as legal entities, registered under the legal framework requirements in their countries. 5.3.2 Building consensus The WG decision to suggest publishing the working draft version for public consultation or publishing the final version for formal approval shall be brought with a consensus.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			5.5.2 Formal approval The final draft version shall be submitted for approval to the NGB. The approval shall be conducted (...) according to the normative documents of the country NGB's."
(b) procedures for keeping documented information,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "9. The following records (data) form the standards setting process shall be kept: a) (...) m) (...) The records 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." <i>The list a) to m) mentions various types of documents to be kept.</i>
(c) procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "4.4 (...) The working group is approved by the NGB's from the Balkan Region based on received nominations. The composition of the WG shall be balanced in order to reflect the categories of stakeholders with reference to the contents and scope of the standard, with no individual interest dominating in the process. Representation of the interests of all interests of all parties in the WG is based on the principles of equity and nobody's individual interest can prevail in the process. Procedures to secure the principle of equity are as follow: a) For stakeholders from every interest group identified above there are at least three seats guaranteed for participation in the working group. b) During consensus building process every voice is equal."
(d) the standard-setting process,	Procedures	YES	<i>The PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 describes the procedures for standard-setting, with main aspects of the process in chapter 5 "Procedures for standard-setting"</i>
(e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.3.2 In order to reach consensus, the WG can employ the following: a) face to face meetings with voting by stating yes or no, raising hand; b) formal secret voting, etc., c) voting by e-mail when the members are asked to vote for or against in writing. In case of a negative vote (...) the following mechanisms shall be used:



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			a) discussions and talks (...) in order to reach a compromise, b) direct negotiations (...) to reach a compromise, c) additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary) d) process of disagreement resolution by mediation. If the process of resolution of disputes is not executed within 4 weeks from beginning, then the threshold for consensus building will be at least that there shall be majority of votes positive in every single stakeholders interest group”
(f) review and revision of standard(s)/normative document(s).	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.1 The standard(s)/normative document(s) shall be reviewed (...). 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 input. 6.3 Gap analysis At the start of a review, the NGB shall evaluate the content of the standard against appropriate PEFC International standards, national laws and regulations, and other relevant standards to identify potential gaps in the standard. (...) 6.4 Stakeholder consultation Where the feedback and the gap analysis do not identify a need to revise the standard, the NGB shall organise stakeholder consultation 6.5 Decision-making Based on the feedback (...), the gap analysis and the consultations, the NGB decides whether to reaffirm the standard or whether a revision of the standard is necessary (...). 7.1 Normal revision A normal revision can occur at the periodic review, or between periodic reviews, but does not include editorial revisions and time-critical revisions. 7.2 Editorial revision Editorial revisions can be made without triggering the normal revision process. The NGB approves editorial changes formally and publish an amendment or a new edition of the standard. 7.3 Time-critical revision A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process. ”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.2.1 (...) The NGB's shall publish the standards setting process on the website as well and the standard setting procedures document and shall review them regularly based on experiences during their implementation. Additionally, the review on procedures shall be conducted according to the comments received.”
	Process	YES	<i>PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 could be found on the Association of Private Forest Owners (APFO) “Naša Šuma” website (http://www.nasasuma.com/). As this is the initial development of the scheme, a review is not applicable.</i>
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “9. The following records (data) form the standards setting process shall be kept: a) Proposal for standards setting,”
	Process	YES	<i>PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 was found in the tender dossier and on the website.</i>
(b) Stakeholder identification mapping,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “a (...) identifying stakeholders,”
	Process	YES	<i>A stakeholder map was found.</i>
(c) Contacted and/or invited stakeholders,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “a (...) list of invited stakeholders,”
	Process	YES	<i>Examples of E-mails and invitations to stakeholders for meetings were found, which include evidence of contacted and invited stakeholders.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(d) Stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “b) Written documentation for establishing a WG, d) Notes from WG meetings, including list of participants in each working group meeting, notes and proposals from WG members and public consultations as well as the changes made in the documentation, f) Notes from meetings with stakeholders, g) Comments received from public consultation,”
	Process	YES	<i>The attendance lists of the WG meetings and of participation in the Council for SFM meetings were found.</i>
(e) Feedback received and a synopsis of how feedback was addressed,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “d) Notes from WG meetings, including list of participants in each working group meeting, notes and proposals from WG members and public consultations as well as the changes made in the documentation, f) Notes from meetings with stakeholders, g) Comments received from public consultation,”
	Process	N.A.	<i>The APFO “Naša Šuma” indicated that no feedback has been received.</i>
(f) All drafts and final versions of the standard,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “m) All versions of the standard along with the changes made to it elaborated in each of the development stages.”
	Process	YES	<i>The various drafts and final version of the standard were found.</i>
(g) Outcomes from working group considerations,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “d) Notes from WG meetings, including list of participants in each working group meeting, notes and proposals from WG members and public consultations as well as the changes made in the documentation, e) Results from reaching consensus and resolving disputes m) All versions of the standard along with the changes made to it elaborated in each of the development stages”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	<i>Minutes were found with the outcomes from all sessions of the WG. Also the various versions of the standard were found in which outcomes of the WG are included. In addition to this, minutes with outcomes are found of the Council from SFM meetings. It shall be noted that the WG consisted of five persons (from various stakeholder groups) which were also part of the SFM Council. The SFM Council consisted of 22 persons and functioned as the stakeholder representation group for the approval of the standard. However, in practice members of the Council for SFM had also been able to include their considerations into the standard.</i>
(h) Evidence of consensus on the final version of the standard(s),	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “e) Results from reaching consensus”
	Process	YES	Minutes of the WG 1 June 2021 (Translated by Google Translate) “Conclusion 2: Members of the expert Working Group for drafting the PEFC standard for RS / BiH adopted by Consensus the Decision to adopt the PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republika Srpska / BiH, which was in the form of a draft at two public hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03.2021 (30 days), at the proposal of the Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints.”
(i) Evidence relating to the review process, and	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “l) Development report n) Evidences of implemented stages in the review process.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This was an initial standard setting process, therefore a review was not applicable.</i>
(j) Final approval by the standardising body.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “k) Results from the NGB’s voting, 4.2. Responsibilities of the NGB’s The responsibilities of every single NGB in the process of creating and revising SFM standards are: b) to vote for the acceptance of the certification scheme in accordance with the PEFC procedures, prior to the submission of the certification scheme for approval to PEFC;”
	Process	YES	Minutes of the 5th meeting of the SFM council of RS/BiH on 1 June 2021 (translated by Google Translate)



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			“Conclusion 2: Members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, adopted a Decision to accept and adopt a package of documents from the PEFC Balkan system, related to the already adopted Republika Srpska / BiH standard for sustainable forest management of CSOs, as follows: - Document PEFC BS 02: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 03: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 04: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 05: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 06: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 07: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 08: 2021 Conclusion 3: The members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, made the Decision to adopt the PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republika Srpska / BiH, which was in the form of a Draft at two Public Hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 (30 days), at the proposal of the Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints.”
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “9. The records 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. ”
	Process	N.A.	<i>Since this was the initial standard-setting process, the requirement is not applicable.</i>
5.2.3 Documented information shall be	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “9. The records shall be (...) accessible upon request from interested parties.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
available to interested parties upon request.	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the APFO “Naša Šuma” “Files are kept in printed version and where is possible in e-version.” <i>The website of the APFO “Naša Šuma” (http://www.nasasuma.com/) contains various documents on the process which are accessible.</i>
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “8.2 Procedures for complaints and appeals Any stakeholder is encouraged to submit appeal/complaint to the NGB's. Appeal or complaint shall be in written format and may be sent to email address announced on the web page of the NGB's or by letter. (...) The official contact point on communication for appeals/complaints is the official email address of the NGB's: - For Council for SFM: pefcmk@gmail.com - For Institute for forest certification in Slovenia: info@pefc.si - For Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma”: info@nasasuma.com After receiving of appeal/complaint, the contact person from the NGB's informs the Appeal Resolution Body about receipt in period of one week. During this period the Appeal Resolution Body acknowledge receive of appeal/complaint to complainant in letter or through the email communication.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to the APFO “Naša Šuma” no formal complaint was received. This is confirmed by respondents to the stakeholder survey.</i>
(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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “8.2. After receive of appeal/complaint, the Appeal Resolution Body starts with procedure of gathering and verification of all necessary information that are relevant to the content of appeal/complaint. Based on the information gathered, the members of Appeal Resolution Body shall execute the process of evaluation and to decide if appeal/complaint is accepted or rejected. Evaluation process shall be executed on the principal of impartiality.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to the APFO “Naša Šuma” no formal complaint was received. This is confirmed by respondents to the stakeholder survey.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(c) formally communicate the decision on the complaint or appeal to the complainant and describe the handling process.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “8.2. The decision of the members of Appeal Resolution Body is final and sent to the contact person of the NGB. After receiving of decision, the NGB formally communicate the way how handling process was executed and the results from the process to the complainant, responsible structures in the NGB and other potentially concerned parties. This communication shall be done in a period of 7 days after receiving of decision from the Appeal Resolution Body.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to the APFO “Naša Šuma no formal complaint was received. This is confirmed by respondents to the stakeholder survey.</i>
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “4.3 Implementing the procedures for development and revision of SFM standards k) providing contact details for questions, complaints and appeals referring to the activities related to setting standards and administering complaints and appeals; 8.2. The official contact point on communication for appeals/complaints is the official email address of the NGB's: - For Council for SFM: pefcmk@gmail.com - For Institute for forest certification in Slovenia: info@pefc.si - For Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma”: info@nasasuma.com ”
	Process	YES	Contact page of the website of the APFO “Naša Šuma” (http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by Google Translate) “Association of private forest owners “NAŠA ŠUMA” - Banja Luka Street- Romanijska 1E 78000 BANJA LUKA Phones: 00387 (0) 51 / 323-600, 00387 (0) 51 / 323-601 Fax: 00387 (0) 51 / 323-602, Contact persons: Dusko Topic e-mail: info@nasasuma.com ”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
Standard-setting process			
6.1.1 For the creation of a new standard, the standardising body shall develop a proposal including:			
(a) the scope of the standard,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.1 The proposal shall offer information on the following issues: a) the scope and clear identification of the reason (new standard development, existing standard revision, etc.),”
	Process	YES	2018 proposal for the standard “Proposed private forest certification procedure in R.S. As the easiest, most feasible and so far the only possible model of private forest certification, the model of certification according to the Slovenian and Croatian models according to the PEFC certification system was proposed. private forests in Macedonia as well. -According to this system, regional certification is possible (RS one region). therefore, here, unlike the FSC model, it is possible to develop national standards of the Republika Srpska without the FBiH or without some consent of the joint institutions of BiH.” <i>For the development of the standard, APFO developed two project proposals in 2017 and 2018 for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, in order to receive funding from the ministry for the development of the standard. The proposals contained clear description of the scope of the standard which was planned to be applicable for private forest in the RS.</i>
(b) a justification of the need for the standard,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.1 The proposal shall offer information on the following issues: a) (...) clear identification of the reason (new standard development, existing standard revision, etc.),”
	Process	YES	2018 proposal for the standard (Translated with Google Translate) “The northern part of the Republika Srpska was chosen precisely because in 90% of cases in private forests in relation to state forests, forests of pedunculate oak, field ash and to some extent acacia predominate. A large part of the wood industry in this part is based exclusively on these assortments and the lack of certification is a serious problem for them, especially after the introduction of EUTR, since our processing industry is related to these types of highly export character. They overcome this problem by



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			importing a certain part of assortments from Croatia, and based on their certificate, they also sell our processed assortments. It is not necessary to mention the damage to our Republic and the owners of private forests in our country in order to obtain a lower price and the impossibility of selling due to unfair competition. Considering the character of forests as a natural resource of special interest for the Republika Srpska, it is clear that forest certification is of exceptional importance. Certificates appear as a guarantee of protection of natural resources from excessive exploitation as a guarantor of sustainable management. The application of these certificates on a global level is accompanied by a strong marketing campaign aimed at raising consumer awareness. Certification of private forests would also have an impact on the living standards of the rural population. Products from certified forests achieve a higher price on the market, which directly affects the quality of life. Certification of forests would achieve a higher level of protection of forest ecosystems and thus biodiversity, which is very common in forest ecosystems. Certification is also an inevitability that must be implemented.”
(c) a clear description of the intended outcomes	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.1 The proposal shall offer information on the following issues: b) identification of intended outcomes,”
	Process	YES	2018 proposal for the standard “In accordance with the national standard for the Republic of Srpska and the PEFC regional group certificate, the forest owners in the Republic of Srpska would be able to obtain the certificate and sign the certificate with a certain amount of time and effort. This year, for one hectare of certificated forest, and for merchants of rare mulch, puddle, whale, dogwood, bagreba and other species, there was no way that they could sell their products with the certificated forest.”
(d) a risk assessment of potential negative impacts arising from implementing the standard, such as	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.1 The proposal shall offer information on the following issues: c) risk assessment about potential negative impacts from implementation of the standard,”
	Process	NO	<i>APFO has explained that risks for standard setting were discussed during a meeting. However, no evidence was found of minutes of this meeting and/or a risk assessment in the proposal for the standard.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
• factors that could affect the achievement of the outcomes negatively, • unintended consequences of implementation, • actions to address the identified risks, and			
(e) a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable. ¹⁵	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.1 The proposal shall offer information on the following issues: g) description of development stages and timeframe,”
	Process	YES	2018 proposal for the standard (Translated by Google Translate) “The project would be implemented in several phases: Phase 1 - preparatory phase which includes the preparatory works for starting the process of drafting the National Standard for Forest Certification according to the PEFC model. (providing all the conditions for its development) - identification of all stakeholders in the certification process. (already done within previous projects) Phase 2 - consists of the following -Having initiative meetings of interested parties -Getting written support from all participants in the process -Election of a working body for the development of PEFC standards. The official body would include all interested parties (private owners, wood industry, chambers, public transport associations, citizens' associations, etc.) - it will be done within the implementation of the Agreement with PEFC. Phase 3:

¹⁵ NOTE Guidance for development of a proposal and justification is given in ISO Directives, Part 1, Annex C and Annex SL (Appendix 1).



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)		
			The third phase would be the development of PEFC standards, ie the development of indicators and criteria for sustainable management of private forests for the Republic of Srpska, harmonization of the preliminary version of the standard with all participants in the process. Phase 4: In this phase, the harmonization of PEFC standards with the PEFC Council, and only the submission of applications for membership in the PEFC Council.”		
				ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
			1.	The preliminary phase will include the preparation of the process of establishing the National Standard for forest certification according to the PEFC model. (Disabling of the conditions for the certification process) - Identification of the country concerned for the certification process.	(activity is undated)
			2.	Disapprove of the initiative of the country concerned, the written procedures to support the process, the selection of a representative of the country concerned, the election of a representative of the PEFC standard.	The ongoing activity will be completed by February 28, 2019.
			3.	The PEFC standard, unanimously the indicator and criteria for the assessment of private forest, for the Republika Srpska, is the basis for the standard's preliminary revision with its participants in the process.	March-September 2019.
			4.	The standards of the PEFC are set by the PEFC Council	Okt-Nov 2019
			5.	Writing about the project in advance and providing relevant information	Tenth month after the approval of funds
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.1 The proposals stage includes formulation and approval of a proposed standard or its revision. The proposal shall offer information on the following issues: a) the scope (...) g) description of development stages and timeframe,”		
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial standard setting process.</i>		
	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2		



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.			“4.4 (...) NGB from the Balkan Region will exercise identification of relevant stakeholders. That will be executed through stakeholder mapping and will be approved by the NGB. Identification of relevant stakeholders will include affected, disadvantaged and key stakeholders, including description of their interests for participation in the process. (...) The stakeholders mapping exercise will also include: a) description and interests of relevant sectors, b) key issues for each relevant sector, c) key stakeholders for each sector, d) disadvantaged stakeholders and the threats to their participation. e) means of communications to reach identified stakeholders”
	Process	YES	Stakeholder mapping document “In order to meet the requirements of the PEFC standard (ST 1001: 2017), the SFM Council identified legal entities as stakeholders in the creation, revision and implementation of sustainable forest management standards in the Republika Srpska / Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mapping includes: • Defining key actors • Defining marginalized actors • Explain the relevance of a particular group • Main issues important for each group • The way of communicating with stakeholders in order to involve them in the process KEY STAKEHOLDERS ECONOMIC SECTOR: (...) Private Forests (...); Wood industry (...); Mushroom association (...); Hunting association (...). ECOLOGICAL SECTOR: (...) National parks (...); Citizen’s associations (...); Social sector and youth (...). EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, STATE AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS (...); MARGINALIZED STAKEHOLDERS Pickers of forest non-wood products of mushrooms and berries, seasonal workers in forestry



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			LOCAL GOVERNMENT Municipalities and cities that have private forests on their surface. MANNER OF COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS The announcement of the beginning of the process of creating national SFM standards will be published in the daily press and on the websites of the project partners: PFOA "Naša Šuma", Čelinačke novine, radio stations. All convenient means of communication will be used to invite interested parties: e-mail, telephone calls or a written call by post if the previous two methods did not work." <i>A stakeholder mapping document was found in which stakeholders relevant to the subject matter of the standard where defined. The document describes per stakeholder group the types of stakeholders typically categorised under this group, what their main interests and functions as stakeholders are, whether they are key or marginalised stakeholders and the ideal means of communication to reach these stakeholders. In total 12 of 13 respondents to the stakeholder survey confirmed that all stakeholders that are relevant to the standard-setting process have been proactively identified and invited, including disadvantaged stakeholders.</i>
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: • forest owners,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "4.4 At least following interest groups shall be included: • forest owners (including state and private) • business and industry (forest managers, traders and forest industry) • indigenous people (if relevant) • NGO's (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports etc) • scientific and technological community • workers and trade unions"
	Process	YES	<i>In the stakeholder mapping document the following stakeholder groups are defined:</i> <i>A) Economic Sector, including private forests, wood industry, mushroom association, hunting association, Chamber of Commerce and the ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management.</i> <i>B) Ecological sector, including national parks and citizen's associations</i> <i>C) Social sector and youth</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
• business and industry, • indigenous people, • non-government organisations, • scientific and technological community, • workers and trade unions. Other groups shall be added if relevant to the scope of standard-setting activities.¹⁶			<i>D) Educational, scientific, state and other institutions</i> <i>E) Marginalized stakeholders</i> <i>F) Local government</i> <i>It shall be noted that there are no indigenous people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.</i> <i>Although named under different stakeholder categories, stakeholders from main stakeholder groups: forest owners, business and industry, non-government organisations, and the scientific and technological community were found in the stakeholder mapping document. APFO explained that workers and trade unions fall under the Chamber of Commerce (economic sector).</i>
6.2.3 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders and address any constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities.¹⁷	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “4.4 Identification of relevant stakeholders will include affected, disadvantaged and key stakeholders, including description of their interests for participation in the process. The NGB’s from the Balkan Region shall analyze constraints about participation of the key and disadvantaged stakeholders and shall develop actions to minimize the risk of non-participation.”
	Process	YES	Stakeholder mapping document “KEY STAKEHOLDERS ECONOMIC SECTOR: (...) Private Forests (...); Wood industry (...); Mushroom association (...); Hunting association (...).

¹⁶ NOTE The full list of nine major stakeholder groups defined by Agenda 21 of the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* 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.

¹⁷ NOTE A stakeholder can be both a disadvantaged and a key stakeholder at the same time.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			ECOLOGICAL SECTOR: (...) National parks (...); Citizen's associations (...); Social sector and youth (...). EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, STATE AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS (...); MARGINALIZED STAKEHOLDERS Collectors of forest non-wood products: this number is quite large, but at the same time informal. (...) As this part of the sector is informal and organized representatives cannot be identified, they will be invited to join the process by public disclosure in the press and on the website. Seasonal forestry workers: are mostly people who come from or live in rural areas of Republic of Srpska and have the skills and tools to work in the forest during cutting, logging and transport. These workers are mostly employed by companies that provide forestry services, but in most cases informally or for a short time, for a few days. The forestry union usually does not represent their interests. As this part of the sector is informal and organized representatives cannot be identified, they will be invited to join the process by public announcement in the press and through the website. Facing the threat that there are marginalized actors who do not participate in the process, efforts are being made to ensure their participation in order to avoid the risk of not being informed, such as pickers of forest non-timber products. The current tool of the association of buyers and processors of non-timber forest products will be used as a medium for the transfer of information as the initial phase of the process of creating criteria indicators for sustainable forest management. MANNER OF COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS The announcement of the beginning of the process of creating national SFM standards will be published in the daily press and on the websites of the project partners: PFOA "Naša Šuma", Čelinačke novine, radio stations. All convenient means of communication will be used to invite interested parties: e-mail, telephone calls or a written call by post if the previous two methods did not work. Public Announcement 26 May 2020 (available on the website of APFO "Naša Šuma" http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) "With this announcement, we especially encourage to include in this process: seasonal workers in forestry, collectors of other forest products as well as other interested parties." <i>The APFO has explained that marginalised stakeholders (NTFP collectors and seasonal workers) are unorganised and informal groups and are therefore hard to reach. The APFO has taken efforts to reach</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<i>NTFP collectors through the association of buyers and processors of NTFPs and through the public announcement. Seasonal workers have no formal representation and were invited to join by public announcement in the press and through the APFO website.</i> <i>Observation: The Council for SFM has identified “marginalised” stakeholders and not disadvantaged stakeholders. Yet, considering the context, marginalised stakeholders here can be assumed to be disadvantaged stakeholders.</i>
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 manner¹⁸ through suitable media¹⁹, as appropriate, to give stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions.	Procedures	NO	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.2.1 The initiation of the documentation development process or its revision shall be announced on the website of the NGB’s from the Balkan Region and other appropriate media in order to enable the stakeholders to actively contribute to the process. The announcement shall contain: b) information on the opportunity for participation of the stakeholders in the process, d) invitation for submitting comments on the scope and process of setting standards and The WG shall ensure that the format of the invitation to the marginalized and key stakeholders is understandable and delivered in a way which guarantees they have received it, for instance, registered post, a confirmation for received electronic mail, etc.” <i>It is insufficiently ensured that the announcement shall be made public at least 4 weeks before the start of the standard setting process, as indicated in the footnote of the requirement.</i>
	Process	YES	Public Announcement 14 November 2018 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by Google Translate) “To this end, the Council for Sustainable Forest Management in RS / BiH invites interested parties to get involved in the process of development of national standards for sustainable forest management, by nominating its representatives to the working group. Nominations of members of the working group are expected by December 1, 2018.” Public Announcement 26 May 2020 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH)

¹⁸ NOTE 1 *In a timely manner* means (at the latest) four weeks before the first standard-setting activity is scheduled to occur.

¹⁹ 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			“To this end, the PEFC of Republika Srpska / BiH invites directly and materially vulnerable parties to be involved in the process of drafting national standards for CSOs by appointing their representatives to the working group. Appointments of new members of the working group are accepted until July 1, 2020.” <i>The first public announcement on the start of the standard setting process was made on 14 November 2018, followed by a second announcement on 6 February 2019. The WG was accepted on March 19, 2019, and the first WG commenced on 1 June 2019. This is more than four weeks after the first announcement and thus made in a timely manner. In 2020, during the 4th Council of SFM RS/BiH meeting it was decided that RS/BiH would join the PEFC Balkan scheme. This was followed by a new process and another public announcement, WG formation and public consultation period. In the second round of the process the announcement was made on 26 May 2020 and standard setting activities continued 28 July 2020. That public announcement is therefore also made in a timely manner. All public announcements are available on the website of the APFO “Naša Šuma http://www.nasasuma.com/</i>
6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include:			
(a) overview of the standard-setting process,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.2.1. The announcement shall contain: a) information on the goals, scope and steps in the standards setting process and framework,”
	Process	YES	Public Announcement 14 November 2018 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by Google Translate) The purpose of this process is to adopt, through a process of consultation with all stakeholders and the application of consensus, BiH criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in accordance with international PEFC standards. (...) The entire process of adopting the standards until their submission to the PEFC Council by the end of 2019. The PEFC Council will then begin the process of reviewing and consulting on the compliance of BiH standards with PEFC international standards, until it accepts and recognizes them. We expect this process to be completed in the second half of 2020. The process of drafting national standards will be transparent and implemented in accordance with the procedures and procedures adopted by the Council for Sustainable Forest Management in RS / BiH (Rules for Development and Revision of BiH Standards for Sustainable Forest Management - OGŠ), and in accordance with the prescribed standard: PEFC ST 1001: 2017.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Public Announcement 26 May 2020 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) “The process of adopting a regional standard will take place in several stages: - Updating the list of participants; - Public announcement of the process; - Invitation to participants to get involved in the process; - Defining the composition of the working group; - Working meetings to discuss the proposed draft CSO Standards; - The first public hearing on the content of the draft Standards for CSOs lasting 60 days and revision of received comments and suggestions; - Second public hearing on the draft CSO Standards lasting 30 days; - Achieving consensus on the content of the CSO Standards within the working group; - Acceptance of the final version of the CBS standard by the CSO Council (National NGB governing bodies). (...) The overall process of adopting the standards until they are submitted to the PEFC Council will take place by the end of 2021. The PEFC Council will then monitor the process of verification and consultation on the compliance of Republika Srpska / BiH standards with international PEFC standards, until they are accepted and recognized by the PEFC Council. We expect this process to be completed in the second half of 2021.”
(b) access to the proposal for the standard (refer to 6.1),	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 <i>“f) link to publicly available proposal for the standard. “</i>
	Process	NO	<i>No reference was found in the public announcement or in the invitations to stakeholders to the proposal for the standard.</i>
(c) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “b) information on the opportunity for participation of the stakeholders in the process,”
	Process	YES	Public Announcement 14 November 2018 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by Google Translate)



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			“To this end, the Council for Sustainable Forest Management in RS / BiH invites interested parties to get involved in the process of development of national standards for sustainable forest management, by nominating its representatives to the working group. Nominations of members of the working group are expected by December 1, 2018.” Public Announcement 26 May 2020 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) “To this end, the PEFC of Republika Srpska / BiH invites directly and materially vulnerable parties to be involved in the process of drafting national standards for CSOs by appointing their representatives to the working group. Appointments of new members of the working group are accepted until July 1, 2020.”
(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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “c) invitation to the stakeholders to nominate their representative in the WG, (...) The WG shall ensure that the format of the invitation to the marginalized and key stakeholders is understandable and delivered in a way which guarantees they have received it, for instance, registered post, a confirmation for received electronic mail, etc.”
	Process	YES	Public Announcement 14 November 2018 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by Google Translate) “To this end, the Council for Sustainable Forest Management in RS / BiH invites interested parties to get involved in the process of development of national standards for sustainable forest management, by nominating its representatives to the working group. Nominations of members of the working group are expected by December 1, 2018. With this announcement, we especially encourage seasonal forestry workers, collectors of non-wood forest products, as well as other stakeholders to be involved in this process.” Public Announcement 26 May 2020 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) “To this end, the PEFC of Republika Srpska / BiH invites directly and materially vulnerable parties to be involved in the process of drafting national standards for CSOs by appointing their representatives to the working group. Appointments of new members of the working group are accepted until July 1, 2020.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			(...) With this announcement, we especially encourage to include in this process: seasonal workers in forestry, collectors of other forest products as well as other interested parties.”
(e) explicit invitation and clear instruction on how to submit feedback on the scope and standard-setting process, and	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “d) invitation for submitting comments on the scope and process of setting standards (...) The NGB’s shall provide clear instructions to interested stakeholders on the ways how feedback may be submitted to the NGB.”
	Process	YES	Public Announcement 14 November 2018 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by Google Translate) “Notes and comments can be sent to the persons responsible for conducting the procedure at the following e-mail address, e-mail: info@nasasuma.com ” Public Announcement 26 May 2020 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) “The preparation of standards and procedures for the adoption of standards of Republika Srpska / BiH will be a public procedure and will take place in accordance with PEFC requirements and rules and procedures described in the document Procedures for development and revision of standards, and the possibility of submitting proposals and comments by e-mail. on the following website: http://www.nasasuma.com/ Suggestions and comments can be submitted to the persons responsible for the implementation of the process, to the specified e-mail address: amnasasuma@gmail.com or info@nasasuma.com ”
(f) access to the standard-setting procedures.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.2.1 The announcement shall contain: e) link to the publicly available procedures for the standards setting process on the NGB’s website.”
	Process	YES	Public Announcement 26 May 2020 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) “The preparation of standards and procedures for the adoption of standards of Republika Srpska / BiH will be a public procedure and will take place in accordance with PEFC requirements and rules and procedures described in the document Procedures for development and revision of standards, and the possibility of submitting proposals and comments by e-mail. on the following website:



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			http://www.nasasuma.com/
6.3.2 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on feedback received in response to the public announcement.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.2 Every NGB shall establish and maintain a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. This mechanism shall be accessible on the NGB’s website with clear directions for providing feedback. All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.” <i>As clause 6.2 specifically refers to feedback on a standard, it is insufficiently ensured that the standardising body shall review the process (as proposed in the announcement), based on feedback received in response to the public announcement.</i>
	Process	YES	APFO “Naša Šuma” explained that no feedback was received.
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	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.2.2 The nominations are gathered by the NGB’s and they are responsible for accepting or refusing the nominations of members in the WG. The acceptance or refusal of a nomination shall be justified and match the balanced representation in the WG in relation to the relevance of organization, individual competences of nominated persons, their experience and gender balance, as well in relation to available resources for the standards setting process.”
	Process	YES	Minutes from the 1st meeting of the SFM council 19 March 2019 “Delegated representatives of institutions (stakeholders), now members of the Council of SFM, agreed that in accordance with the possibilities and procedures of PEFC, the members of the WG (Working Group) for drafting the Standards for SFM according to PEFC methodology, which can be expanded if necessary, will be: - Boris Markovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Milan Tepic, director of forest exploitation at the Public Forest Enterprise - Dragan Čomić, assistant professor of the Faculty of Forestry in Banja Luka - Dubravka Kršić, "Suma Plan" (planning, production and service enterprise) - Aleksandar Mrkobrada, APFO "Naša Šuma", President of the WG”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard-setting.			Minutes of the 4th meeting of the SFM council “Conclusion 2 TDR: The members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, decided to accept all previously nominated members of the Working / Expert Group.” <i>APFO explained that on 3 July 2020 the NGB voted for the final confirmation of all previous nominations of the WG, and clarified that there had been no new nominations for the WG. APFO further explained that the justification for the WG members was based on the fact that these members were found to have the most experience; were in key positions at important institutions (e.g. at the ministry, at the Private Forest Enterprise, and at the Faculty of Forestry), and that these members were willing and able to working on the standard. Other members were also allowed to join the WG, but APFO explained that some people were unwilling to work on the standard without receiving a salary for their work, and that people were satisfied with the small WG. Respondents to the stakeholder survey as well as interviewed stakeholder during the field visit in RS/BiH found that there was a balanced representation of stakeholders in the WG.</i> <i>Observation: the WG for drafting the SFM standard only consisted of 5 people, which despite their relevance and experience is a low number of people to achieve a balanced representation of a WG. These 5 people were also part of the SFM Council. However, in practice, other members of the SFM Council were also able to give input into the standard. Various members of the Council for SFM have done this, which was made clear during stakeholder interviews in RS/BiH. Their considerations were provided by email and through informal talks on the phone or in person. All interviewed stakeholders which were not part of the WG were further satisfied with the WG and the process and all felt they had been able to include their considerations into the standards.</i>
6.4.2 The working group shall:			
(a) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories, relevant to the subject matter and geographical	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “4.4 The composition of the WG shall be balanced in order to reflect the categories of stakeholders with reference to the contents and scope of the standard, with no individual interest dominating in the process. (...) Representation of the interests of all interests of all parties in the WG is based on the principles of equity and nobody's individual interest can prevail in the process. Procedures to secure the principle of equity are as follow:



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
scope of the standard, where no single concerned stakeholder group can dominate, nor be dominated in the process, and			a) For stakeholders from every interest group identified above there are at least three seats guaranteed for participation in the working group. b) During consensus building process every voice is equal.”
	Process	YES	Minutes from the 1st meeting of the SFM council 19 March 2019 “Delegated representatives of institutions (stakeholders), now members of the Council of SFM, agreed that in accordance with the possibilities and procedures of PEFC, the members of the WG (Working Group) for drafting the Standards for SFM according to PEFC methodology, which can be expanded if necessary, will be: - Boris Markovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Milan Tepic, director of forest exploitation at the Public Forest Enterprise - Dragan Čomić, assistant professor of the Faculty of Forestry in Banja Luka - Dubravka Kršić, "Suma Plan" (planning, production and service enterprise) - Aleksandar Mrkobrada, APFO "Naša Šuma", President of the WG” <i>The 5 members of the WG represented the following stakeholder groups: forest owners; government; social sector and youth; research community; other economic sector, and the environmental sector. APFO explained that some of these members represented multiple interest, e.g. both forests owners and the environment. None of the groups were dominating the process. Despite the relevance and experience of these member, this is a low number of people to achieve a balanced representation of a WG. However, in practice, other members of the SFM Council were also able to give input into the standard. Various members of the Council for SFM have done this, which was made clear during stakeholder interviews in RS/BIH. Their considerations were provided by email and through informal talks on the phone or in person.</i>
(b) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that affected by the standard, and those that	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “4.4 (...) interest groups (...): • forest owners (including state and private) • business and industry (forest managers, traders and forest industry) • indigenous people (if relevant) • NGO's (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports etc)



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
can influence implementation of the standard. The affected stakeholders shall be represented in an appropriate proportion among participants.			• scientific and technological community • workers and trade unions (...) Procedures to secure the principle of equity are as follow: a) For stakeholders from every interest group identified above there are at least three seats guaranteed for participation in the working group. b) During consensus building process every voice is equal. Key stakeholders shall constitute a significant part of all participants. All other identified stakeholders are relevant for the process including disadvantaged stakeholders.”
	Process	YES	Minutes from the 1st meeting of the SFM council 19 March 2019 “Delegated representatives of institutions (stakeholders), now members of the Council of SFM, agreed that in accordance with the possibilities and procedures of PEFC, the members of the WG (Working Group) for drafting the Standards for SFM according to PEFC methodology, which can be expanded if necessary, will be: - Boris Markovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Milan Tepic, director of forest exploitation at the Public Forest Enterprise - Dragan Čomić, assistant professor of the Faculty of Forestry in Banja Luka - Dubravka Kršić, "Suma Plan" (planning, production and service enterprise) - Aleksandar Mrkobrada, APFO "Naša Šuma", President of the WG” Minutes of the 4th meeting of the SFM council “Conclusion 2 TDR: The members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, decided to accept all previously nominated members of the Working / Expert Group.” Explanation provided by APFO “In the process there were: Ministry of agriculture forestry and water department of RS, JP Sume RS; Private forest owners; Hunting association; Students association, Environmental NGO; Mountain sports federation; Chambers of commerce; Forest faculty; (10 in total)” <i>The five stakeholders included in the WG included those affected by the standard (forest owners); those who can implement the standard; and those who can influence the implementation of the standard.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<i>Respondents to the stakeholder survey and interviewed stakeholders in RS/BiH also confirmed that this was the case.</i>
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. ²⁰ 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.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “4.4 (...) interest groups (...): • forest owners (including state and private) • business and industry (forest managers, traders and forest industry) • indigenous people (if relevant) • NGO's (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports etc) • scientific and technological community • workers and trade unions The NGB's from the Balkan Region shall set targets for participation of key stakeholders and take proactive approach to ensure their input in the work group. (...) Procedures to secure the principle of equity are as follow: a) For stakeholders from every interest group identified above there are at least three seats guaranteed for participation in the working group.”
	Process	NO	<i>In the WG, representation was found of the following stakeholder groups: forest owners; business and industry; NGOs; scientific and technological community. The interest of workers and trade unions was represented through the Chamber of Commerce by SFM Council member Lazo Sinik, who commented during an interview that he had been able to put their interests and considerations into the standard. APFO explained that their goal was to have representation of each key stakeholder groups and to include the stakeholders with the most relevant experience. APFO explained that they actively sought participation of key stakeholders through the public announcement, personal e-mail invitations and through phone calls. Stakeholders interviewed in RS/BiH, which came from all stakeholder groups, also found that there had been a balanced representation of the stakeholders and that the participation of key stakeholders was actively sought.</i> <i>However, no evidence is found that actual targets were set for the participation of key stakeholders.</i>

²⁰ NOTE When a stakeholder group is not represented and key stakeholders cannot be encouraged to participate, the standardising body may consider alternative options.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.1 Working drafts (...) shall be available to all WG members.”
	Process	YES	Invitation to the 5th meeting of the Council for SFM “Along with the invitation, we submit the following working materials: Minutes of the 11th session; - Document PEFC BS 02: 2021 - PEFC document BS 03: 2021 - PEFC document BS 04: 2021 - PEFC document BS 05: 2021 - PEFC document BS 06: 2021 - PEFC document BS 07: 2021 - PEFC document BS 08: 2021” <i>Various working drafts of the standard were found, which were available to the members of the WG. Stakeholder in the SFM Council also said they had been able to see the working drafts of the standards and that all information was available to them. Before the final meeting of the SFM Council the latest draft of the standard as developed by the WG was sent to all members of the Council.</i>
(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	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.1 All WG members shall have an opportunity to actively contribute to the development or revision of a standard and to submit comments and proposals for the working draft version.”
	Process	YES	<i>According to APFO “Naša Šuma” all stakeholders actively participated during the meetings and discussions. This was confirmed by respondents to the stakeholder survey. Evidence (minutes) are found of the WG meetings, which records various points discussed for the development of the standard. Outcomes are directly elaborated in the updated versions of the draft standard. Also members of the SFM council said in stakeholder interviews in RS/BiH that they had meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the standard. Some of them had provided input and comments on the draft standards which had subsequently been taken into consideration by the WG. Also, informal calls and</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<i>discussion had taken place outside the WG/Council meetings in which some input had been given. These were always later shared in the WG and in the SFM Council to be approved by the members.</i>
(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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.1 The comments and views of any member of the WG along with the initial proposal shall be reviewed in an open and transparent manner. All proposals for changes which refer to the working draft version shall be kept.”
	Process	YES	<i>According to APFO “Naša Šuma” all stakeholders actively participated during the meetings and discussions, and that the content of the discussions was accepted by all participants. This was confirmed by respondents to the stakeholder survey as well as by all interviewed stakeholders during the field visit in RS/BiH.</i>
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:			
(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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.2 Building consensus The WG decision to suggest publishing the working draft version for public consultation or publishing the final version for formal approval shall be brought with a consensus. In order to reach consensus, the WG can employ the following: a) face to face meetings with voting by stating yes or no, raising hand; b) formal secret voting, etc.,”
	Process	YES	<i>APFO explained that voting took place in a face-to-face meeting with a verbal yes/no vote. This was confirmed by the interviews with members of the WG.</i>
(b) telephone conference meeting(s) where there is a verbal yes/no vote,	Procedures	N.A.	<i>The PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 do not include options for telephone conference meetings where there is a verbal vote.</i>
	Process	N.A.	<i>This method was not used.</i>
	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(c) e-mail request to the working group for agreement or objection where the members provide a formal (written) response (vote),			"c) voting by e-mail when the members are asked to vote for or against in writing."
	Process	N.A.	<i>This method was not used.</i>
(d) combinations of these methods.	Procedures	N.A.	<i>The PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 do not include options for combinations the methods.</i>
	Process	N.A.	<i>This method was not used.</i>
6.4.6 Where a vote is used in decision-making, the standard-setting procedures shall determine and include decision-making thresholds that quantifies 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.	Procedures	NO	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "3.1 Consensus General agreement characterized by absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests or by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and the need to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Note: The need to reach a consensus needs not imply unanimity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)" <i>No reference is found where thresholds are determined (that quantify consensus).</i>
	Process	YES	Minutes of the WG 1 June 2021 (Translated by Google Translate) "Present: Mr. Boris Markovic, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management Milan Tepic, PE "Forests of RS" Dr. Dragan Čomić, Faculty of Forestry in Banja Luka-Justifiably absent Dubravka Kršić, Šuma Plan Aleksandar Mrkobrada, UPS "Our Forest" Activity Coordinator Conclusion 2: Members of the expert Working Group for drafting the PEFC standard for RS / BiH adopted by Consensus the Decision to adopt the PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republika Srpska / BiH, which was in the form of a draft at two public hearings held from 25.12.2021 to



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			25.02 .2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 (30 days), at the proposal of the Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints.” <i>Almost all members of the WG attended this meeting and all agreed to the final standard.</i>
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 discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.2 In case of a negative vote which represents permanent and sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests and to substantial issues, at least one of the following mechanisms shall be used: a) discussions and talks for the issue for which there is no agreement in the WG in order to reach a compromise,”
	Process	N.A.	<i>The APFO “Naša Šuma” has indicated that no sustained opposition remained. This is confirmed by stakeholders responding to the stakeholder survey.</i>
(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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.2 In case of a negative vote (...) the following mechanisms shall be used: b) direct negotiations between concerned parties which objected and those who hold an opposing view in order to reach a compromise,”
	Process	N.A.	<i>The APFO “Naša Šuma” has indicated that no sustained opposition remained. This is confirmed by stakeholders responding to the stakeholder survey.</i>
(c) additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary) where further stakeholder input can help to achieve consensus on unresolved issues. The standardising body	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.2 In case of a negative vote (...) the following mechanisms shall be used: c) additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary)”
	Process	N.A.	<i>The APFO “Naša Šuma” has indicated that no sustained opposition remained. This is confirmed by stakeholders responding to the stakeholder survey.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
determines the scope and duration of any additional public consultation.			
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	NO	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.3.2 In case of a negative vote which represents permanent and sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests and to substantial issues, at least one of the following mechanisms shall be used: d) process of disagreement resolution by mediation” <i>It is insufficiently ensured that the dispute resolution shall be initiated in accordance with PEFC Balkans complaints and dispute resolution procedures (PEFC BS 08:2020).</i>
	Process	N.A.	<i>The APFO “Naša Šuma” has indicated that no sustained opposition remained. This is confirmed by stakeholders responding to the stakeholder survey.</i>
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 ²¹ through suitable media,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.4.1 The initiation and end of the public consultation shall be published in an appropriate time period on the website and in other suitable medium if possible.
	Process	NO	Announcement of the third public consultation 25 December 2020 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) “The third public discussion lasts 60 days from the date of publication on December 25, 2020.” <i>The public announcement is made on the same day as the start of the public consultation period. Also, no reference to an end date of the public consultation period is found in the announcement.</i>
(b) a direct invitation to comment on the enquiry draft is sent to each	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.4.1 Every NGB shall conduct the public consultation of the enquiry draft version. (...) The invitation shall be sent directly to each of identified stakeholders in the stakeholders mapping exercise. To

²¹ NOTE *In a timely manner* means (at the latest) the day before the start of public consultation.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
stakeholder identified by stakeholder identification mapping (refer to 6.2) aiming for a balanced participation of stakeholder groups,			disadvantaged and key stakeholders the invitation shall be prepared in an understandable format and it shall be ensured that it is delivered to them (...)"
	Process	YES	<i>Evidence was found of direct invitations to stakeholders identified in the stakeholder mapping document, which included the public announcement and the request to comment on the enquiry draft.</i>
(c) invitations are sent to disadvantaged and key stakeholders by methods that ensure they reach recipients and are easy to understand,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.4.1 Every NGB shall conduct the public consultation of the enquiry draft version. (...) The invitation (...) To disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be prepared in an understandable format and it shall be ensured that it is delivered to them (...)"
	Process	YES	Announcement of the third public consultation 25 December 2020 (available on the website of APFO "Naša Šuma" http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) "With this call, we especially encourage seasonal forestry workers, collectors of non-timber forest products, as well as other stakeholders to be involved in this process." <i>Evidence was found that invitations to comment on the enquiry draft were sent to key stakeholders in addition to the public announcement. APFO has clarified that marginalised groups (seasonal workers and NTFP collectors), which function as disadvantaged stakeholders, are unorganised groups which are not easy to reach as they have no direct representation. That is why no direct invitation could be sent to them. However, APFO tried to include seasonal workers through the syndicate of the public forest enterprise, which is the main workers union in the country. Yet, this organisation did not wish to participate, because the state forest is already FSC certified. APFO also tried to get in touch with marginalised groups through umbrella organisations which represent their interest, including the mushroom association and an organisation for the collection of medicinal herbs.</i>
(d) the enquiry draft is made publicly available,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.4.1 (...) the enquiry draft version shall be publicly accessible on the NGB's website."
	Process	YES	<i>The enquiry draft of the standard was placed on the website on 25 December 2020, the same day as the announcement of the third public consultation period.</i>
	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.4.1 The public consultation shall last for at least 60 days"



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,	Process	YES	Announcement of the third public consultation 25 December 2020 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH) “The third public discussion lasts 60 days from the date of publication on December 25, 2020.”
(f) all feedback is considered by the working group in an objective manner, and	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.4.1 The received comments along with the initial proposals shall be reviewed in an open and transparent manner as described in part 5.3.2.”
	Process	N.A.	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM RS/BiH “No suggestion received during the process.”
(g) a synopsis of feedback is compiled for each material issue, including the outcome of considering the issue. ²² The synopsis is made publicly available (e.g. on a website) and is sent to each stakeholder/party that gave feedback.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.4.1 All proposed changes that refer to the enquiry draft version need to be kept. The records of received comments and proposals that are material in nature, along with the results of their resolution, shall be publicly available on the NGB’s website. The outcome from received comments and proposals will be also sent to stakeholders that reacted.”
	Process	N.A.	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM RS/BiH “No suggestion received and discussed in the work group.”
6.5.2 For new standards the standardising body shall organise a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.4.1 (...) the NGB is organizing the process of second public consultation that will last for at least 30 days (...). The second public consultation is organized only for the new standard, while for revision processes is not obligatory.”
	Process	YES	Announcement of the fourth public consultation 25 February 2021 (available on the website of APFO “Naša Šuma” http://www.nasasuma.com/, translated by the Council for SFM RS/BiH)

²² 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			"The fourth public discussion lasts 30 days counting from the day of its publication on February 25, 2021."
6.6 The standardising body shall organise pilot testing of new standard(s) ²³ to assess the clarity, auditability and feasibility of the requirements. The working group shall consider the outcome of pilot testing.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.4.2 Every NGB shall organize pilot testing of the new standards application and the results of it shall be reviewed by the WG. In case the standard is reviewed, the experiences from its application are a replacement of the pilot testing."
	Process	YES	<i>Evidence was found that pilot testing was done on 24 February 2021 through a Zoom session. During the 4-hour session participants of the pilot testing went through all requirements of the standard, guided by Sasho Petrovski, and discussed their clarity, auditability and feasibility. A document was found with the outcomes of the pilot testing. As only two minor editorial changes were made, the outcomes were not further discussed by the WG.</i>
Approval and Publication			
7.1 The standardising body shall approve the standard(s)/normative document(s) formally when there is evidence of consensus among the working group.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.3.2 The WG decision to suggest (...) publishing the final version for formal approval shall be brought with a consensus. 5.5.2 The final draft version shall be submitted for approval to the NGB. The approval shall be conducted only on the basis of evidence for reached consensus at the WG ,according to the normative documents of the country NGB's."
	Process	YES	Minutes of the Appeals Commission 28 March 2021 "The Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints stated that during the Public Hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 on the working draft of the National Standard for SFM for RS / BiH, by mail or by published mail. no suggestions, comments or complaints were received at the address. For that reason, the commission, by consensus and unanimously, decided that the proposed version of the Working Draft of the National Standard for SFM for RS / BiH prepared by the Expert / Working Group in the proposed form can be sent for adoption to the SFM Council."

²³ NOTE Pilot testing is not required for revision of an existing standard when experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Minutes of the WG 1 June 2021 (Translated by Google Translate) “Conclusion 2: Members of the expert Working Group for drafting the PEFC standard for RS / BiH adopted by Consensus the Decision to adopt the PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republika Srpska / BiH, which was in the form of a draft at two public hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 (30 days), at the proposal of the Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints.” Minutes of the 5th meeting of the SFM council of RS/BiH on 1 June 2021 (translated by Google Translate) “Conclusion 2: Members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, adopted a Decision to accept and adopt a package of documents from the PEFC Balkan system, related to the already adopted Republika Srpska / BiH standard for sustainable forest management of CSOs, as follows: - Document PEFC BS 02: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 03: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 04: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 05: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 06: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 07: 2021 - Document PEFC BS 08: 2021 Conclusion 3: The members of the SFM Council, by Consensus, made the Decision to adopt the PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republika Srpska / BiH, which was in the form of a Draft at two Public Hearings held from 25.12.2021 to 25.02.2021. years (60 days) and 25.02.2021. to 25.03. 2021 (30 days), at the proposal of the Commission for Resolving Proposals and Complaints.” <i>The appeals commission has recommended that the working draft of the SFM standard should be adopted by the Council for SFM. The WG first approved the final version of the standard by consensus on 1 June 2021. This was an unchanged version since their approval in December 2020. In the meeting of the SFM council, which followed on the same day the SFM Council approved this final standard.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.6 (...) the NGB will be responsible to ensure that standard is publicly accessible on their website after 2 weeks.”
	Process	YES	<i>The formally approved standard was placed on the website of the APFO “Naša Šuma” (http://www.nasasuma.com/) on 1 June 2021, the same day as the formal approval of the standard.</i>
7.2.2 Standard(s) shall include:			
(a) identification and contact information for the standardising body,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.6 Standard(s) will also include information on: (a) identification and contact information for the NGB,”
	Process	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “The owner of this standard is: The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in Republic of Republic of Srpska /Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ulica- Romanijska 1E 78000 BANJA LUKA. Telefoni: 00387 (0)51/323-600 email: info@nasasuma.com ”
(b) official language of the standard,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.6 (b) official language of the standard,”
	Process	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “The official version of this standard is on English.”
(c) a note that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “5.6 (c) a note that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference.”
	Process	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
by the PEFC Council is the reference.			"If there is any inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference."
(d) The approval date and the date of next periodic review ²⁴	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.6 (d) The approval date and the date of next periodic review"
	Process	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 "Approved by: Assembly of the Council for SFM in Republic Srpska/B&H Date: 01.06.2021 Date of next periodic review: 01.06.2026"
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.7 The NGB's will provide printed copies to interested stakeholders upon request at a price that covers administrative costs."
	Process	YES	<i>The Council for SFM in RS/BiH explained that printed copies shall be made available upon request, but that no requests were made yet.</i>
7.2.4 The standardising body shall make the development report (refer to PEFC GD 1007) publicly available	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "5.6 The NGB's will also provide free access to their development reports on their web pages."
	Process	YES	<i>The development report was found on the website of the APFO "Naša Šuma" (http://www.nasasuma.com/)</i>
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	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 "6.1 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 input."
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard.</i>

²⁴ 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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 input.			
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. ²⁵	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.2 Every NGB shall establish and maintain a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. This mechanism shall be accessible on the NGB's website with clear directions for providing feedback.”
	Process	NO	Statute of APFO Nasa Suma “Article 39 The Appeals Body shall be formed by members of the SFM Council when needed. In the process of creating SFM standards, the body shall take into account all received remarks on preparing the standards, applying individual or group certification, interpreting the requirements under the certification scheme, using PEFC logo, appeals relating to the Chain of Custody (CoC). Article 41 Representative of the group which files an appeal should file the appeal with the SFM Council in writing. The form for the written application and information about the contact person are available at the webpage of the SFM Council. An appeal filed by e-mail shall be deemed properly filed. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Appeals Body shall notify the sender of the appeal that the appeal has been received and that they shall respond to the appeal within 60 days. In some cases, this period may be extended by 30 days.

²⁵ NOTE Feedback can be sent in various formats: comments, requests for clarification and/or interpretation, complaints, etc.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			Decision of the Appeals Body shall be made by majority of votes. The SFM Council shall keep record of appeals under investigation. Decision of the Appeals body shall be final.” <i>Although a mechanism is found for receiving feedback in the Statue of the APFO, this is not a permanent mechanism, as the Appeals body shall only take into account received remarks during the process of creating the SFM standards. Further, this mechanism was not found on the website of APFO. APFO further explained that this mechanism will be put into place once the standard is endorsed by PEFC International.</i>
8.2.2 All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.2 All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>As the standard is just developed and not yet implemented, no feedback is received yet.</i>
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.3 At the start of a review, the NGB shall evaluate the content of the standard against appropriate PEFC International standards, national laws and regulations, and other relevant standards to identify potential gaps in the standard.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
8.3.2 The standardising body shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.3 The NGB shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research and relevant emerging issues.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
and relevant emerging issues.			
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.4 Where the feedback and the gap analysis do not identify a need to revise the standard, the NGB shall organise stakeholder consultation to determine whether stakeholders see a need for revising the standard, including the gap analysis in the stakeholder consultation.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.4 At the start of a review, the NGB shall update the stakeholder identification mapping.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
8.4.3 The standardising body shall organise:			
(a) a public consultation period of at least 30 days (following the	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.4 The NGB shall organise: (a) a public consultation period of at least 30 days”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
requirements of clause 6.5.1) and/or,			
(b) stakeholder meetings.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “(b) stakeholder meetings.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
8.4.4 The standardising body shall announce the review in a timely manner (refer to 6.3).	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.4 The review shall be announced at least 4 weeks prior to beginning.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
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		PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.5 Based on the feedback received during the period of a standard’s implementation, the outcome of the gap analysis and the consultations, the NGB decides whether to reaffirm the standard or whether a revision of the standard is necessary”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
8.5.2 The decision shall be made at the highest decision-making level of the standardising body	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.5 Based on the feedback received during the period of a standard’s implementation, the outcome of the gap analysis and the consultations, the NGB decides whether to reaffirm the standard or whether a revision of the standard is necessary”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.			“6.5 If the decision is to reaffirm a standard, the NGB provides a justification for the decision and make the justification publicly available.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “6.5 Based on the feedback received during the period of a standard's implementation, the outcome of the gap analysis and the consultations, the NGB decides whether to reaffirm the standard or whether a revision of the standard is necessary, including the decision about the type of the revision of the standard (normal or editorial).”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No review has taken place yet.</i>
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “7.1 A normal revision can occur at the periodic review, or between periodic reviews, but does not include editorial revisions and time-critical revisions.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “7.2 Editorial revisions can be made without triggering the normal revision process. The NGB approves editorial changes formally and publish an amendment or a new edition of the standard.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
9.3.1 A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “7.3 A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “7.3 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”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
(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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “(b) Instruction by PEFC International to comply with specific or new PEFC requirements within a timescale that is too short for a normal revision.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
9.3.3 The time-critical revision shall follow these steps:			



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(a) The standardising body shall draft the revised standard,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “7.3 The time-critical revision shall follow these steps: (a) Produce draft version of the revised standard,”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
(b) The standardising body may consult stakeholders, but it is not mandatory,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “(b) Stakeholders consultation (not mandatory),”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
(c) The revised standard shall be approved formally at the highest appropriate decision-making level of the standardising body,	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “(c) Formal approval of revised standard by the NGB,”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
(d) The standardising body shall explain the justification for the urgent change(s) and make the justification publicly available.	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “(d) Justification for the urgent change(s) and its public availability.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
9.4.1 A revision shall define the application date and transition period of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s).	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “7.4 A revision defines the application date and transition period of the revised standard /normative document(s).”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>
	Procedures	YES	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.			“7.4 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.”
	Process	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “Approved by: Assembly of the Council for SFM in Republic Srpska/B&H Date: 01.06.2021 Date of next periodic review: 01.06.2026 Date of entry into force: 01-06-2021”
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	PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 “7.4 The transition period shall not exceed one year. The NGB may determine a longer period when justified by exceptional circumstances.”
	Process	N.A.	<i>This is the initial version of the standard. No revision has taken place yet.</i>



Part IB: PEFC Checklist for Standard-setting process – North Macedonia

1 Scope

Part I covers the requirements for Standard-setting Procedures and process as defined in the revised 2017 issue of PEFC ST 1001, Standard-setting – Requirements.

Checklist

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		<i>The assessment of the standard-setting procedures is covered in Annex 1, Part 1A. The procedures are applicable for the full PEFC Balkan system.</i>
(b) procedures for keeping documented information,	Procedures		
(c) procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,	Procedures		
(d) the standard-setting process,	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and	Procedures		
(f) review and revision of standard(s)/normative document(s).	Procedures		
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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The new PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 was adopted by the Council for SFM in April 2020. By that date the previous document PEFC MK 02:2017 was in force (from September 2017). (...) it is worth to say that no any feedback was received from the period of 2017 until these days. The Macedonian PEFC system and forest certification is something new and there are no clients yet for forest certification. The main stakeholders become more familiar with the system in 2019 with the pilot certification. Anyway, the new PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 was placed on the webpage after adoption of the NGB in April 2020, with clear instructions how to submit any feedback on the document or on the process” <i>PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 could be found on the PEFC MK website (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/).</i>
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		
	Process	YES	<i>PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 was found and could be found on the PEFC MK website (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/).</i>
(b) Stakeholder identification mapping,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>A stakeholder map was found.</i>
(c) Contacted and/or invited stakeholders,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>Multiple examples of E-mails and invitations to stakeholder were found.</i>
	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(d) Stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting,	Process	YES	<i>A stakeholder mapping document and attendance lists of all participants in the WG meetings were provided by the Council for SFM.</i>
(e) Feedback received and a synopsis of how feedback was addressed,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The Council for SFM explained that no feedback was received during the public consultation period. .</i>
(f) All drafts and final versions of the standard,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The various drafts and final version of the standard were found.</i>
(g) Outcomes from working group considerations,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>Various updated drafts of the standard were found in which working group considerations were taken into account.</i>
(h) Evidence of consensus on the final version of the standard(s),	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>Email confirmations from all participants of the WG approving the final draft of the standard were found.</i>
(i) Evidence relating to the review process, and	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>A development report was found as well as recordings of the WG meetings, e-mail exchanges accepting the draft and final version of the standard, announcements, and various drafts of the standard.</i>
(j) Final approval by the standardising body.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Invitation to the 11th Session of the Council for SFM to be held on 28 October 2020 (translated by the Council for SFM)



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			“Pursuant to Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Council for SFM in the Republic of Macedonia, I convene the 11th session of the Assembly, which will be held electronically on 28.10.2020 starting from 12 o'clock. For the session of the Assembly, I propose the following: 1. Adoption of the Minutes from the 10th Session of the Assembly of the Council for SFM in MK 2. Adoption of a draft standard for SFM, in addition to the agenda the information on the completed process of the Macedonian standard for sustainable forest management is shared. 3. Miscellaneous Explanation provided by Council for SFM “Formal approval of the standard from the NGB on 28.10.2020. Currently there are 5 members in the Assembly of the NGB: - Ministry – forestry sector, Goran Lichovski; - Private Forest Association, Vojo Sokolovski; - Chamber of commerce, Ljupka Hadzi Ristova; - Forestry Faculty, Pande Trajkov; - REFORD (NGO), Sasho Petrovski;” <i>E-mail confirmations were found of all Assembly members, in which they accepted agenda item 2 of the 11th session (adoption of the draft standard) in October 2020. Consensus by the WG had already been reached in July 2020. As no changes were made to this draft after the public consultation period, this can be considered the version of the standard on which consensus was reached among the working group.</i>
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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>Some documentation on the current process is found on the website of the Council for SFM (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/). The Council for SFM explained that files are kept in e-version.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
after publication of the standard.			
5.2.3 Documented information shall be available to interested parties upon request.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>Some documented information on the process and standard is available on the website of the Council for SFM (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/). The council for SFM further explained that information is available for parties upon request.</i>
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to the Council for SFM no formal complaint was received during the process. This is confirmed by respondents to the stakeholder survey.</i>
(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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to the Council for SFM no formal complaint was received during the process. This is confirmed by respondents to the stakeholder survey.</i>
(c) formally communicate the decision on the complaint or appeal to the complainant and describe the handling process.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to the Council for SFM no formal complaint was received during the process. This is confirmed by respondents to the stakeholder survey.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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		
	Process	YES	Main page of the Council for SFM website (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated with Google Translate) “Contact Address: Nikola Parapunov 41, building 5 / III / 307, 1000, Skopje Phone: +389 71 292 004 Email: pefcmk@gmail.com” <i>In addition to the contact described above there is also a contact form on the website.</i>
Standard-setting process			
6.1.1 For the creation of a new standard, the standardising body shall develop a proposal including:			
(a) the scope of the standard,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>
(b) a justification of the need for the standard,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>
(c) a clear description of the intended outcomes	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>
(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,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
• unintended consequences of implementation, • actions to address the identified risks, and			
(e) a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable. ²⁶	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>
6.1.2 For the revision of a standard the proposal shall cover at least (a) and (e) of clause 6.1.1.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Public Announcement on the Development of PEFC regional standard for Slovenia, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated by the Council for SFM) “National PEFC governing bodies of Republic of Slovenia (SI), Republic of North Macedonia (NMK) and Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH) (referred countries) are starting the process for development of the PEFC Regional forest certification system that will include separate national standards for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). (...) Every single national SFM standard will be in compliance with PEFC meta standard PEFC 1003:2018 and current legal framework related to forest management in referred country. The content of National SFM standard is unique for every participating country in this regional Standard. The scope of the standard is only for forest and forest land. Trees outside the forests and forest plantations were not considered as part of this Standard. Other documents of the Regional Standard are identical and applicable for all participating countries. This standard proposal is applicable for individual and group certification. Forest managers and forest owners are responsible to ensure full compliance to forest management standard including activities that are conducted by contracted forest operators in certified forest area.

²⁶ NOTE Guidance for development of a proposal and justification is given in ISO Directives, Part 1, Annex C and Annex SL (Appendix 1).



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			(...) The process of adopting a regional standard will take place in several stages: • Update of the stakeholders list • Public announcement of the process • Invitation for stakeholders to get involved in the process • Defining the composition of the working group • Working sessions for discussion on the proposed draft Standard for SFM • First public consultation on the content of the draft Standard for SFM lasting 60 days and revision of the received comments and suggestions • Second public consultation on the draft Standard for SFM lasting 30 days • Building consensus on the content of the SFM Standard within the working group • Acceptance of the final version of the SFM Standard by the National PEFC Governing Body" The entire process of adopting the SFM standard, until its submission to the PEFC Council for approval, is expected to last until the end of 2020. The process of inspections and consultations by the PEFC Council until the recognition of the regional standard is expected to be completed in the fall of 2021.
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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	10. Stakeholder mapping document "With objective to fulfill requirements of PEFC Standard (ST 2001:2017), The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in Republic of Macedonia (The Council for SFM) identified legal entities that are concerned by preparation, revision and implementation of sustainable forest management standard in North Macedonia. The mapping process includes: ☐ Definition of the key stakeholders ☐ Definition of disadvantaged stakeholders ☐ Definition of affected stakeholders ☐ Explanation on the relevance of every stakeholders group ☐ Main issues for every stakeholder ☐ The way of communication to include stakeholders in the process Disadvantaged stakeholders



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them.			Collectors of non wood forest products: (...) The message for joining the process will be also spread out through the companies that are buying and processing these products. Seasonal workers in the forestry: (...) They will be anyway invited to join with their proposals and suggestions for the content of the standard during the process of public consultation. THE WAY OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS The announcement of the beginning of the process for revision of the national SFM standards will be announced on the web oage of the Council for SFM and other means for communication, such as FB profile of the Council for SFM and other NGO's. Delivery of iinvitation to stakeholders will be provided by email or phone call." <i>A stakeholder mapping document was found in which stakeholders relevant to the subject matter of the standard were defined. The document describes per stakeholder group the types of stakeholders typically categorised under this group, whether they are key, affected and/or disadvantaged stakeholders, and the ideal means of communication to reach these stakeholders. For certain stakeholder groups (including forest owners, business and industry) their main interest is defined, while for others their main activities are defined, which clarifies their functions as stakeholders.</i> <i>In total 4 of 6 respondents to the stakeholder survey confirmed that all stakeholders that are relevant to the standard-setting process have been proactively identified and invited, including disadvantaged stakeholders.</i>
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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>In the stakeholder mapping document the following stakeholder groups are defined:</i> <i>A) Forest owners</i> <i>B) Business and industry</i> <i>C) NGOs</i> <i>D) Scientific community</i> <i>E) Workers and labor union</i> <i>F) Institutions and managers responsible for protected areas</i> <i>G) Other</i> <i>It shall be noted that there are no indigenous peoples in North Macedonia.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
included in the stakeholder mapping: • forest owners, • business and industry, • indigenous people, • non-government organisations, • scientific and technological community, • workers and trade unions. Other groups shall be added if relevant to the scope of standard-setting activities.²⁷			
6.2.3 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders and address any constraints to their participation in	Procedures		
	Process	YES	10. Stakeholder mapping document “AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS Forest owners: (...), Business and industry: (...), NGO's: (...), Scientific community: (...), Workers and labor union: (...), Institutions and managers responsible for protected areas: (...), Other: (...) From above listed affected stakeholders, key stakeholders for revision of PEFC Macedonian standard for SFM are representatives of: A) Forest owners; B) Business and industry; C) NGOs; D) Scientific community; E) Workers and labor union; F) Institutions and managers responsible for protected areas.

²⁷ NOTE The full list of nine major stakeholder groups defined by Agenda 21 of the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
standard-setting activities. ²⁸			DISADVANTAGED STAKEHOLDERS Physical entities – collectors of non wood forest products and physical entities – season wokrrers in forestry.(...) Mitigation of the risk from non participation of marginalized stakeholders To avoid the risk of no information to collectors of non wood forest products, the existing Association of buyers and processors of non wood forest products will be used as a channel for information about beginning of the process.” Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “We have used the emails of the Group for Non-wood forest products in the Chamber of commerce that we wanted to involve in the process and by their participation to reach collectors of the NWFP as part of the value chain. An information for start up of the process was sent on 21 emails and some phone calls were realized, but no of these companies have showed interest for participation. However, inclusion of physical person in such process, especially when we are talking about unorganized groups as NWFP collectors is (...) impossible. These people are often employed and collects NWFP for additional income or receive some social assistance by the State, so they are not eager to show in public their work to avoid any tax regulation on the income they provide for their households. The NGB decided to remain in communication to seasonal workers in industry through the Labor Union as the only channel where on organized way we can reach employees in the forestry. The part of seasonal workers in the industry that are not regularly employed cannot be reached. There is no any channel of communication with them, there is no register of the companies that are providing services in forest logging operations etc. At the end, we were able to rely only on FB profile of the NGB with hope that whoever is interested will reach that information.” <i>Key stakeholders were identified by the stakeholder mapping and were invited by E-mail. The Council for SFM has clarified that the two disadvantaged stakeholder groups (non-wood forest products collectors and seasonal workers) are unorganized, which makes it difficult to reach them and ensure their participation in the process. Through the chamber of commerce and the Labor Union the Council for SFM has made efforts to reach these stakeholders and ensure their participation in the process.</i>

²⁸ NOTE A stakeholder can be both a disadvantaged and a key stakeholder at the same time.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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 ²⁹ through suitable media ³⁰ , as appropriate, to give stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	2.Public announcement 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated by the Council for SFM) “(…) The Council for SFM in Macedonia (The Council for SFM) is announcing the start of the process for elaboration of criteria and indicators for SFM according to PEFC requirements.(…) To this purpose, the Council for SFM invites stakeholders to be involved in the process of drafting national SFM standards by nominating their representatives to the working group. Nominations of representatives of members in the working group are accepted until 31.05.2020. <i>The public announcement was found on the PEFC MK facebook page and on their website on 28 April 2020. Evidence of e-mail invitations with the public announcement sent to the identified stakeholders on 27 April 2020 was also found. The first standard-setting activity was the first WG, which started on 18 June 2020, which is almost two months after the announcement. The announcement is therefore made in a timely manner.</i>
6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include:			
(a) overview of the standard-setting process,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	2.Public announcement 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated by the Council for SFM) “Each of the national standards for SFM in Slovenia, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina will be in line with the global standard of PEFC 1003: 2018, as well with the existing legal framework related

²⁹ NOTE 1 *In a timely manner* means (at the latest) four weeks before the first standard-setting activity is scheduled to occur.

³⁰ 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			to forest management in the country. The content of the national SFM standard is specific to each country participating in the regional standard. The process of adopting a regional standard will take place in several stages: • Update of the stakeholders list • Public announcement of the process • Invitation for stakeholders to get involved in the process • Defining the composition of the working group • Working sessions for discussion on the proposed draft Standard for SFM • First public consultation on the content of the draft Standard for SFM lasting 60 days and revision of the received comments and suggestions • Second public consultation on the draft Standard for SFM lasting 30 days • Building consensus on the content of the SFM Standard within the working group • Acceptance of the final version of the SFM Standard by the National PEFC Governing Body The entire process of adopting the SFM standard, until its submission to the PEFC Council for approval, is expected to last until the end of 2020. The process of inspections and consultations by the PEFC Council until the recognition of the regional standard is expected to be completed in the fall of 2021.”
(b) access to the proposal for the standard (refer to 6.1),	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The proposal as defined in section 6.1 is incorporated in the public announcement of 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/).</i>
(c) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	2.Public announcement 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated by the Council for SFM) “To this purpose, the Council for SFM invites stakeholders to be involved in the process of drafting national SFM standards by nominating their representatives to the working group. Nominations of representatives of members in the working group are accepted until 31.05.2020.” Invitation sent to identified stakeholders 27 April 2020 (translated by Google Translate)



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			“Please nominate a person who will represent your institution and participate in the work of the working group, with the authority to vote for the adoption of the national standard for OSS. At the same time, I ask you to submit a professional biography of the nominee with the nomination.”
(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		
	Process	YES	2.Public announcement 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated by the Council for SFM) “To this purpose, the Council for SFM invites stakeholders to be involved in the process of drafting national SFM standards by nominating their representatives to the working group. Nominations of representatives of members in the working group are accepted until 31.05.2020.” Invitation sent to identified stakeholders 27 April 2020 (translated by Google Translate) “Please nominate a person who will represent your institution and participate in the work of the working group, with the authority to vote for the adoption of the national standard for OSS. At the same time, I ask you to submit a professional biography of the nominee with the nomination.” Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “We have used the emails of the Group for Non-wood forest products in the Chamber of commerce that we wanted to involve in the process and by their participation to reach collectors of the NWFP as part of the value chain. An information for start up of the process was sent on 21 emails and some phone calls were realized, but no of these companies have showed interest for participation. The NGB decided to remain in communication to seasonal workers in industry through the Labor Union as the only channel where on organized way we can reach employees in the forestry. The part of seasonal workers in the industry that are not regularly employed cannot be reached. There is no any channel of communication with them, there is no register of the companies that are providing services in forest logging operations etc. At the end, we were able to rely only on FB profile of the NGB with hope that whoever is interested will reach that information.” <i>Key stakeholders are most stakeholders identified in the stakeholder mapping document and were invited by email.</i>
(e) explicit invitation and clear instruction on how to submit feedback on	Procedures		
	Process	YES	2.Public announcement 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated by the Council for SFM)



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
the scope and standard-setting process, and			“Questions and comments related to the content of the Procedures for standards settings and revision or in relation to the process itself can be placed electronically by email: pefcmk@gmail.com or saso.petrovski@cnvp-eu.org. (...) For more information you can call the phone number 071 292 004.”
(f) access to the standard-setting procedures.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	2.Public announcement 28 April 2020 (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, translated by the Council for SFM) “The preparation of the standard will be a public process and will take place according to the rules and procedures described in the document Procedures for standards settings and revision. The document is available on the website: https://pefc.mk/documents/” <i>The Council for SFM explained that due to a website hack, the link provided in the public announcement is no longer working. The pefc.mk general website refers back to: https://refordcentre.org/pefc/, where the announcement and standard setting procedures can be found.</i>
6.3.2 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on feedback received in response to the public announcement.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM: “No feedback received for the process in Macedonia.”
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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Minutes of the 10th Session of the Assembly of the Council for SFM 10 June 2020 (translated by the Council for SFM) “After the adoption of the Stakeholder Mapping document, electronic invitations were sent to all identified parties. Some of them responded immediately, some later, but there are stakeholders who did not send any response. To my great disappointment, despite a series of additional invitations and telephone calls, PE National Forests did not nominate a member of the Working Group for the initiated process. Additional explanation provided by the Council for SFM



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.			“All procedural steps in nomination of the WG members are part of the document PEFC BS 02:2020 V2, Chapter 4.4. No any of these steps was violated. All nominations were received, no any party was against and consensus was reached by all votes positive.” When all nominations were received, during assessment we (the President of the Council for SFM and me in the role of technical secretary) found that all nominated person were on relevant positions in invited organizations or were relevant experts in their organization. Only the ZELS (association of municipalities) representative did not have any relevant position, but after phone call with President of ZELS (Dushica) we decided to accept it. As explained above, there is no space in our procedures that any party would have possibility to overrule the process. Official policy for WG composition is in chapter 4.4.” <i>The Council for SFM identified all stakeholders in its stakeholder mapping document after which it received nominations for the WG, which were accepted, none was rejected. Received nominations for the WG were found. With regards to gender balance, it shall be noted that the working group had 2 female participants. Respondents to the stakeholder survey confirmed that the WG had balanced representation of all stakeholder groups.</i>
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		
	Process	YES	14.List of received nominations for the WG (as found translated in the development report) "Forest owners Ministry for agriculture, forestry and water economy Association of private forest owners Forest police NGOs Macedonian ecological society WWF Adria Macedonian acociation of forest engineers Federation of mountain sports Dren Institutions and managers of protected areas Ministry for environment and physical planning Business and industry The Hunting association PE National Forests Scientific community Faculty of forestry Workers and labour union Labour union of forest workers Other Association of municipalities ZELS



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			National Park Mavrovo Municipality of Vevchani"
(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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM "There were 2 Ministries in the process (forestry and environment); National Forest managers; Private forest owners; One National Park; Hunting association; Mountain sports federation; Labour union; Forest faculty; Association of municipalities; (10 in total)" <i>From the stakeholder groups represented in the WG (evidence 14) it is clear that the WG included stakeholders that are affected by the standard and those that can influence implementation of the standard (forest owners, industry, government). Respondents from the stakeholders survey confirmed that the WG members had relevant expertise.</i>
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. ³¹ The standardising body shall set targets for the participation of key stakeholders and	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM "The NGB didn't set targets in written, but almost all important stakeholders were participating (16 of 21, plus 2 unorganized groups as disadvantaged) as foreseen by the stakeholders mapping. There were expectations that the Group of forest processing industry will join the process, but nobody wanted to participate, even several attempts were done by phone. <i>Observation: No targets were set for the participation of key stakeholders. However, the Council for SFM did proactively seek their participation and all identified stakeholder groups in the stakeholder mapping, namely forest owners; business and industry; NGOs; Scientific community; workers and labour union; institutions and managers responsible for protected areas were represented in the WG (evidence 14).</i>

³¹ NOTE When a stakeholder group is not represented and key stakeholders cannot be encouraged to participate, the standardising body may consider alternative options.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
proactively seek their participation by using outreach such as (but not limited to) personal emails, phone calls, meeting invitations etc.			
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		
	Process	YES	<i>Evidence was found of e-mails sent to the WG members before each session which included the working drafts of the standard.</i>
(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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “Participants actively participated during ZOOM sessions. All proposals were discussed chapter by chapter, recorded and the content that was accepted by all shared in new version;” <i>In the recordings of the ZOOM sessions various WG members are seen to participate. Respondents to the stakeholder survey who participated in the WG confirmed that all members had been given meaningful opportunities to contribute to the revision of the standard and to provide feedback on the working drafts.</i>
(c) feedback and views given by any member of the working group shall be considered in an open and transparent way where the outcome	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “Participants actively participated during ZOOM sessions. All proposals were discussed chapter by chapter, recorded and the content that was accepted by all shared in new version;”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
of these considerations is recorded.			<i>According to respondents to the stakeholder survey feedback and views given by members were considered in an open and transparent way. The outcome of considerations were found in working drafts of the standards.</i>
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:			
(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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM has indicated that consensus was reached by e-mail vote of each member of the WG.</i>
(b) telephone conference meeting(s) where there is a verbal yes/no vote,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM has indicated that consensus was reached by e-mail vote of each member of the WG.</i>
(c) e-mail request to the working group for agreement or objection where the members provide a formal (written) response (vote),	Procedures		
	Process	YES	7.Email sent to all WG members to accept the standard (translated by Council for SFM) “The decision of the WG to recommend the publication of a working version for public consultation or the final version for formal approval should be taken on the basis of consensus. To reach a consensus, WG can apply the following ways: a) face-to-face meetings where voting yes or no will be applied, by raising the hand; b) formal secret ballot, etc. c) voting by e-mail asking members to vote for or against in writing.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			I invite you within 7 days (until 16.00, July 27) to declare by e-mail to accept the content of the working version, which we should further submit to a public consultation for a period of 60 days.” <i>As no comments were received during the public consultation period, this concerns the final draft of the standard. E-mail confirmations of acceptance of the draft were found from all WG members (evidence 7).</i>
(d) combinations of these methods.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM has indicated that consensus was reached by e-mail vote of each member of the WG.</i>
6.4.6 Where a vote is used in decision-making, the standard-setting procedures shall determine and include decision-making thresholds that quantifies 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.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>All WG members accepted the final draft of the standard in July 2020. E-mail confirmations of acceptance of the final draft were found from all WG members (evidence 7).</i>
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 discussion and negotiation on the	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM and respondents to the stakeholder survey indicated that a consensus was reached and no sustained opposition remained.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
disputed issue within the working group,			
(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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM and respondents to the stakeholder survey indicated that a consensus was reached and no sustained opposition remained.</i>
(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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM and respondents to the stakeholder survey indicated that a consensus was reached and no sustained opposition remained.</i>
6.4.8 When a substantial issue cannot be resolved and sustained opposition persists, the standardising body shall initiate dispute	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM and respondents to the stakeholder survey indicated that a consensus was reached and no sustained opposition remained.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
resolution in accordance with its procedures for impartial and objective action.			
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 ³² through suitable media,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	15. Announcement on the start of the public consultation 31 July 2020 on PEFC MK website (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/ translated by Council for SFM) “(…) In the period June and July 2020, a working group composed of representatives of 16 institutions and organizations participated in the preparation of a working version of the Macedonian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) according to the requirements of PEFC (Program for Endorsement of Forest Certification). According to PEFC rules, the working version of the SFM standard goes through a process of public consultation with stakeholders. The public consultation starts on 03.08.2020 and will last until 04.10.2020.” <i>The public announcement with the start and end date of the public consultation was made four days before the start of the public consultation. It was made on the website of PEFC MK as well as sent to all identified stakeholders.</i>
(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		
	Process	YES	15. Announcement on the start of the public consultation 31 July 2020 on PEFC MK website (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/ translated by Council for SFM) “For that purpose, we inform you that your remarks on the content of the standard and proposals for improvement and change can be submitted via e-mail to the following address: saso.petrovski@cnvp-eu.org or to pefcmk@gmail.com.

³² NOTE *In a timely manner* means (at the latest) the day before the start of public consultation.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			They must be submitted through the form attached to this e-mail and a reasoned explanation is required from you for the remark or proposal you submit. The received remarks and suggestions will be reviewed by the working group and we will inform you again about the result (acceptance or rejection) by e-mail. For all questions you can contact the person in charge of communication for the duration of this process, Sasho Petrovski on the phone number: 071 292 004.” Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “Link to SFM standard provided on web and as attachment on email to all identified stakeholders. (Sent to 67 emails).” <i>Evidence was found of E-mails sent to identified stakeholders in which the public announcement, enquiry draft and feedback form were attached.</i>
(c) invitations are sent to disadvantaged and key stakeholders by methods that ensure they reach recipients and are easy to understand,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The NGB decided to remain in communication to seasonal workers in industry through the Labor Union as the only channel where on organized way we can reach employees in the forestry. The part of seasonal workers in the industry that are not regularly employed cannot be reached. There is no any channel of communication with them, there is no register of the companies that are providing services in forest logging operations etc. At the end, we were able to rely only on FB profile of the NGB with hope that whoever is interested will reach that information. Below is email informing on start of public consultation, sent on 31.07.2020 on 66 emails, including 21 emails of the companies engaged in NWFP trade and processing with expectation they will include physical persons that they are cooperating with.” <i>Key stakeholders, which are part of all stakeholders identified in the stakeholder map, were invited by E-mail. And the referenced E-mail was found.</i>
(d) the enquiry draft is made publicly available,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The enquiry draft is found on the website of the Council for SFM as part of the public announcement and is also attached to the e-mails of identified stakeholders.</i>
(e) public consultation is for at least 60 days,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	15. Announcement on the start of the public consultation 31 July 2020 on PEFC MK website (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/ translated by Council for SFM)



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			"The public consultation starts on 03.08.2020 and will last until 04.10.2020." <i>The public consultation lasted 62 days.</i>
(f) all feedback is considered by the working group in an objective manner, and	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM has clarified that no feedback was received during the public consultation.</i>
(g) a synopsis of feedback is compiled for each material issue, including the outcome of considering the issue. ³³ The synopsis is made publicly available (e.g. on a website) and is sent to each stakeholder/party that gave feedback.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The Council for SFM has clarified that no feedback was received during the public consultation.</i>
6.5.2 For new standards the standardising body shall organise a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No new standards were developed during this revision.</i>
6.6 The standardising body shall organise pilot testing of new	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No new standards were developed during this revision.</i>

³³ 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
standard(s) ³⁴ to assess the clarity, auditability and feasibility of the requirements. The working group shall consider the outcome of pilot testing.			
Approval and Publication			
7.1 The standardising body shall approve the standard(s)/normative document(s) formally when there is evidence of consensus among the working group.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Invitation to the 11th Session of the Council for SFM to be held on 28 October 2020 (translated by the Council for SFM) “Pursuant to Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Council for SFM in the Republic of Macedonia, I convene the 11th session of the Assembly, which will be held electronically on 28.10.2020 starting from 12 o'clock. For the session of the Assembly, I propose the following: 1. Adoption of the Minutes from the 10th Session of the Assembly of the Council for SFM in MK 2. Adoption of a draft standard for SFM, in addition to the agenda the information on the completed process of the Macedonian standard for sustainable forest management is shared. 3. Miscellaneous Explanation provided by Council for SFM “Formal approval of the standard from the NGB on 28.10.2020. Currently there are 5 members in the Assembly of the NGB: - Ministry – forestry sector, Goran Lichovski; - Private Forest Association, Vojo Sokolovski; - Chamber of commerce, Ljupka Hadzi Ristova; - Forestry Faculty, Pande Trajkov;

³⁴ NOTE Pilot testing is not required for revision of an existing standard when experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			- REFORD (NGO), Sasho Petrovski; <i>E-mail confirmations were found of all Assembly members, in which they accepted agenda item 2 of the 11th session (adoption of the draft standard) in October 2020. Consensus by the WG had already been reached in July 2020. As no changes were made to this draft after the public consultation period, this can be considered the version of the standard on which consensus was reached among the working group.</i>
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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “there is no approved version published. The approved version we consider the one that will go through the process of endorsement where possibly there will be changes (due to assessment comments). That version will be then updated (and translated) on the web. the version of PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 published on the web page was the one that was part of the public consultation process. Since there were no comments in the public consultation process, that is the actual version that was adopted by the NGB. The only difference was the missing date of entry in force of the Standard that was not yet placed on the front page and the statement about the language versions of the Standard. Now, the updated version after the approval of the NGB is placed on the web page. The NGB is considering that the final-final version will be the one that will pass through the process of assessment and after its improvements, that one will replace the current one on the web page.” <i>The approved version of the standard was found on the website.</i>
7.2.2 Standard(s) shall include:			
(a) identification and contact information for the standardising body,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “The owner of this standard is: The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in Republic of Macedonia, st. Nikola Parapunov 41, building 5/III/307, 1000 Skopje, North Macedonia; email: pefcmk@gmail.com tel: +389 71 292 004”
(b) official language of the standard,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “The official version of this standard is on English.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(c) a note that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “If there is any inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference.”
(d) The approval date and the date of next periodic review ³⁵	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “Approved by: Assembly of the Council for SFM in Macedonia Date: 2020-10-28 Date of next periodic review: 2025-10-28”
7.2.3 Printed copies shall be made available upon request at a price that covers no more than administrative costs (if any)	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 is published on the web page and the obligation for available printed copies is part of the chapter 5.7, so any interested party may request printed copies.”
7.2.4 The standardising body shall make the development report (refer to PEFC GD 1007) publicly available	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The Council for SFM explained that the development report was placed on their website (pefc.mk) in June 2021. However, this website has been hacked and is no longer available. Some of the content of this website has been moved to the website of the Reford Centre (https://refordcentre.org/pefc/) including the development report.</i>
Periodic review of standards			
	Procedures		

³⁵ 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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 input.	Process	YES	<i>The previous version of the standard was approved on 6 September 2017, which means that the standard was reviewed within a five-year period. No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted. It can be assumed that the mentioned evaluations were directly and indirectly included in the revision process.</i>
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	Procedures		
	Process	NO	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The Council for SFM does not yet established very precisely permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. But, on the web page there is statement that: (...) means for any question there is possibility to call on specific mobile phone.” <i>The Council for SFM has currently no permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. The organisation notes that such a mechanism will be implemented once the new standard is endorsed.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
clear directions for providing feedback. ³⁶			
8.2.2 All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.	Procedures		
	Process	NO	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The Council for SFM does not yet established very precisely permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. But, on the web page there is statement that (...) means for any question there is possibility to call on specific mobile phone.” <i>The Council for SFM has currently no permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. The organisation notes that such a mechanism will be implemented once the new standard is endorsed.</i>
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted. It can be assumed that the mentioned evaluations were directly and indirectly included in the revision process.</i>
8.3.2 The standardising body shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research and relevant emerging issues.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted. It can be assumed that the consideration of latest scientific knowledge were directly and indirectly included in the revision process.</i>

³⁶ NOTE Feedback can be sent in various formats: comments, requests for clarification and/or interpretation, complaints, etc.

PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>
8.4.2 At the start of a review, the standardising body shall update the stakeholder identification mapping (refer to clause 6.2).	Procedures		
	Process	YES	10. Stakeholder mapping document “With objective to fulfill requirements of PEFC Standard (ST 2001:2017), The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in Republic of Macedonia (The Council for SFM) identified legal entities that are concerned by preparation, revision and implementation of sustainable forest management standard in North Macedonia.” <i>A stakeholder mapping document was found in which stakeholders relevant to the subject matter of the standard were defined.</i>
8.4.3 The standardising body shall organise:			
(a) a public consultation period of at least 30 days (following the	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
requirements of clause 6.5.1) and/or,			
(b) stakeholder meetings.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>
8.4.4 The standardising body shall announce the review in a timely manner (refer to 6.3).	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>
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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The decision to conduct full revision of the standard was brought on the 9th session of the Assembly of the Council for SFM on 20.04.2020, who is the highest decision making authority related to PEFC MK SFM standard. On that session was discussed and approved the future involvement of the Council for SFM in Macedonia in creation of Balkan FCS as a way to overbridge difficulties related to accreditation procedures that were hampering PEFC developments in the country. The summary of that discussion is part of the Proposal for development of BFCS, dated on 13.04.2020. In addition to this, it is worth to say that no any feedback was received from the period of 2017 until these days. The Macedonian PEFC system and forest certification is something new and there are no clients yet for forest certification. The main stakeholders become more familiar with the system in 2019 with the pilot certification.”
8.5.2 The decision shall be made at the highest decision-making level of the standardising body	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The decision to conduct full revision of the standard was brought on the 9th session of the Assembly of the Council for SFM on 20.04.2020, who is the highest decision making authority related to PEFC MK SFM standard. On that session was discussed and approved the future involvement in creation of Balkan



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			FCS as a way to overbridge difficulties related to accreditation procedures that were hampering PEFC developments in the country.”
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>
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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The decision to conduct full revision of the standard was brought on the 9th session of the Assembly of the Council for SFM on 20.04.2020, who is the highest decision making authority related to PEFC MK SFM standard. On that session was discussed and approved the future involvement in creation of Balkan FCS as a way to overbridge difficulties related to accreditation procedures that were hampering PEFC developments in the country.”
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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The procedures apply also to revision of standards, and were applied in the standard-revision process in North Macedonia.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
revisions and time-critical revisions.			
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No editorial revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
9.3.1 A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
(b) Instruction by PEFC International to comply with specific or new PEFC requirements within a timescale that is	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
too short for a normal revision.			
9.3.3 The time-critical revision shall follow these steps:			
(a) The standardising body shall draft the revised standard,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
(b) The standardising body may consult stakeholders, but it is not mandatory,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
(c) The revised standard shall be approved formally at the highest appropriate decision-making level of the standardising body,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
(d) The standardising body shall explain the justification for the urgent change(s) and make the justification publicly available.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
9.4.1 A revision shall define the application date and transition period of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s).	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “Date of next periodic review: 2025-10-28 Date of entry into force: 2021-10-28” <i>As there are currently no certified companies under the MK PEFC scheme, the transition period does not apply.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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		
	Process	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “Approved by: Council for SFM in the Republic of Macedonia Date: 28.10.2020 Date of entry into force: 28.10.2021 Date of the next revision of the standard: 28.10.20”
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>As there are currently no certified companies under the MK PEFC scheme, the transition period does not apply.</i>



Part IC: PEFC Checklist for Standard-setting process – Slovenia

1 Scope

Part I covers the requirements for Standard-setting Procedures and process as defined in the revised 2017 issue of PEFC ST 1001, Standard-setting – Requirements.

Checklist

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		<i>The assessment of the standard-setting procedures is covered in Annex 1, Part 1A. The procedures are applicable for the full PEFC Balkan system.</i>
(b) procedures for keeping documented information,	Procedures		
(c) procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,	Procedures		
(d) the standard-setting process,	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and	Procedures		
(f) review and revision of standard(s)/normative document(s).	Procedures		
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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by IFC “First standard setting procedures were presented at first meeting with no feedback or comments and were also signed by all participants of first meeting. After that Balkan version of standard setting document was presented at second meeting, with no comments from working group members. <i>The BS 02-2020 could be found on the Institute for Forest Certification (IFC) website (pefc.si), as well as the General Presentation of Slovenian Forest Certification Scheme (PEFC SLO 01:2012) from 2014, which described the previous way of revising the Slovenian Forest Certification Scheme. There are six years between the last PEFC Slovenia documentation and the new standard setting procedures, indicating a regular review. As indicated by IFC, no feedback was received on the standard setting procedures.</i>
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		
	Process	YES	<i>PEFC BS 02:2020 V2 was found.</i>
(b) Stakeholder identification mapping,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>A stakeholder map was found.</i>
(c) Contacted and/or invited stakeholders,	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	Process	YES	<i>Examples of E-mails and invitations to stakeholders were found.</i>
(d) Stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>An overview of the participants in each WG (attendance lists) was provided.</i>
(e) Feedback received and a synopsis of how feedback was addressed,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to IFC no feedback was received.</i>
(f) All drafts and final versions of the standard,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The various drafts and final version of the standard were found.</i>
(g) Outcomes from working group considerations,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>Various updated drafts of the standard were found in which working group considerations were taken into account.</i>
(h) Evidence of consensus on the final version of the standard(s),	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Minutes of the third WG Meeting 15 January 2021 “Decision: The members unanimously agree that the document PEFC SLO 01 - 2021 Standard for Sustainable Forest Management, with the discussed and included changes, be submitted to the Council of the Forest Certification Institute for further processing.” Minutes of the second correspondence session of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute 19 January 2021



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			“Friday 15.1. In 2021, the working group for the preparation of the standard revised the comments and approved the document PEFC SLO 01: 2020 in the attachment. The members of the working group reached a consensus on the proposed standard and adopted a decision: The members of the working group unanimously agree that the document PEFC SLO 01 - 2021 Standard for Sustainable Forest Management, with considered and included changes submitted to the Institute for Forest Certification hearing” <i>As no feedback was received during the public consultation period this is the consensus on the final version of the standard.</i>
(i) Evidence relating to the review process, and	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>A development report was found as well as recordings of the WG meetings, announcements, and various drafts of the standard.</i>
(j) Final approval by the standardising body.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Minutes of the fourth correspondence session of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute 10 June 2021 “Members voted on the question Do you certify documents marked BS01 to 08 and SLO03? Members voted by e-mail and telephone. Decision: Members of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute approve documents and submit them for further certification. Decision: The members of IFC council are approving the documents and members and is submitting them for further processing and approval.” Explanation provided by IFC “The meeting on final approval was done with correspondence”
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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>IFC has indicated that documented information is still available.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
documented information must be kept for a minimum of five years after publication of the standard.			
5.2.3 Documented information shall be available to interested parties upon request.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by IFC: “Minutes, attendance list, correspondence are available upon request at IFC office.” <i>Some documented information on the process could also be found on the IFC website (pefc.si).</i>
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to IFC, no complaints were received during the standard setting process. This was confirmed by the outcomes of the stakeholder survey.</i>
(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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to IFC, no complaints were received during the standard setting process. This was confirmed by the outcomes of the stakeholder survey.</i>
(c) formally communicate the decision on the	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>According to IFC, no complaints were received during the standard setting process. This was confirmed by the outcomes of the stakeholder survey.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
complaint or appeal to the complainant and describe the handling process.			
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		
	Process	YES	Contact page of the IFC website (pefc.si, translated by Google Translate) “Contact Forest Certification Institute Celovška cesta 135 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia Mihael Koprivnikar Phone: 01 51 36 702 E-mail: info@pefc.si”
Standard-setting process			
6.1.1 For the creation of a new standard, the standardising body shall develop a proposal including:			
(a) the scope of the standard,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>
(b) a justification of the need for the standard,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>
(c) a clear description of the intended outcomes	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>
(d) a risk assessment of potential negative impacts arising from	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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			
(e) a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable. ³⁷	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>During this revision, no new standard was developed</i>
6.1.2 For the revision of a standard the proposal shall cover at least (a) and (e) of clause 6.1.1.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Public announcement 29 October 2019 “The scheme contains the documents needed to validate the Slovenian system of sustainable and sustainable forest management. The renewal of the scheme will take into account national legislation and the new international standard 1002: 2018, which describes the group certification of forests, and PEFC ST 1003: 2018, which describes sustainable forest management. The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. Once approved, the scheme will be submitted for international approval.”

³⁷ NOTE Guidance for development of a proposal and justification is given in ISO Directives, Part 1, Annex C and Annex SL (Appendix 1).



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)											
			E-mail on the revision of the standard sent to stakeholders on 8 November 2019 “On behalf of the Forest Certification Institute, we invite you to participate in the renewal of the Slovenian scheme for forest certification according to the PEFC system. The scheme includes documents required for the international certification of the Slovenian system of sustainable and sustainable forest management. The renewal of the scheme will take into account national legislation and the new international standard 1002: 2018, which describes the group certification of forests, and PEFC ST 1003: 2018, which describes sustainable forest management. The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjaska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized proposal of the scheme is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. After approval, the scheme will be submitted for international approval. The Slovenian forest certification scheme is available on the website www.pefc.si.”											
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	Procedures													
	Process	YES	Stakeholder mapping document (Translated by Google Translate) “The purpose of this document is to describe the stakeholders involved by their characteristics and organizations. 1.1 Key stakeholders for each sector <table><tr><th>Stakeholder group</th><th>Organizations representing stakeholders</th></tr><tr><td>Forest owners (including public and private)</td><td>KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG</td></tr><tr><td>Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)</td><td>GZS, ZZS, SloLes</td></tr><tr><td>NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)</td><td>Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace</td></tr><tr><td>Scientific and technological community</td><td>University of Ljubljana, GIS</td></tr><tr><td>Workers and trade unions</td><td>Forestry and timber workers' union</td></tr></table> 1.2 Description and interests of relevant sectors	Stakeholder group	Organizations representing stakeholders	Forest owners (including public and private)	KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG	Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	GZS, ZZS, SloLes	NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace	Scientific and technological community	University of Ljubljana, GIS	Workers and trade unions
Stakeholder group	Organizations representing stakeholders													
Forest owners (including public and private)	KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG													
Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	GZS, ZZS, SloLes													
NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace													
Scientific and technological community	University of Ljubljana, GIS													
Workers and trade unions	Forestry and timber workers' union													



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)												
stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them.			<table><tr><th>Stakeholder group</th><th>Interest in cooperation</th></tr><tr><td>Forest owners (including public and private)</td><td>implementation of simple and affordable forest certification</td></tr><tr><td>Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)</td><td>Certified forests and the possibility of purchasing certified timber in case of demand</td></tr><tr><td>NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)</td><td>Sustainable development, meeting all forest functions.</td></tr><tr><td>Scientific and technological community</td><td>Professional implementation of certification and incorporation of new findings into practice</td></tr><tr><td>Workers and trade unions</td><td>Ensuring workers' rights, adequate pay and safe work</td></tr></table>	Stakeholder group	Interest in cooperation	Forest owners (including public and private)	implementation of simple and affordable forest certification	Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	Certified forests and the possibility of purchasing certified timber in case of demand	NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Sustainable development, meeting all forest functions.	Scientific and technological community	Professional implementation of certification and incorporation of new findings into practice	Workers and trade unions	Ensuring workers' rights, adequate pay and safe work
			Stakeholder group	Interest in cooperation											
			Forest owners (including public and private)	implementation of simple and affordable forest certification											
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			Scientific and technological community	Professional implementation of certification and incorporation of new findings into practice											
			Workers and trade unions	Ensuring workers' rights, adequate pay and safe work											
			1.3 Key issues for each relevant sector												
			<table><tr><th>Stakeholder group</th><th>Key issues</th></tr><tr><td>Forest owners (including public and private)</td><td>• How to ensure easy and at the same time credible certification?</td></tr><tr><td>Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)</td><td>• How to ensure greater involvement of owners in certification?</td></tr><tr><td>• NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)</td><td>How are the ecosocial functions of forests ensured in certified forests?</td></tr><tr><td>• scientific and technological community</td><td>How to take into account and implement professional starting points?</td></tr><tr><td>Workers and trade unions</td><td>• How to ensure improvements in work and safety at work through certification?</td></tr></table> „	Stakeholder group	Key issues	Forest owners (including public and private)	• How to ensure easy and at the same time credible certification?	Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	• How to ensure greater involvement of owners in certification?	• NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	How are the ecosocial functions of forests ensured in certified forests?	• scientific and technological community	How to take into account and implement professional starting points?	Workers and trade unions	• How to ensure improvements in work and safety at work through certification?
			Stakeholder group	Key issues											
Forest owners (including public and private)	• How to ensure easy and at the same time credible certification?														
Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	• How to ensure greater involvement of owners in certification?														
• NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	How are the ecosocial functions of forests ensured in certified forests?														
• scientific and technological community	How to take into account and implement professional starting points?														
Workers and trade unions	• How to ensure improvements in work and safety at work through certification?														
Explanation provided by IFC															
“Regarding stakeholders: We have identified and invited by mail only key stakeholders in order to have balancer representation. In case of more stakeholders of in one group that would mean unbalanced presentation we predicted elections but it was not needed to put in the rules and procedures.															
Decision on how to contact stakeholders was on director of institute for forest certification. In this age as also common in Slovenia mails are considered also as official correspondence. In case of stakeholder that did not reply or was important to have balanced representation (NGO’s) I made additional phone calls.															
In Slovenia there are more than 20.000 NGO’s of which probably around half have some interest in nature or in using forest as recreation activities. Stakeholder mapping has identified stakeholders that work at national level and their work deals also in the field of forestry. Invitation was sent out to all identified stakeholders from stakeholders mapping. Working group was all the time open for new stakeholders wanting to join the process, as we also made effort to have additional NGO’s present at second meeting.”															



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)											
			<i>A stakeholder mapping document was found in which key stakeholders relevant to the subject matter of the standard were defined. The document describes per stakeholder group the main stakeholders categorised under this group, their main interest and their key issues. Based on the explanation provided by IFC, the stakeholder mapping document did not include all stakeholders, but only key stakeholders. IFC has clarified that this selection of the key stakeholders was made because of the high number of relevant stakeholders, and has noted that the WG was open to additional input.</i>											
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: • forest owners, • business and industry, • indigenous people, • non-government organisations, • scientific and technological community,	Procedures													
	Process	YES	Stakeholder mapping document 1.1 Key stakeholders for each sector <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Stakeholder group</th><th>Organizations representing stakeholders</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Forest owners (including public and private)</td><td>KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG</td></tr><tr><td>Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)</td><td>GZS, ZZS, SloLes</td></tr><tr><td>NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)</td><td>Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace</td></tr><tr><td>Scientific and technological community</td><td>University of Ljubljana, GIS</td></tr><tr><td>Workers and trade unions</td><td>Forestry and timber workers' union</td></tr></tbody></table> <i>It shall be noted that there are no indigenous peoples in Slovenia.</i>	Stakeholder group	Organizations representing stakeholders	Forest owners (including public and private)	KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG	Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	GZS, ZZS, SloLes	NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace	Scientific and technological community	University of Ljubljana, GIS	Workers and trade unions
Stakeholder group	Organizations representing stakeholders													
Forest owners (including public and private)	KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG													
Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	GZS, ZZS, SloLes													
NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace													
Scientific and technological community	University of Ljubljana, GIS													
Workers and trade unions	Forestry and timber workers' union													



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
• workers and trade unions. Other groups shall be added if relevant to the scope of standard-setting activities.³⁸			
6.2.3 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders and address any constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities. ³⁹	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by IFC “We did not beforehand identify any stakeholders that were disadvantaged. We did this after they were contacted. We did not have any stakeholders that would not regularly work on emails. If any requests would be made to financially compensate attendance this would be discussed. One request for financial compensation came from member of ministry. I explained that compensations can be paid only for disadvantaged stakeholders and that the ministry is not a disadvantaged stakeholder. We wanted to include more NGO's and therefore I had a phone call with most relevant stakeholder Umanotera, I offered also compensation for their time but they answered that they do not have human resources. From this CIPRA was invited and attended the meetings.” <i>Key stakeholders were identified in the stakeholder mapping document.</i>
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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	E-mail invitation on the renewal of the Slovenian PEFC Scheme 8 November 2019 (Translated by Google Translate) “On behalf of the Forest Certification Institute, we invite you to participate in the renewal of the Slovenian scheme for forest certification according to the PEFC system.” <i>The E-mail invitation was sent to 23 stakeholders which were identified in the stakeholder mapping on 8 November 2019. The first standard-setting activity was the first WG, which started on 10 December 2019,</i>

³⁸ NOTE The full list of nine major stakeholder groups defined by Agenda 21 of the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* 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.

³⁹ NOTE A stakeholder can be both a disadvantaged and a key stakeholder at the same time.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
process. The announcement shall be made in a timely manner ⁴⁰ through suitable media ⁴¹ , as appropriate, to give stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions.			<i>which is just over four weeks after the announcement. The announcement is therefore made in a timely manner. Additionally, evidence was found that the announcement was also made on the IFC website (pefc.si) on 29 October 2019.</i>
6.3.1 The announcement and invitation shall include:			
(a) overview of the standard-setting process,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Public announcement 29 October 2019 on the website of the IFC (pefc.si) “The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. Once approved, the scheme will be submitted for international approval.” E-mail invitation on the renewal of the Slovenian PEFC Scheme 8 November 2019 (Translated by Google Translate) “The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. A coherent proposal is expected

⁴⁰ NOTE 1 *In a timely manner* means (at the latest) four weeks before the first standard-setting activity is scheduled to occur.

⁴¹ 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			of the scheme will be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. After approval, the scheme will be submitted for international approval. The Slovenian forest certification scheme is available on the website www.pefc.si
(b) access to the proposal for the standard (refer to 6.1),	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Public announcement 29 October 2019 on the website of the IFC (pefc.si) “The scheme contains the documents needed to validate the Slovenian system of sustainable and sustainable forest management. The renewal of the scheme will take into account national legislation and the new international standard 1002: 2018, which describes the group certification of forests, and PEFC ST 1003: 2018, which describes sustainable forest management. The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. Once approved, the scheme will be submitted for international approval.” E-mail invitation on the renewal of the Slovenian PEFC Scheme 8 November 2019 (Translated by Google Translate) “The scheme contains the documents needed to validate the Slovenian system of sustainable and sustainable forest management. The renewal of the scheme will take into account national legislation and the new international standard 1002: 2018, which describes the group certification of forests, and PEFC ST 1003: 2018, which describes sustainable forest management. The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020. Once approved, the scheme will be submitted for international approval.” <i>The proposal was included in the public announcement and the invitations to stakeholders.</i>
c) information about opportunities for stakeholders to	Procedures		
	Process	NO	Public announcement 29 October 2019 on the website of the IFC (pefc.si)



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
participate in the process,			“The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020.” E-mail invitation on the renewal of the Slovenian PEFC Scheme 8 November 2019 (Translated by Google Translate) “The inaugural meeting to determine the working group will be held on 10 December 2019 at 10 am in the large meeting room at KGZS, Gospodinjska ulica 6, Ljubljana. The working group will be formed with equal representation of stakeholder groups on the basis of the Requirements for setting the standard PEFC 1001: 2017. The harmonized scheme proposal is expected to be submitted for public consideration by autumn 2020.” Explanation provided by the IFC “I confirm that in invitation there was no mention on how working group will work in detail in the general invitation (to general public and in mail), however this was sent to members of working group and later agreed in document procedures of working group. In Slovenia there is a general understanding that stakeholders in working group can contribute their views and expertise in the process of drafting any documents of any working group, as in this case PEFC scheme. Working group was open to new stakeholders if the interest in participation would occur.” <i>No explicit reference is found in the public announcement on opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process.</i>
(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	Procedures		
	Process	NO	E-mail invitation sent on 15 November 2019 “Please acknowledge receipt of the email with a response regarding your interest in participating. A more detailed agenda and documents will be sent to applicants.” Explanation provided by the IFC “Preliminary mail to appoint representatives was sent on 15.11.2019 Mails were sent to all identified stakeholders as to some other relevant stakeholders. After received answers with expression of interest we concluded that elections in a stakeholder group were not needed, and that each organization could appoint representatives to the meeting. Representatives that came to



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is easy to understand,			first meeting were then noted as stakeholder representatives and members of working group. At the first meeting we also concluded that working group is open to new members (especially from the side of NGO's representing nature) as it was later also implemented by cooperation of two organizations." Development report "Key stakeholders were contacted also by phone." <i>From the evidence provided it is clear that the invitation was sent to all organisations identified in the stakeholder map. However, the invitation does not include a specific request to nominate a representative.</i>
(e) explicit invitation and clear instruction on how to submit feedback on the scope and standard-setting process, and	Procedures		
	Process	NO	Explanation provided by the IFC "PEFC has strict rules on the process procedures and it must be followed. Process timetable could be discussed but we did not put a fixed timetable of the process as we were not in a hurry and the process was finished as it was. The process was also influenced by Corona epidemic. Scope of standard can be understood from the name of the process that is certification of forests. As in Slovenia forest plantations are marginal by hectares and economic importance, and fall under agricultural land, certification of forest plantations is not relevant for Slovenia. The scope of the standard was discussed this at first meeting of working group as was previously discussed by council of IFC before starting revision process. Standard setting process was discussed as a main point of first meeting of the working group and all present members of the working group also signed the document Procedures of working group." <i>No evidence was found of an explicit invitation and clear instruction to stakeholders to submit feedback on the scope and standard setting process. It shall be noted that the requirement does not refer to the procedures, rather to the proposed scope and process, on which stakeholders shall be invited to submit feedback.</i>
(f) access to the standard-setting procedures.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	E-mail invitation on the renewal of the Slovenian PEFC Scheme 8 November 2019 (Translated by Google Translate) "The Slovenian forest certification scheme is available online pages www.pefc.si" <i>On the IFC website (pefc.si) the previous and new standard setting procedures were available for stakeholders.</i>
	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
6.3.2 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on feedback received in response to the public announcement.	Process	YES	<i>IFC has explained that no responses were received, which is why the standard-setting process has remained unchanged.</i>
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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by IFC "All nominations were accepted, and working group remained open for new members, as Pro Silva and Cipra joined in second part of process. We knew from experience from previous revision of scheme that we would not have a problem of too much members but too little interest was predicted. If in a case of too many organisations would apply we would have to have some instrument of election or selection in a group of stakeholders. This was not needed and the rules and procedures did not include this part. Due to lack of engagement of Green NGO's we also left working group open and later after additional effort got new members of working group. As we had an open working group, we could not implement any selection procedures on gender balance or expertise of members. Openness of the working group has in our case resulted in balanced representation of stakeholders with relevant expertise and approximately gender balanced working group." <i>Some justification is given on why the WG members were accepted. The relevance of the organisations is justified as these were identified in the stakeholder map.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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		
	Process	YES	Development report (Showing stakeholders in the WG) Forest owners: Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry State forests company SIDG Association of Forest Owners Wood based industry: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cooperative union of Slovenia NGO CIPRA Pro Silva Scientific community University of Ljubljana Public interest representatives Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MKGP) State forest Service (ZGS) <i>The IFC explained that the WG was balanced: Forest owners 3 members, industry, 2 members, Scientific community and government 2 members, forest workers 1 member. There were in total 10 members in the WG divided over all five stakeholder categories, none of which were dominant.</i>
(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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by IFC “Affected stakeholders had relevant experts representing their interests” <i>From the stakeholder groups represented in the WG it is clear that the WG included stakeholders that are affected by the standard and those that can influence implementation of the standard (forest owners, industry, government). Respondents from the stakeholder survey confirmed this.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)					
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. ⁴² 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.	Procedures							
	Process	YES	Development report (showing stakeholders in the WG) <table><tr><td>Forest owners: Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry State forests company SIDG Association of Forest Owners</td><td>Wood based industry: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cooperative union of Slovenia</td></tr><tr><td>NGO CIPRA Pro Silva</td><td>Scientific community University of Ljubljana</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Public interest representatives Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MKGP) State forest Service (ZGS)</td></tr></table> Explanation provided by IFC “Direct emails were send and calls were made. There was no official target but we predicted to have one or two members from stakeholder group to be balanced and that a group would consist of around 10 members but not more than 20 (to be workable) As I mentioned we had more problem to get participation than to have to much of interest. (...) Workers are presented by Chamber of Agriculture and forestry that has members from both forest owners and companies that work in harvesting as primary registration of company forestry. Additionally first preliminary invitation was send also to syndicate but with no response also after additional phone calls in second round.” <i>Stakeholders from all stakeholder groups identified in 6.2 (forest owners, business and industry, NGOs, scientific & technological community, and workers and trade unions) were present in the WG.</i>	Forest owners: Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry State forests company SIDG Association of Forest Owners	Wood based industry: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cooperative union of Slovenia	NGO CIPRA Pro Silva	Scientific community University of Ljubljana	Public interest representatives Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MKGP) State forest Service (ZGS)
Forest owners: Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry State forests company SIDG Association of Forest Owners	Wood based industry: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Cooperative union of Slovenia							
NGO CIPRA Pro Silva	Scientific community University of Ljubljana							
Public interest representatives Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MKGP) State forest Service (ZGS)								
6.4.4 Activities of the working group shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where:								
	Procedures							

⁴² NOTE When a stakeholder group is not represented and key stakeholders cannot be encouraged to participate, the standardising body may consider alternative options.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group,	Process	YES	<i>One email example which included the working draft was found and respondents to the stakeholder survey confirmed that working drafts were available to members of the working group.</i>
(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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by IFC “All members were able to contribute, some comments only needed explanations.” <i>This was confirmed by the two respondents of the stakeholder survey.</i>
(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		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by IFC “All changes were based on consensus.” <i>The various drafts of standard which included outcomes of the considerations of the WG were found. Respondents to the stakeholder survey confirmed that they had been able to provide feedback.</i>
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:			
(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	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>This method was not used.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal ballot, etc.,			
(b) telephone conference meeting(s) where there is a verbal yes/no vote,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Minutes of the third WG Meeting 15 January 2021 “Decision: The members unanimously agree that the document PEFC SLO 01 - 2021 Standard for Sustainable Forest Management, with the discussed and included changes, be submitted to the Council of the Forest Certification Institute for further processing.” Explanation provided by the IFC “Meeting was on zoom conference call with screen sharing mode of document. As there was no proposals that would not be accepted (only one was withdrawn) there was no need for methods to reach consensus. All members agreed with no abstentions.”
(c) e-mail request to the working group for agreement or objection where the members provide a formal (written) response (vote),	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>This method was not used.</i>
(d) combinations of these methods.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>This method was not used.</i>
6.4.6 Where a vote is used in decision-making, the standard-setting procedures shall determine and include decision-making thresholds that	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	Explanation provided by the IFC “There was no voting. All decisions were reached on consensus or proposal was withdrawn.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
quantifies 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.			
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 discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	Explanation provided by IFC “There was no disputes. All decisions were reached on consensus or proposal was withdrawn after explanation.”
(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		
	Process	N.A.	Explanation provided by IFC “There was no disputes. All decisions were reached on consensus or proposal was withdrawn after explanation.”
(c) additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary) where further stakeholder input can help to achieve	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	Explanation provided by IFC “There was no disputes. All decisions were reached on consensus or proposal was withdrawn after explanation.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
consensus on unresolved issues. The standardising body determines the scope and duration of any additional public consultation.			
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		
	Process	N.A.	Explanation provided by IFC “There was no disputes. All decisions were reached on consensus or proposal was withdrawn after explanation.”
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 ⁴³ through suitable media,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Public announcement on the renewal of the Slovenian standard for PEFC forest certification 23 January 2021 (translated by Google Translate) “The working group for the renewal of the Slovenian standard for forest certification has prepared a new standard, which was submitted by the Forest Certification Institute for a two-month public hearing, which lasts until 23 March 2021.” Explanation provided by IFC

⁴³ NOTE *In a timely manner* means (at the latest) the day before the start of public consultation.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			“(consultation period was) From 23.2 to 23.3. and extended to 23.5. Due to Corona epidemic the consultation was prolonged. Closing date of prolonged consultation was not announced. In Slovenia it is usual to have start of public consultation on the day of publication and therefore the starting date was not published. As public consultation was 2 months we did not prolong it by late start. An announcement that would have a postponed start of consultation date in a week or month after publication would probably result in less likely participation of stakeholders.” <i>Although no start date of the public consultation period is found in the public announcement, from announcement it can be assumed that the public consultation period started on 23 January 2021. While this is the same day of the announcement, and not at least one day before the start, the public consultation period lasted until May which is much longer than 60 days, and that intend of the requirement is met.</i>
(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		
	Process	NO	Explanation provided by IFC “There are close to 30.000 NGO’s in Slovenia, including all societies. Around half could have some link with nature, sustainable development or are doing recreation activities in the forest and could count as stakeholder. From this vast pool of organizations, we identified stakeholders that act at national level or are umbrella organization and have direct or indirect link with forestry and nature protection. Two stakeholders have sent an answer that they do not have time or human resources and they do not see this in their priorities and that they will not participate. After their lack of interest and possibility of replacement they were not anymore considered as key stakeholder. Following their answer, we respected their decision and did not invite them again for comments and did not send them the final draft of the standard. (Additional evidence of mails was provided.) After initial meeting of working group, we had unbalanced representation of working group. Organization Umanotera was contacted by phone* and financial compensation was proposed for their participation. A proposal was made from their side to include organization Cipra and we consequently succeeded for them and for Pro Silva that they joined. With these two members from NGO’s that represent nature protection interests were added to the working group in key stakeholder group. An initial stakeholder mapping was not changed but a list of relevant stakeholders that we included in working group as replacement had changed consequently. We must emphasize that Cipra is together with Umanotera are a member of Plan B umbrella organization and that Umanotera is stated as contact of plan B and as we know also acting as manager for Plan B. In



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			a way Umanotera was replaced and represented by Cipra and they both represent the same NGO group gathered under Plan B under Umanotera management. We therefore ensured that all stakeholder members and all stakeholder groups participated and got the inquiry draft and could contribute.” <i>The invitation was not sent to all stakeholders from the stakeholder identification mapping, and therefore not all relevant stakeholders were invited to comment on the enquiry draft. It shall be noted that efforts have been made to get NGOs involved in the process.</i>
(c) invitations are sent to disadvantaged and key stakeholders by methods that ensure they reach recipients and are easy to understand,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by IFC “Public announcement was on website and in newspaper Zelena Dežela that has around 100.000 recipients. All identified stakeholders got the final version of the standard, with exemption of replaced stakeholders Umanotera and Greenpeace that decided not to participate. In Slovenia we have quite well-organized NGO's and no disadvantaged stakeholders were identified that would need other than regular communication by mail.”
(d) the enquiry draft is made publicly available,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The enquiry draft is found on the IFC website (pefc.si).</i>
(e) public consultation is for at least 60 days,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Public announcement 23 January 2021 “The working group for the renewal of the Slovenian standard for forest certification has prepared a new standard, which was submitted by the Forest Certification Institute for a two-month public hearing, which lasts until 23 March 2021.” <i>Although no start date is mentioned, from the text it can be assumed that the public consultation period started on the date of the announcement, which is 23 January 2021. It lasted until 23 March 2021, a total of 60 days. The IFC explained that it was then extended to 23 May 2021 due to the Corona epidemic.</i>
(f) all feedback is considered by the	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>IFC explained that no feedback was received during the public consultation period.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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. ⁴⁴ The synopsis is made publicly available (e.g. on a website) and is sent to each stakeholder/party that gave feedback.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>IFC explained that no feedback was received during the public consultation period.</i>
6.5.2 For new standards the standardising body shall organise a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No new standard was developed, the previous standard was revised.</i>
6.6 The standardising body shall organise pilot testing of new standard(s) ⁴⁵ to assess the clarity, auditability and feasibility of the	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No new standard was developed, the previous standard was revised.</i>

⁴⁴ 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.

⁴⁵ NOTE Pilot testing is not required for revision of an existing standard when experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
requirements. The working group shall consider the outcome of pilot testing.			
Approval and Publication			
7.1 The standardising body shall approve the standard(s)/normative document(s) formally when there is evidence of consensus among the working group.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Minutes of the third WG Meeting 15 January 2021 “Decision: The members unanimously agree that the document PEFC SLO 01 - 2021 Standard for Sustainable Forest Management, with the discussed and included changes, be submitted to the Council of the Forest Certification Institute for further processing.” Minutes of the second correspondence session of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute 19 January 2021 “Decision: The members of the board of the Forest Certification Institute unanimously agree to submit the document PEFC SLO 01: 2020 for a two-month public hearing.” Minutes of the fourth correspondence session of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute 10 June 2021 “Members voted on the question Do you certify documents marked BS01 to 08 and SLO03? Members voted by e-mail and telephone. Decision: Members of the Council of the Forest Certification Institute approve documents and submit them for further certification. Decision: The members of IFC council are approving the documents and members and is submitting them for further processing and approval.” Development report “In Slovenia SFM standard did not receive any comments or objections. SFM standard for Slovenia was unanimously adopted by Council of Institute for Forest Certification on 10.06.2021.” <i>Evidence is found of the approval of the standard for the public consultation by the WG. No comments were received during the public consultation period after which the standard was approved by the standardising body on 10 June 2021.</i>
7.2.1 The formally approved standard(s)/normative	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the IFC



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.			“Documents are still drafts until final approval of general assembly of PEFC. To avoid confusion we did not put dates on them (process dates could be added we agree) Formally approved standard was placed on website on 23.1.2021 At the time of public consultation, the inquiry drafts were on website. Drafts were approved for public consultation. After the public consultation the documents on the website were replaced with new updated and approved versions dated 10.6.2021.” <i>The formally approved standard was found on the website.</i>
7.2.2 Standard(s) shall include:			
(a) identification and contact information for the standardising body,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “National PEFC Governing Body Institute for Forest Certification Gospodinjska ulica 6 1000 Ljubljana Tel: + 386 1 51 36 702 E- mail: info@pefc.si , web site: www.pefc.si”
(b) official language of the standard,	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “The official version of this standard is English.”
(c) a note that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “If there is any inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference.”
	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(d) The approval date and the date of next periodic review ⁴⁶	Process	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Approved by: Institute for Forest Certification in Slovenia on 10.06.2021 Endorsed by PEFC council: Date of entry into force: application date and transition period” Explanation provided by IFC “Final date will be added after endorsement.” <i>No reference is found in the standard of the date of the next periodic review.</i>
7.2.3 Printed copies shall be made available upon request at a price that covers no more than administrative costs (if any)	Procedures		
	Process	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “The document is freely available on the web site www.pefc.si or at the headquarters of the Institute for Forest Certification.”
7.2.4 The standardising body shall make the development report (refer to PEFC GD 1007) publicly available	Procedures		
	Process	YES	<i>The development report was found on the IFC website (http://pefc.si/shema-sprememba.php).</i>
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	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Minutes of the second session of the Council of IFC 24 October 2018 “Decision 3: The Forest Certification Institute decides to start the procedures for revision the Slovenian Forest Certification Scheme.” Explanation provided by the IFC

⁴⁶ 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.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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 input.			"In terms of content we did a review of old standard and a gap analysis was made before start of the process by me but there is no documentation that was shared or voted on. In terms of process we decided to have a revision and a full working group in revision process (due to new standard). A regular revision was done based on change of international standard. In the meantime there was no relevant change of legislation. A review was done following 5 years of implementation of the standard. A review was done together with feedback received in last the time of implementation of the standard. Notes on chapters that could be improved were marked based on received remarks. The review was unofficial." <i>The previous standard was approved May 2014, the current revision started with a decision in October 2018 and a public announcement in October 2019.</i> <i>It is concluded that an (unofficial) review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, in which also feedback received were directly and indirectly included in the revision process.</i>
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. ⁴⁷	Procedures		
	Process	NO	Explanation provided by the IFC "Permanent feedback is to be collected by director of IFC. Description is on www.pefc.si Institute for forest certification is currently working on new website The launch of new website was postponed due to consistency in the revision process. Feedback was mentioned regarding the new website that will have the appeal to the general public similar to the one on PEFC international website. Currently there is no separate mechanism than mail and phone contact, but this will be met with the new website." <i>No evidence is found of a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on the standard (also in the coming years). Only contact details are available on the website of PEFC Slovenia (pefc.si). However, as explained by IFC such mechanism will be in place on their new website.</i>

⁴⁷ NOTE Feedback can be sent in various formats: comments, requests for clarification and/or interpretation, complaints, etc.



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.2.2 All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.	Procedures		
	Process	YES	Explanation provided by the IFC “No concrete feedback was received. A general feedbacks that certification should be less of bureaucratic burden was received. Generally comments are to be received by mail or on paper. Comments are to be recorded being in any form or manner. The comment that certification should be less of a bureaucratic burden was received in oral form by a board member of Institute. The comment was noted and written down. As comment was very general and could not undermine PEFC meta standard and all proposals of working group and the fact that PEFC is a third party ISO Accreditation system. It was also explained that we have tried to be as minimal as we could be and the comments of members of WG were not such that would be a new burden.”
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted. It can be assumed that the mentioned evaluations were directly and indirectly included in the revision process.</i>
8.3.2 The standardising body shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research and relevant emerging issues.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted. It can be assumed that the consideration of latest scientific knowledge were directly and indirectly included in the revision process.</i>
	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)											
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.	Process	N.A.	No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.											
8.4.2 At the start of a review, the standardising body shall update the stakeholder identification mapping (refer to clause 6.2).	Procedures													
	Process	YES	Stakeholder mapping document (Translated by Google Translate) “The purpose of this document is to describe the stakeholders involved by their characteristics and organizations. 1.1 Key stakeholders for each sector <table><tr><th>Stakeholder group</th><th>Organizations representing stakeholders</th></tr><tr><td>Forest owners (including public and private)</td><td>KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG</td></tr><tr><td>Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)</td><td>GZS, ZZS, SloLes</td></tr><tr><td>NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)</td><td>Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace</td></tr><tr><td>Scientific and technological community</td><td>University of Ljubljana, GIS</td></tr><tr><td>Workers and trade unions</td><td>Forestry and timber workers' union</td></tr></table> ”	Stakeholder group	Organizations representing stakeholders	Forest owners (including public and private)	KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG	Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	GZS, ZZS, SloLes	NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace	Scientific and technological community	University of Ljubljana, GIS	Workers and trade unions
Stakeholder group	Organizations representing stakeholders													
Forest owners (including public and private)	KGZS, ZLGS, SIDG													
Forestry contractors and industry (forest management, traders and forest timber industry)	GZS, ZZS, SloLes													
NGOs (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports, etc.)	Cyprus, Pro Silva, Umanotera, Greenpeace													
Scientific and technological community	University of Ljubljana, GIS													
Workers and trade unions	Forestry and timber workers' union													



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			<i>A stakeholder mapping document was found in which key stakeholders relevant to the subject matter of the standard were defined.</i>
8.4.3 The standardising body shall organise:			
(a) a public consultation period of at least 30 days (following the requirements of clause 6.5.1) and/or,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>
(b) stakeholder meetings.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>
8.4.4 The standardising body shall announce the review in a timely manner (refer to 6.3).	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No separate review of the standard was conducted as an initial step, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>
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		
	Process	YES	Minutes of the second session of the Council of IFC 24 October 2018 “Decision 3: The Forest Certification Institute decides to start the procedures for revision the Slovenian Forest Certification Scheme.” Explanation provided by the IFC “In terms of content we did a review of old standard and a gap analysis was made before start of the process by me but there is no documentation that was shared or voted on. In terms of process we decided to have a revision and a full working group in revision process (due to new standard). As international standard changed IFC council decided to do a revision. A review was done together with feedback received in last the time of implementation of the standard. Notes on chapters that could be improved were marked based on received remarks. The review was unofficial.”
	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.5.2 The decision shall be made at the highest decision-making level of the standardising body	Process	YES	Minutes of the second session of the Council of IFC 24 October 2018 “Decision 3: The Forest Certification Institute decides to start the procedures for revision the Slovenian Forest Certification Scheme.”
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>The standard was not reaffirmed, instead a full revision was conducted.</i>
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		
	Process	YES	Minutes of the second session of the Council of IFC 24 October 2018 “Due to changes in the international forest certification scheme, all countries will have to change their schemes. Decision 3: The Forest Certification Institute decides to start the procedures for revision the Slovenian Forest Certification Scheme.” Explanation provided by the IFC “In terms of process we decided to have a revision and a full working group in revision process (due to new standard). <i>Evidence is found providing that it was decided to conduct a revision of the scheme. Although it is not specified that this was a normal revision, from the minutes of the second session of the Council of IFC and the explanation by IFC it becomes clear that a normal revision is needed due to the changes in the international forest certification scheme.</i>
Revision of standards			
	Procedures		



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.	Process	YES	<i>The procedures apply also to revision of standards, and were applied in the standard-revision process in Slovenia.</i>
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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No editorial revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
9.3.1 A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process.	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
9.3.2 A time-critical revision can be conducted only in the following situations:			



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
(a) Change in national laws and regulations affecting compliance with PEFC International requirements	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
(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		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
9.3.3 The time-critical revision shall follow these steps:			
(a) The standardising body shall draft the revised standard,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
(b) The standardising body may consult stakeholders, but it is not mandatory,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
(c) The revised standard shall be approved formally at the highest appropriate decision-making level of the standardising body,	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>
(d) The standardising body shall explain the justification for the	Procedures		
	Process	N.A.	<i>No time-critical revision was conducted, instead, a normal revision was conducted.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
urgent change(s) and make the justification publicly available.			
9.4.1 A revision shall define the application date and transition period of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s).	Procedures		
	Process	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Approved by: Institute for Forest Certification in Slovenia on 10.06.2021 Endorsed by PEFC council: Date of entry into force: application date and transition period Date of next revision:” Explanation provided by IFC “The document was edited. The final document will have this date.” <i>No application date and transition period are found in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2.</i>
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		
	Process	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Approved by: Institute for Forest Certification in Slovenia on 10.06.2021 Endorsed by PEFC council: Date of entry into force: application date and transition period Date of next revision:” Explanation provided by IFC “The document was edited. The final document will have this date.” <i>No application date is found in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2.</i>
9.4.3 The transition period shall not exceed one year. The standardising body may	Procedures		
	Process	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Approved by: Institute for Forest Certification in Slovenia on 10.06.2021



PEFC benchmark requirement	Assess. basis*	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
determine a longer period when justified by exceptional circumstances.			Endorsed by PEFC council: Date of entry into force: application date and transition period Date of next revision:" Explanation provided by IFC "The document was edited. The final document will have this date." <i>No transition period is found in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2.</i>

Part II: PEFC Checklist for Group Forest Management Certification

1 Scope

Part II covers requirements for sustainable forest management as defined in PEFC ST 1002:2018, Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements.

2 Checklist

PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
4. Context of the group organisation		
4.1 Understanding the group organisation and its context		
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:		
a) regional groups: group of forest owners/managers defined by regional borders and	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "4.1 Understanding the group organisation and its context Considering the number of forest owners, their needs and expectations, dispersion of forest holdings, the forest management planning method (...) a group or regional certification system is the preferred choice.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Due to the facts specified above, a small country or canton may be defined as a single certification region, however it may be also divided into several regions or groups of forest owners from different administrative units”
b) other groups and/or	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “4.1 Understanding the group organisation and its context Due to the facts specified above (...) it may be also divided into several regions or groups of forest owners from different administrative units”
c) whether there are any other specific circumstances which influence the implementation of the group management system.	N.A.	<i>The procedures do not include any other specific circumstances which influence the implementation of the group management system.</i>
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “4.3 Group management system Group organisation is responsible for determining and implementing Group management system that includes positions of affected stakeholders and their expectations.”
b) the relevant expectations of these affected stakeholders.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “4.3 Group management system Group organisation is responsible for determining and implementing Group management system that includes positions of affected stakeholders and their expectations.”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “3. Terms and definitions Regional/group organization: A group of members represented by the group representative for the purposes of implementation of the sustainable forest management standard and its certification. Members are signing a written agreement with the group organisation for



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		participation in the group certification and are prepared to implement requirements of sustainable forest management standard and other requirements that are part of the forest certification scheme. Group entity: A 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. For this purpose the group entity is using a group management system. Note: The structure of the group entity should follow the operations, number of participants and other basic conditions for the group organisation. It may be represented by one person. Participant in group certification: forest owner/manager or other entity who is covered by the group certificate, has written agreement with group entity, has legal right to manage the forest on a precisely specified area and is able to fulfill the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard.” <i>Observation: It is noted that the words ‘Group member’ and ‘Participant’ are both used throughout the procedures, whereas they refer to the same.</i>
b) the certified area,	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “3. (...) Certified area: An area of forests and areas of forest trees covered by a referred forest management system according to Sustainable Forest Management Standards as a part of PEFC BFCS. In the group certification context the certified area is the sum of forest areas of the participants and covered by a group forest certificate.”
c) the group certificate and	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “3. (...) Regional/group forest certificate: document confirming that the group organization fulfills the requirements of referred sustainable forest management standard as well as other requirements that are part of the forest certification scheme.”
d) the document confirming participation in group certification.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “3. (...) Document confirming participation in group forest certification: A document issued to an individual member that refers to the group forest certificate confirming that the member is covered by the scope of the group forest certification.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Observation: <i>it is noted that the word 'member' is used as a synonym of participant. Although the context of the definition clearly indicates this is the participant, the use of different words can make it confusing.</i>
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "4.2. Determining the scope of the group management system Regional or group representative must provide written justification for decision of establishment of group certification, scope of the group management system the geographical boundaries and applicability of the group management system."
4.3.3 The standard shall define which requirements of the sustainable forest management standard may be fulfilled on group level.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "4.4. Fulfilling requirements of the sustainable forest management standard at group level Requirements that are normative due to national legislation should be fulfilled and monitored at regional or group level" <i>The procedures do not specifically indicate which requirements may be fulfilled on group level, rather it indicates that requirements of the standard that are normative due to national legislation are those that may be fulfilled on group level.</i>
4.3.4 The standard requires that the scope shall be made available as documented information.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "4.2. Determining the scope of the group management system The scope shall be made available as documented information."
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "4.3 Group management system Participants in a group are subjected to internal monitoring and audit programme that is described in internal procedures of the group representative."
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "4.3 Group management system In case of a group organisation acting as a trader a certified PEFC chain of custody system shall be in place."
5. Leadership		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “5.1.1 Functions and responsibilities of the group entity a) to implement and maintain an effective management system covering all participants of the group”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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”
c) to establish written procedures for the management of the group organisation;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “c) to establish written procedures for the management of the group organisation”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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)”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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”
f) to keep documented information of:	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “f) to keep documented information of:



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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, ii. all participants, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/their size(s), iii. the certified area, iv. the implementation of an internal monitoring programme, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken;		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, II. all participants, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/their size(s), III. the certified area, IV. the implementation of an internal monitoring programme, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken"
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; 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	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "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; 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 mandate to represent the participants and where its commitment and the terms and conditions of the contract are enforceable."



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.		
h) to provide all participants with a document confirming participation in the group forest certification;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “h) to provide all participants with a document confirming participation in the group forest certification”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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”
k) to operate an internal monitoring programme that provides for the evaluation of the participants' conformity with the certification requirements;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “k) to operate an internal monitoring programme that provides for the evaluation of the participants' conformity with the certification requirements”
l) to operate an annual internal audit programme covering both group members and group entity;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “l) to operate an annual internal audit programme covering both group members and group entity”
m) to operate a management review of the group forest certification and acting on the results from the review;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “m) to operate a management review of the group forest certification and acting on the results from the review”
n) to provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the certification body, accreditation body, PEFC	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.		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.”
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 12 months after exclusion. 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.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “5.1.2 Function and responsibilities of participants 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”
b) To provide the group entity with information about previous group participation.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “b) to provide the group entity with information about previous forest certification”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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”
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;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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”
e) to inform the group entity about nonconformities identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “e) to inform the group entity about nonconformities identified under other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification”
f) to implement relevant corrective and preventive actions established by the group entity.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “f) to implement relevant corrective and preventive actions established by the group entity”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “5.2.1 Group entity shall provide a commitment a) to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system”
b) to integrate the group certification requirements in the group management system;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “b) to integrate the group certification requirements in the group management system”
c) to continuously improve the group management system;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “c) to continuously improve the group management system”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) to continuously support the improvement of the sustainable management of the land/forests by the participants.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “d) to continuously support the improvement of the sustainable management of the land/forests”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “5.2.1 Group entity shall provide a commitment The commitment of the group entity may be part of a group management policy and shall be publicly available as documented information upon request.”
5.2.3 The standard requires that the participants shall provide a commitment		
a) to follow the rules of the management system;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “5.2.2 Participants shall provide a commitment a) to follow the rules of the management system”
b) to implement the requirements of the sustainability standard in their operations in their area.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “b) to implement the requirements of the sustainability standard in their operations in their area”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “6.1 Changes in the group management system that are planned by organisation shall be included in a group management plan”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “6.2 Requirements of the sustainable forest management standard on the group level, shall be considered, decided and implemented in a group management plan.”
7. Support		
7.1 The standard requires that resources needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “7.1. Group or regional representative shall secure sufficient means for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the group management system.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
group management system shall be determined and provided.		
7.2 The standard shall define the necessary competence of persons doing work in the group management system.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “7.2 Group or regional representative shall maintain regular implementation of the group management system and conduct regular internal audits within the group. Required qualifications refer to a bachelor degree in forestry and minimum 2 years of relevant experience in the field. Required qualities refer to basic knowledge of office work, archives and computer literacy.”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “7.3 Group or regional representative must ensure that communication processes are in place to raise the awareness of participants concerning: a) the group management policy”
b) the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “b) the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard”
c) their contribution to the effectiveness of the group management system and the sustainable forest management, including the benefits of improved group performance;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “c) their contribution to the effectiveness of the group management system and the sustainable forest management, including the benefits of improved group performance”
d) the implications of not conforming with the group management system requirements.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “d) the implications of not conforming with the group management system requirements”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “7.4 Group or regional representative must determine internal and external communications relevant to the group management system a) on what to communicate”
b) when to communicate;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		"b) when to communicate"
c) with whom to communicate;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "c) with whom to communicate"
d) how to communicate.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "d) how to communicate"
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 7.5 Group or regional representative shall have appropriate mechanisms in place for resolving complaints and disputes relating to group management and sustainable forest management operations.
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "7.6 Documented information relevant to the group management system and the conformance with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard shall be: a) up to date"
b) available and suitable for use, where and when it is needed;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "b) available and suitable for use, where and when it is needed"
c) adequately protected against loss of confidentiality, improper use, or loss of integrity.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "c) adequately protected against loss of confidentiality, improper use, or loss of integrity."
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "8.1 Group organisation shall plan, implement and control processes needed • to meet the requirements of the group certification standard and the sustainable forest management standard and"
b) to implement the actions determined in 6.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		“• to implement the actions determined in chapter 6.”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “8.2 Planning, implementing and controlling described in 8.1. shall be done by: • defining the necessary processes and establishing criteria for those”
b) implementing control of the processes in accordance with the criteria;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “• implementing control of the processes in accordance with the criteria”
c) keeping documented information to the extent necessary to have confidence that the processes have been carried out as planned.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “• keeping documented information to the extent necessary to have confidence that the processes have been carried out as planned.”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.1.1 An ongoing internal monitoring programme shall provide confidence in the conformity of the group organisation with the sustainable forest management standard. In particular, it shall include information on: what shall be monitored and measured”
b) the methods for monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation, as applicable, to ensure valid results;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.1.1 (...) it shall include information on: the methods for monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation, as applicable, to ensure valid results”.
c) when the monitoring and measuring shall be performed;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.1.1 (...) it shall include information on: when the monitoring and measuring shall be performed”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) when the results from monitoring and measurement shall be analysed and evaluated;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.1.1 (...) it shall include information on: when the results from monitoring and measurement shall be analysed and evaluated”.
e) what documented information shall be available as evidence of the results.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.1.1 (...) it shall include information on: what documented information shall be available as evidence of the results”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.1.2 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.”
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 i. the group organisation's own requirements for its group management system; ii. the requirements of the national group certification standard;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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 I. the group organisation's own requirements for its group management system; II. the requirements of the national group certification standard; • ensures the implementation of the sustainable forest management standard on the participant level; • is effectively implemented and maintained.”
b) ensures the implementation of the sustainable forest management standard on the participant level;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “b) ensures the implementation of the sustainable forest management standard on the participant level”
c) is effectively implemented and maintained.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “c) is effectively implemented and maintained”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.2.1.2 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.”
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 concerned and the results of previous audits;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.2.2 Organisation The standard requires an internal audit programme which shall cover at least: • 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”
b) definition of the audit criteria and scope for each audit;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “• definition of the audit criteria and scope for each audit;”
c) competence of internal auditor (forest knowledge, standard knowledge);	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “• competence of internal auditor (forest knowledge, standard knowledge)”
d) selection of auditors and conducting of audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “• selection of auditors and conducting of audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;”
e) ensuring that the results of the audits are reported to relevant group management;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “• ensuring that the results of the audits are reported to relevant group management”
f) retaining of the documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “• retaining of the documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results”
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:		
a) determination of the sample size (9.3.2);	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.3.1 Requirements for the selection of participants in the internal audit programme shall include a) determination of the sample size”
b) determination of sample categories(9.3.3);	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “b) determination of sample categories”
c) distribution of the sample to the categories (9.3.4);	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “c) distribution of the sample to the categories”
d) selection of the participants (9.3.5).	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “d) selection of the participants”
9.3.1.2 The standard may define additional requirements on the regional, national or sub-national level.	N.A.	<i>The procedures do not define additional requirements on the regional, national or sub-national level.</i>
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.3.1 (...) In case of participation in pre-existing organisations or group or the members participation, such as a forest owners’/managers’ association shall be additionally sampled.”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 9.3.2.1 The size of the sample should generally be based on the square root of the number of participants
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.3.2.1 The size of the sample should generally be based on the square root of the number of participants: ($y=\sqrt{x}$), rounded to the upper whole number 9.3.2.2 Internal assessments of a group representative



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		The group or regional representative shall audit at least: • At first assessment: $y = \sqrt{x}$ • At annual supervisory audits: $y = 0.6 * \sqrt{x}$ • Upon reassessment or transfer of the certificate: $y = 0.8 * \sqrt{x}$ y = number of controlled owners x = number of owners involved"
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "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"
b) results of internal audits or previous certification audits;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "b) results of internal audits or previous certification audits;"
c) quality / level of confidence of the internal monitoring programme;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "c) quality / level of confidence of the internal monitoring programme"
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "d) use of technologies allowing the gathering of information concerning specified requirements"
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "e) based on other means of gathering information about activities on the ground"



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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);	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “b) size of management units (different size classes)”
c) biogeographic region (e.g. lowlands, low mountain range, high mountain range);	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “c) biogeographic region (e.g. lowlands, low mountain range, high mountain range)”
d) operations, processes and products of potential group participants;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “d) operations, processes and products of potential group participants”
e) deforestation and forest conversion;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “e) deforestation and forest conversion”
f) rotation period(s);	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “f) rotation period(s)”
g) richness of biological diversity;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “g) richness of biological diversity”
h) recreation and other socio-economic functions of the forest;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “h) recreation and other socio-economic functions of the forest”
i) dependence of and interaction with local communities and indigenous people;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “i) dependence of and interaction with local communities and indigenous people”
j) available resources for administration, operations, training and research;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “j) available resources for administration, operations, training and research”
k) governance and law enforcement.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		"k) governance and law enforcement"
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "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."
9.3.4 Distribution of the sample The sample shall be distributed to the categories according to the result of the risk assessment.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "9.3.4 Distribution of the sample and selection of the participants The sample shall be distributed to the categories according to the result of the risk assessment."
9.3.5 Selection of the participants		
9.3.5.1 At least 25% of the sample should be selected at random.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "9.3.4 Distribution of the sample and selection of the participants The sample shall be distributed to the categories according to the result of the risk assessment. At least 25% of the sample should be selected at random"
9.3.5.2 A risk-based procedure for the selection of the participants shall be specified.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "9.3.4 (...) A risk-based procedure for the selection of the participants shall be specified"
9.4 Management review		
9.4.1 The standard requires that an annual management review shall at least include:		
a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "9.4.1 Annual management review shall at least include: a) the status of actions from previous management reviews"
b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the group management system;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the group management system"
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "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"



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) information on the group performance, including trends in: i. nonconformities and corrective actions; ii. monitoring and measurement results; iii. audit results;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “d) information on the group performance, including trends in: I. nonconformities and corrective actions; II. monitoring and measurement results; III. audit results”
e) opportunities for continual improvement.	YES	“e) opportunities for continual improvement.”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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.”
9.4.3 The standard requires that the group organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “9.4.3 The standard requires that the group organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews.”
10. Improvement		
10.1 Non conformity 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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “10.1.1 In case of a nonconformity, 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”
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;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “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”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
iii. determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur;		
c) implement any action needed;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “c) implement any action needed”
d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken”
e) make changes to the group management system, if necessary.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “e) make changes to the group management system, if necessary”
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	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “10.1.2 Group organisation shall retain documented information as evidence of: a) the nature of the nonconformities and any subsequent actions taken;”
b) the results of any corrective action.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “b) the results of any corrective action”
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 is allowed to re-enter the group certification. The internal audit shall not take place sooner than 12 months after the exclusion.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “10.1.3 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 place sooner than 12 months after the exclusion.”
10.2 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.	YES	PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 “10.2 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.”



Part IIIA: PEFC Checklist for Sustainable Forest Management – Bosnia and Herzegovina

1 Scope

Part III covers requirements for sustainable forest management as defined in PEFC ST 1003:2018, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements.

2 Checklist

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 forest management 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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2. General Requirements. This standard is applicable at the level of the forest management unit (parcel, owner), or at another level (Municipality Cadasters, Municipalities, Republic of Srpska). Forest managers, forest owners and forest users are responsible for ensuring full compliance of forest management with the PEFC standard, including activities performed by engaged workers in certified forest areas.” <i>The assessment of the standard reveals that the requirements in the standard consist of management and performance requirements that are applicable at the forest management level.</i>
b) be clear, performance based and auditable;	YES	<i>The standard and requirements are clearly structured, performance based and auditable. One general observation is made: the use of the English language is not always clear. There are various spelling mistakes, incorrect use of grammar and words.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
c) apply to activities of all forest operators in the defined forest area who have an impact on achieving compliance with the requirements;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2. Forest managers, forest owners and forest users are responsible for ensuring full compliance of forest management with the PEFC standard, including activities performed by engaged workers in certified forest areas.” <i>Observation: the wording “forest users” is a bit confusing, as it might include local stakeholders that use the forest for recreation. However, considering the clause and context, it is interpreted throughout the standard as “forest operators”.</i>
d) require record-keeping that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the forest management standards;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2. Forest managers and forest owners shall secure record-keeping procedures that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of this Standard. Minimum period for keeping records and documents that are relevant as evidence is 5 (five) years.”
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 .	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2. The “100% PEFC certified” certificate are only made by forest owners/managers covered by a PEFC for products coming from forests that are certified in accordance with this Standard.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2. The “100% PEFC certified” certificate are only made by forest owners/managers covered by a PEFC for products coming from forests that are certified in accordance with this Standard.”
g) require that claims on the origin of products in an area covered by the standard are only made by	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
forest owners/managers covered by a PEFC recognised certificate issued against the standard;		"2. The "100% PEFC certified" certificate are only made by forest owners/managers covered by a PEFC for products coming from forests that are certified in accordance with this Standard. This certificate can be used by forest owners and forest managers who have a valid PEFC certificate issued by an accredited certification body."
h) specify requirements concerning the information which need to be provided to a PEFC chain of custody certified customer;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 "2. When forest owners or forest managers sell products from forests with the PEFC declaration "100% PEFC certified", in order to provide appropriate information for the input material, customers will be provided with the following information: a) supplier identification, b) product identification, c) product quantity, d) delivery identification based on delivery date, delivery period or billing period, e) the organisation's name as the PEFC customer of the delivery, f) declaration "100% PEFC certified" separately for each product claimed to be covered by the documentation, g) the certificate number of the supplier's PEFC recognized certificate."
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.	N.A.	<i>No overview of applicable legislation is found for requirements of the benchmark which are not reflected in the standard because they are already addressed through the legislation. It is assumed that all requirements of the benchmark are met through the requirements in PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2. Nevertheless, the standard provides reference to relevant laws under each criterion (when applicable).</i>
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 "2. General requirements Forest managers and forest owners shall determine: a) the affected stakeholders that are relevant to the sustainable forest management;"
b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 "b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders"
4.3 Determining the scope of the management system		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
4.3.1 The standard requires that the organisation shall determine the boundaries and applicability of the management system to establish its scope.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2. General requirements Forest managers and forest owners shall determine: c) determine the boundaries and applicability of the management system to establish its scope.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.1. Forest management is based on permanent inventory cycles, planning, implementation, monitoring and analysis of the management taking in consideration economical, ecological and social influence of forest management with aim to avoid unnecessary negative impacts. The results from the monitoring and analysis of the management are conducted for period of 10 years and 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. These results shall provide basis for assessment on the social, environmental and economic impact of the forest management and used for the new planning cycle.” <i>Observation: although monitoring and analysis of management are conducted each 10 years (and thus form a cycle), the length of this cycle is considered quite long to allow for adequate response in the meantime, especially when forest operations are adjusted compared to what was planned initially.</i>
5. Leadership		
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.1. (...) The organizational management fully understand requirements of all forest certification system and for SFM and demonstrate its commitment for compliance with requirements for SFM and to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system. For that purpose, the organization compulsory has to prepare statement as a part of internal policy regulation, where: - organization declares its commitment to fulfill requirements for SFM; - organization declares its commitment to fulfill requirements of the FC system.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		- organization declares its commitment to implement regular monitoring on implementation of requirements for SFM and improvement where is possible; - organization is committed to equal opportunities, prevention for discrimination and harassment at work; - support to gender equality where possible;”
b) to continuously improve the sustainable forest management system.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.1. (...) For that purpose, the organization compulsory has to prepare statement as a part of internal policy regulation, where: - organization declares its commitment to implement regular monitoring on implementation of requirements for SFM and improvement where is possible;”
5.2 The standard requires that this commitment shall be publicly available.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.1.(...) The statement shall be publicly available, while employees are familiar with the content and understand their role in commitment of the organization.”
5.3 The standard requires that responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.2.(...) The management of the organization shall define and secure necessary structure among employees and service providers and to have clearly defined responsibilities for implementation of SFM. Update on the roles of all persons in the system shall be implemented on annual level through written instructions and training provision. This includes all resources and documented information to place, implement, maintain, and improve system efficiency. The organization has to define main responsible person that will prepare and keep records of all the documented information is relevant, and updated as appropriate, to the activities of the organisation.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.2.(...) Forest managers that are managing forest area bigger than 4.000 ha shall conduct analysis on the threats and opportunities for compliance with standard requirements and measures for risk mitigation. Forest manager and owners that manage forest area smaller than 4.000 ha shall at least prepare list for current threats for SFM.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.1.(...) The results from the monitoring and analysis of the management are conducted for period of 10 years and 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. Forest inventory and mapping is conducted on appropriate way which reflects the structural elements of the stand, management measures and is in compliance with law regulation. Borders of the forest area managed in a sustainable way are clearly defined and mapped. The surface of certified forest area is equal to the area of forest management unit defined by Forest Management Plan, Plan for Management of Protected Area and Special Plan for Forest Cultivation and Protection. Indicator 1. The goals of forest management are in line with criterion requests and are comprised in the forest management plans or their equivalents. Indicator 2. Quantity and quality of data obtained through regular forest inventory for forest management planning;”
6.2 Management plan		
6.2.1 The standard requires that management plans shall be:		
a) elaborated and periodically updated or continually adjusted;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.1. Forest management is based on permanent inventory cycles, planning, implementation, monitoring and analysis of the management (...). The results from the monitoring and analysis of the management are conducted for period of 10 years and 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. 1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated based on the existing forest legislation Indicator 1. The goals of forest management are in line with criterion requests and are comprised in the forest management plans or their equivalents.”
b) appropriate to the size and use of the forest area;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated based on the existing forest legislation, taking in consideration existing spatial plans, current land use and other relevant



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		documentation for specific area and treating the forest resources in balance with their volume and value, the ownership structure as well the purpose and intensity of their utilization.”
c) based on applicable local, national and international legislation as well as existing land-use or other official plans; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated based on the existing forest legislation, taking in consideration existing spatial plans, current land use and other relevant documentation for specific area”
d) adequately covering forest resources.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.1. Forest inventory and mapping is conducted on appropriate way which reflects the structural elements of the stand, management measures and is in compliance with law regulation. Indicator 2. Quantity and quality of data obtained through regular forest inventory for forest management planning; Indicator 3. Data contained in forest maps; 1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated (...) and treating the forest resources in balance with their volume and value, the ownership structure as well the purpose and intensity of their utilization.”
6.2.2 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated (...) and treating the forest resources in balance with their volume and value, the ownership structure as well the purpose and intensity of their utilization. 3.1.(...) Forest management planning shall also identify all important functions and services of the forest area and to secure that all of these functions will be retained with the forest management activities foreseen.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.1.(...) Forest inventory and mapping is conducted on appropriate way which reflects the structural elements of the stand, management measures and is in compliance with law regulation. Borders of the forest area managed in a sustainable way are clearly defined and mapped. The surface of certified forest area is equal to the area of forest management unit



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		defined by Forest Management Plan, Plan for Management of Protected Area and Special Plan for Forest Cultivation and Protection. Indicator 1. The goals of forest management are in line with criterion requests and are comprised in the forest management plans or their equivalents. Indicator 2. Quantity and quality of data obtained through regular forest inventory for forest management planning; Indicator 3. Data contained in forest maps; 1.3 Forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are aimed towards maintaining of forests and forests lands as well towards improvement of economic, ecological, cultural and social values of the forests, including soil and water protection. 1.4 Indicator 1. Forest classification according to: composition, purposes and management and silviculture methods (ha, map description) applied. 1.4 Indicator 3. Ratio between increment and allowable cut is in function for forest sustainability in quality and quantity and it is comprised in forest management plan, programme for management or in their equivalents. Min. requirement: The allowed cut is not higher than the increment of wood mass, and it is defined in the FMP.
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.1. Commercial and non-commercial utilization of non-timber forest products is regulated and performed under monitoring and control and is in compliance with the regulations. With the aim to secure sustainability in use of non-wood products, forest planning shall determine quantities for commercial use and to guarantee sustainability of species that are collected in nature. Determination of quantities shall be based on sound methodology. Indicator 1. List of product types (from wood, mushrooms, forest fruits, herbs, game, stone and other) considered in FMP and FSPP and their equivalents.
6.2.5 The standard requires that management plans specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation and damage to forest ecosystems.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2. In forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are defined measures for maintenance of health and vitality, minimizing the risk of forest



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		degradation or appearance of damages, as well as measures for eventual revitalization of degraded forest ecosystems. Indicator 1. Selection of protection measures is in function for supporting the health and vitality of forest ecosystems with priority on application of biological measures”
6.2.6 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the results of scientific research.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated based on (....). Results from the recent scientific researches that are relevant and applicable in forest management must be taken in consideration.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.2. A summary of the forest management plan, shall include information on the general objectives and forest management principles, plan for silviculture and protection or their equivalent which contains information about general objectives and forest management principles, forest management measures and location where they will be applied shall be publicly available based on the stakeholders request.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.2. The forest user or forest owner in accordance with national legislation decides what confidential information or information related to sensitive characteristics of the natural resources will not be part of the summary.”
6.3 Compliance requirements		
6.3.1 Legal compliance		
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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.6. The forest owner or user is obliged to identify the relevant legislation related to forest management including elaboration how obligations from relevant legislation apply to the organization and to provide each employee with access to the requested documents”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.		
6.3.1.2 The standard requires that the 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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.6. The forest owner or user (...) as well as to comply with applicable regulations in the field of forestry, trade, nature and environmental protection, ownership, and rights of use of land, health and safety at work, labor law and collective agreement (where applicable and for migrant forest workers and contractors), the fight against corruption, fees and taxes. This includes national regulations and international obligations accepted by the country and by Law on Labor. Guaranteed are rights of the International Labor Organization and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Note: no indigenous people in Republic of Srpska were identified.” <i>Evidence was found (including in the Law on Nature Protection No. 20/14) that legislation on nature protection also includes requirements for protected and endangered species.</i>
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.	N.A.	<i>Anti-corruption legislation exists in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Republic of Srpska (see for instance https://archive.rai-see.org/legislation-bosnia-and-herzegovina-anti-corruption-institutional-framework/) and is applicable for this standard.</i>
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.7. Forest owners or users will implement legal provisions to protect forests from illegal activities and thus ensure the implementation of systemic forest protection. Systematic protection is in accordance with national legislation and ensures the regular functioning of the institutions and bodies responsible for carrying out such activities. Forest owners or users annually monitor, record, investigate and report cases of illegal activities in their forests to institutions responsible for the systematic protection of forests from illegal activities.”
6.3.2 Legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property 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. 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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.3. Property rights and land tenure arrangements are clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. The legal, customary and traditional rights related to forest and forest land are recognized and respected in accordance with national regulations.”
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.	N.A.	<i>It shall be noted that there are no indigenous people in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Republic of Srpska.</i>
6.3.2.3 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall respect human rights as	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
defined by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.		“6.6.(...) This includes national regulations and international obligations accepted by the country. Guaranteed are rights of the International Labor Organization and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”
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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.6.(...) This includes national regulations and international obligations accepted by the country. Guaranteed are rights of the International Labor Organization and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” <i>Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions.</i>
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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.5. Activities in forests are planned, organized and carried out in such a way as to identify possible risks to health and accidents and apply all reasonable measures to protect workers. The owner or user of the forest is obliged to inform all employees about the existence of risks related to their work and to organize and conduct training in occupational safety.”
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 forest operations. Working hours and leave shall comply with national laws or applicable collective agreements.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.5 (...) The owner or user of the forest is obliged to (...) and apply all reasonable measures to protect workers. The owner or user of the forest is obliged to (...) organize and conduct training in occupational safety. Working hours and leave shall comply with national (Republic of Srpska) laws or applicable collective agreements. The owner or user of the forest is obliged to monitor safe working conditions for all employees and contractors. Based on the results of the



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
Note: Guidance for specifying national standards can be obtained from the ILO Code of Good Practice: Safety and Health in Forestry Work.		conducted supervision, the forest owner or user takes measures to improve working conditions, where possible. 6.6 The forest owner or user is obliged to (...) comply with applicable regulations in the field of (...) health and safety at work, labor law (...). This includes national regulations and international obligations accepted by the country.” Labour law of Republica Srpska “Article 57 (1) The full working hours of workers are 40 hours per week. (2) The general act may determine working hours shorter than 40 hours per week, but not shorter than 36 hours per week. Article 58 Part-time work in the sense of this Law means working time shorter than the working time referred to in Article 57, paragraph 1 of this Law. Article 59 (1) Working hours of workers working at workplaces and jobs where, despite the application of appropriate measures and means of protection at work, there is an increased harmful effect of working conditions on workers' health, shall be reduced in proportion to that harmful effect, up to ten hours per week (jobs with increased risk). (2) The ministry in charge of labor shall decide on the reduction of working hours in terms of paragraph 1 of this Article at the request of the employer, interested worker, labor inspector or trade union, based on an expert analysis made by an authorized scientific or professional organization. (3) Working hours referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article and Article 110, paragraph 1 of this Law with regard to workers' rights shall be considered full-time. Article 131 (1) Wage compensation during the use of annual leave, holidays according to the law, temporary incapacity for work due to injury at work or occupational disease, as well as during interruption of work due to failure of employers to take appropriate safety measures at work, is



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		100% the average salary that the worker earned in the corresponding previous period, or from the salary that he would have earned if he had been at work.”
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. 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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.6. The forest owner or user is obliged to (...) comply with applicable regulations in the field of (...) health and safety at work, labor law and collective agreement (where applicable and for migrant forest workers and contractors) (...). This includes national regulations and international obligations accepted by the country and by Law on Labor. Guaranteed are rights of the International Labor Organization and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The forest owner or user and service providers must provide a fair salary to employees at a level that is at least in accordance with the requirements of national legislation.” <i>Evidence was found in the Labor Law that employees also include migrant and contract workers. During the field visit in BiH/RS it became clear that in general the minimum wage in BiH/RS is lower than the living wage. However, this is not the case for the forestry sector. The sector pays comparatively well, because workers in forestry are scarce and are known to work abroad if they are not paid well.</i>
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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.1 (...) For that purpose, the organization compulsory has to prepare statement as a part of internal policy regulation, where: - organization is committed to equal opportunities, prevention for discrimination and harassment at work; - support to gender equality where possible;”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.2 (...) The management of the organization shall define and secure necessary structure among employees and service providers and to have clearly defined responsibilities for implementation of SFM. (...) This includes all resources and documented information to place, implement, maintain, and improve system efficiency.”
7.2 Competence		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.2. (...) 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. Indicator 3. Internal training on requirements for SFM is conducted in a period of 30 days after provision of written instructions. For new employees and service providers, organization is implementing training in a period of 60 days after engagement. For person employed on field works, training is conducted before their engagement on the field.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.1.(...) Effective and continuous communication and consultation with local population and other stakeholders are basic tools for resolving potential complaints in regards to forest management. Indicator 3. Consultative meetings among the forest managers and local community for issues of interest to the local community related to forestry.” <i>It shall be noted that there are no Indigenous peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Republic of Srpska.</i> <i>Observation: clause 6.1 is written as an explanatory note (“are basic tools”), without a clear normative direction. It’s only the indicator that makes the clause normative.</i>
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.1. (...) Effective and continuous communication and consultation with local population and other stakeholders are basic tools for resolving potential complaints in regards to forest management. In cases of dispute forest managers/forest owners shall prescribe mechanism for resolving dispute in effective way. An appropriate mechanisms are in place for resolving complaints and disputes relating to forest management operations, land use rights and work conditions”
7.5 Documented Information		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.2. This includes all resources and documented information to place, implement, maintain and improve system efficiency. Indicator 4. Internal regulation related to keeping records and necessary documentation for maintenance of the system is prepared, including nomination of responsible person.”
7.5.2 The standard requires that the documented information is relevant, and updated as appropriate, to the activities of the organisation.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.2. The organization has to define main responsible person that will prepare and keep records of all the documented information is relevant, and updated as appropriate, to the activities of the organisation.”
8. Operation		
8.1 Criterion 1: Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle		
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3. Forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are aimed towards maintaining of forests and forests lands as well towards improvement of economic, ecological, cultural and social values of the forests, including soil and water protection. (...) Increasing the forest areas through conversion of abandoned agricultural and bare lands into forest land shall be always taken in consideration whenever it enriches economic, long-term conservation and social and/or cultural values.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3. Forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are aimed towards maintaining of forests and forests lands as well towards improvement of economic, ecological, cultural and social values of the forests, including soil and water protection. 1.4 Forest management techniques and practices in the medium and long term shall safeguard the quantity and quality of the forest resources to the level that is economically, ecologically and socially desirable. Maintenance of the balance of the forest resources is secured through application of adequate silviculture measures and techniques for work in forest that minimize direct or indirect damage to forest, soil and water resources.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		3.1. Maintenance of the forests resource capacities for production of timber and non-timber forest products and services is one of the main goals of forest management planning. (...) Forest management planning shall also identify all important functions and services of the forest area and to secure that all of these functions will be retained with the forest management activities foreseen. Indicator 3. Ratio between increment and planned available cut (available quantity for utilization) of wood products is in function for fulfilment of the criterion request.” <i>Observation: no explicit reference is found to safeguard the capacity of the forest to store and sequester carbon. However, it is concluded that the several management techniques and measures will have a positive effect on retaining the forests capacity in storing and sequestering carbon.</i>
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.5. (...) At the same time, where possible, it is mandatory to analyze and apply forest practices that are conducive to climate change, such as reducing greenhouse gases during forest operations in the field or in facilities owned by forest owners or users, including administrative buildings. Indicator 4. Study and internal rulebook for implementation of climate friendly activities on organizational and / or forest management unit level are prepared.”
8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion 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 including consultation with affected stakeholders; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3. Conversion of primary forests to forest plantations is strictly forbidden. It is prohibited to decrease the area of forest and forest land through conversion to other types of land use unless in justified circumstances where the conversion is in compliance with: a) national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management, and is a result of government authorities planning and decision including consultations with materially and directly affected people and organizations” Annex 1 to PEFC National standard for sustainable forest management in Republic of Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina “3.8. Forest plantation



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Forest plantation represents afforested surface of (forest/non forest) land with forest tree species that are distinguished by their ability of fast growing, quality and other characteristics that are viable for intensive growth and use. 3.23. Primary forest Naturally regenerated forest of native species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed. 49. Forest land is a land with forest or a land that based upon its natural characteristics is most suitable for growing forests, as well as land with facilities intended for forest management.” Forest law of Republica Srpska (translated by Google Translate) “Article 7 (1) A forest is a complex community or biogeocenosis (ecosystem) of forest trees and forest land that affects each other, as well as the environment in which they are located. (2) Forests within the meaning of this Law are areas overgrown with forest tree species, on an area larger than 0.16 ha, minimum width 20 meters, with the degree of land cover with tree canopies minimum 20% and higher, regardless whether it is offspring or adult trees either from seeds or shoots from stumps or veins. (3) Forests include areas with a lower degree of coverage on temporarily deforested areas, as a result of natural disasters or human activities (bare felling), where tree growth is expected soon and the degree of land cover with tree canopies at least 20% and more, and all such surfaces are included regardless of the intended use. (4) Forest areas also include forest road areas (with one lane and narrower than five meters wide) if they are located within a forest complex, watercourses of a narrower riverbed of seven meters, then areas of fire and wind protection averages, and windbreaks of wider of 20 meters and a minimum area of 0.16 hectares. (5) For the purposes of this Law, parks, tree lines, orchards, border trees, cemetery trees, etc. are not considered forests. (6) In case of a dispute whether a land overgrown with forest trees is considered a forest, ie whether a land is considered a forest land, the Ministry shall decide.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
b) entails a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area; and	NO	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3 a) (...) and if conversion of forest area is lower than 1%; 4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.” <i>It is insufficiently ensured that the 1% will be of the forest type within the certified area.</i> <i>Furthermore, the requirement for coppice forest is too general. It is unclear whether the law requires conversion to entail only a small proportion of the forest type; else it might also induce misinterpretation / interpretation disputes for conversion of coppice forests, as the relationship between clauses 1.3 and 4.8 is unclear.</i>
c) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and	NO	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3. b) does not have negative impact on the threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species and other protected areas; 4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.” <i>The requirement for coppice forest is too general. It is unclear whether the law requires conversion not to have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; else it might also induce misinterpretation / interpretation disputes for conversion of coppice forests, as the relationship between clauses 1.3 and 4.8 is unclear.</i>
d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and	NO	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3 d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; 4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.” <i>The requirement for coppice forest is too general. It is unclear whether the law requires conversion not to destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; else it might also induce</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<i>misinterpretation / interpretation disputes for conversion of coppice forests, as the relationship between clauses 1.3 and 4.8 is unclear.</i>
e) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.	NO	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3. c) contribute to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits; 4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.” <i>The requirement for coppice forest is too general. It is unclear whether the law requires conversion to make a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits; else it might also induce misinterpretation / interpretation disputes for conversion of coppice forests, as the relationship between clauses 1.3 and 4.8 is unclear.</i>
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.3 (...) In areas where ecologically significant areas that are not forests exist, afforestation shall be implemented if it is in compliance with: a) national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management and it is a result of government authorities planning and decision ; b) it is not in breach with regional/national policy;” <i>Observation: requirement 8.1.5a of the PEFC benchmark standards prescribes that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur, unless in certain justified circumstances. However, requirement 1.3 of PEFC RS/BiH 03:2020 V2 requires that afforestation shall be implemented under certain conditions. Although the outcome is similar, it is remarkable that the standard seems to encourage such conversion, whereas the benchmark standard is discouraging such conversion.</i>
b) is established based on a decision-making basis where affected stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making on conversion	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “c) 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”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
through transparent and participatory consultation processes; and		
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	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “d) 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; does not has negative impact to vulnerable, rare and endangered species that can be found in these areas”
d) entails a small proportion of the ecologically important non-forest ecosystem managed by an organisation; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “e) and in the same time do not take more than 1% of the area of these non-forest important areas”
e) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “e) (...) and do not endanger areas where significant storage of carbon exists.”
f) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “f) make a contribution to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2 Rehabilitation of severely degraded forests by afforestation shall be implemented only by native forest species that are well adapted to the site conditions. In cases of conversion of degraded forests by afforestation or seeding in to forest culture, 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” Annex 1 to PEFC National standard for sustainable forest management in Republic of Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		“3.7. Forest culture represents young forest up to age of 20 years generated by afforestation or seeding on forest land.” Explanation provided by the Council for Sustainable Forest Management in Republic of Srpska / Bosnia and Herzegovina “This is not common forest practice in B&H and that is not applied as forest practice in the country due to intensive field works required and lots of investment for implementation. The work group considered forest plantations as N/A, because forest plantations in (...) national context are seen as not valuable for forest certification. In raising forest plantations, the main objective is to produce wood by fast growth (as using Poplar species) and these forests does not support natural processes as in other forests. For afforestation with native species or other forest species that are well adapted to the site conditions and do not have negative impact on native forest species we use the term “raising of forest cultures” and that fits in to requirements for SFM according to national interpretation. More relevant for this case is to look at the definition of forest culture: Forest culture represents young forest up to age of 20 years generated by afforestation or seeding on forest land. Added in criteria 2.2: Whole chapter 8.1.6 where content of criteria do not use the term “forest plantations” but “forest cultures”.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2 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” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM of BiH/RS under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
c) has a positive impact on long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2 c) has a positive impact on long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM of BiH/RS under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
d) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2 d) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM of BiH/RS under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
e) safeguards protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2 e) safeguards protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM of BiH/RS under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
f) safeguards socio-economic functions of forests, including the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests and other cultural services; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2 f) safeguards socio-economic functions of forests, including the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests and other cultural services; and” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM of BiH/RS under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
g) has a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices; and	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2 g) has a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices; and” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM of BiH/RS under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
h) is based on credible evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2 h) is based on credible evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM of BiH/RS under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.2. In forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are defined measures for maintenance of health and vitality, minimizing the risk of forest degradation or appearance of damages, as well as measures for eventual revitalization of degraded forest ecosystems. Forest management is based on natural processes and in determining the measures to maintain the health of forests primary is taken care for utilization of preventive biological measures in cases where it is feasible and economically justified.”
8.2.2 The standard requires that adequate genetic, species and structural diversity shall be encouraged or maintained to enhance the stability,	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
vitality and resilience of the forests to adverse environmental factors and strengthen natural regulation mechanisms.		“2.2. One of main objectives of forest management is maintenance of genetic, species and structural diversity and with that to contribute to maintenance of health and vitality of forest ecosystems. 4.3 In forest stands where established diversity exists according to species and aged structure, forest management measures are applied with the aim to support their existence as well as in forest stands with recognized values in landscape diversity perspective. In forest stands where diversity of species and age structure is not established, silviculture measures for ensuring their promotion shall be established.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.7. It is not allowed to light a fire in the forest and its vicinity”
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 and transport techniques that minimise tree and/or soil damages shall be applied.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.2. Usage of tools, mechanization and forest technique during activities in harvesting, extraction and transport are conducted with due attention to avoid unnecessary damage to trees remaining in the forest stand, soil and water flows. 4.4. In selection of forest species for afforestation, priority has to be given to native tree species of local provenance and varieties that are well adapted on the habitat conditions. Only provenances and varieties of introduced species may be used if their impact on the ecosystem and genetic integrity of native species is evaluated by independent expert institution and there are not negative impacts.”
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	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.3. During forest harvesting, skidding and transport, the risk of oil spillage is strictly avoided and 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



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
operations shall be prevented. Emergency procedures for the minimisation of risk of environmental harm arising from the accidental spillage shall be in place.		operations shall be prevented. Emergency procedures for the minimisation of risk of environmental harm arising from the accidental spillage shall be in place.”
8.2.6 The standard requires that integrated pest management, appropriate silviculture alternatives and other biological measures shall be preferred to minimise the use of pesticides.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.5. The use of pesticides in forest is minimized and used in cases when application of silvicultural and biological measures is not justified. The application of pesticides is recommended by an expert or relevant institution.”
8.2.7 The standard requires that any use of pesticides is documented.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.5. Indicator 1. Documented utilization of pesticides by type, quantity, treated areas, remaining quantities and storage of chemicals.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.5. It is prohibited usage of pesticides WHO* Type 1A and 1B. In cases where no other viable alternatives are available, type 1A and 1B may be applied on request only with prior written approval by the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Health and Ministry for Environment and Physical Planning.”
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 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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.5. Usage of pesticides such as chlorinated hydrocarbons it is prohibited, as well as any pesticides prohibited with Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.”
8.2.10 The standard requires that the use of pesticides shall follow the instructions given by the	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.5. Usage of pesticides is applied according to the instructions given by the producer and implemented only with proper equipment and persons especially skilled for this purpose.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
pesticide producer and be implemented with proper equipment by trained personnel.		
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.6. Usage of fertilizers in forest is avoided. The fertilizers can be applied only by recommendation of respective institution on controlled and prescribed manner, taking in consideration their influence on the environment.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.1. Maintenance of the forests resource capacities for production of timber and non-timber forest products and services is one of the main goals of forest management planning.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.1. Forest management planning shall provide economic goals of the forest management (...) and 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. The forest structure and its productive capacities are base for determining the economics goals in forest management plans or their equivalents, taking in consideration the current need for different forest products and services and the market flows.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.2. Forest silviculture and regeneration measures are conducted by use of adequate techniques and technologies, in time and manner that support maintenance of productive capabilities of the forest habitat by avoiding un-necessary damage towards remaining forest trees in the stand as well towards soil layer in the forest.”
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	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.1. The level of utilization of the products (timber and non-timber) shall contribute to their long-term sustainability and shall be elaborated in the management plans or their equivalents.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
term, and optimum use shall be made of the harvested products.		Utilization of timber products shall be planned, with due regard to nutrients off-take from the soil at the level of optimum utilization of the products.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.3. 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 in accordance with FMPs and their equivalents ”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.1. Forest management goals shall aim to maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity on ecosystem, species and genetic level and, where is appropriate to reach diversity at landscape level.”
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. Note: This does not prohibit forest management activities that do not damage the important ecologic values of those biotopes.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.1. During forest management planning, inventory and mapping of forests, if ecologically important forest exists, areas will be identified, protected and/or conserved, containing significant concentration of: (a) protected, rare sensitive, intact, or representative forest ecosystems; (b) endangered or protected endemic species and habitats of endangered species, defined and recognized in referent lists; (c) endangered and protected genetic in situ resources, as well as to be taken into account (d) nationally significant, large landscape areas with natural distribution and abundance of naturally occurring species.”
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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.2. Protected and endangered species of forest plants, mushrooms and forest animals shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures is shall be taken for their protection, nursing and increase of their population.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
Note: The requirement does not preclude trade according to CITES requirements.		
8.4.4 The standard requires that successful regeneration shall be ensured through natural regeneration or planting that is adequate to ensure the quantity and quality of the forest resources.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.4. Forest management measures have a goal to ensure successful natural forest regeneration. If this is not possible, afforestation measures shall lead into securing adequate quantity and quality of forest resources in accordance with habitat conditions.”
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. 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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.4. In selection of forest species for afforestation, priority has to be given to native tree species of local provenance and varieties that are well adapted on the habitat conditions. Only provenances and varieties of introduced species may be used if their impact on the ecosystem and genetic integrity of native species is evaluated by independent expert institution and there are not negative impacts. Indicator 2. Selection of measures and species for planting is in line with criterion requirement.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.4. Afforestation and reforestation that contributes to improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity shall be promoted and implemented.”
8.4.7 The standard requires that genetically-modified trees shall not be used. Note: The restriction on the usage of genetically-modified trees has been adopted by the PEFC General Assembly based on the Precautionary	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.4. Forests that were planted with genetically modified trees does not comply for certification. It shall not be allowed to use genetically-modified trees.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.		
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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.3. In forest stands where established diversity exists according to species and aged structure, forest management measures are applied with the aim to support their existence as well as in forest stands with recognized values in landscape diversity perspective. In forest stands where diversity of species and age structure is not established, silviculture measures for ensuring their promotion shall be established.”
8.4.9 The standard requires that traditional management practices that create valuable ecosystems on appropriate sites shall be supported, where appropriate.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.5. Forest silviculture and utilization activities must be conducted on a way that doesn’t cause lasting damage on ecosystems. Wherever is possible, practical measures shall be taken to improve or maintain biological diversity.” <i>Observation: it is assumed that the wording “utilization activities” includes harvesting operations.</i>
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.3. Maintenance of the infrastructure is adequate and according with conditions and needs, with minimal negative impact on environment. Maintenance and drainage of forest roads is conducted according to plans and in accordance with the category of forest road. Therefore, more importance is given in rare, sensitive and representative ecosystems or genetic reserve stands, and on the pathways of migration of key or endangered animal species.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Indicator 1. Plan for construction and maintenance of forest road and other infrastructure with focus on the possible influence on ecosystem and migration corridors.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.6. Forest management measures shall be oriented towards establishing balance between the pressure of animal populations toward regeneration, forest development and biodiversity protection. Indicator 1. Existence of evidence for monitoring on the presence of animal populations and their influence on forest ecosystem and elaboration of preventive and other measures where risks towards forest ecosystem are identified.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “4.7. Standing and fallen dead trees, monumental trees, trees with holes, old trees and rare tree species are left in the stand in quantity and composition necessary for preserving biodiversity, taking in consideration potential impact on health and stability of the forest and neighboring ecosystems. Min. requirements - Minimum 3 trees per hectare according to criterion description are left in the stand. - The wood waste after cutting remains at harvesting area with respect to the provisions for conduction of forest order.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “5.1. Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance protective forest functions, such as erosion protection; wind protection; protection of water resources; protection from harmful effect of water (floods, avalanches); and infrastructure protection. (...) Silviculture and protection measures are adapted to maintain or enhance their protective function.”
8.5.2 The standard requires that areas that fulfil specific and recognised protective functions for society shall be mapped, and forest management	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
plans and operations shall ensure the maintenance or enhancement of these functions.		“5.1. Forest of protective purposes are registered and mapped in Forest Management Plans or their equivalents. Silviculture and protection measures are adapted to maintain or enhance their protective function.”
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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “5.2. In forests exposed to risk from soil erosion, selection and implementation of measures for forest protection and silviculture are in line with their purpose (economic, protective or protected) and are aimed at protection of the soil. 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. (...) Special measures shall be taken to minimise the pressure of animal populations on these areas.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “5.2. In forest with water protection functions, special attention is given to implementation of forest practices in order to avoid negative impact on the water quantity and quality. Inappropriate chemical and harmful substances which has negative impact on the water quality are prohibited for use during activities in forests. In principle, forest management shall at least sustain and where possible aiming to improve identified forest ecosystem services relevant for the forest area.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.3. 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 in accordance with FMPs and their equivalents (...). Natural field configuration is used for avoiding unnecessary removal of soil layer and its spilling in water courses. During the construction of forest infrastructure measures are applied to preserve the natural level and function of water resources. Maintenance of the infrastructure is adequate and according with conditions and needs, with minimal negative impact on environment.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Maintenance and drainage of forest roads is conducted according to plans and in accordance with the category of forest road.”
8.6 Criterion 6: Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of socio-economic functions and conditions		
8.6.1 The standard requires that forest management planning shall aim to respect all socio-economic functions of forests.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Forest management maintains socio-economical forest functions, their contribution to rural development and employment possibilities, community well-being, recreational and esthetic values as well as their positive impact on human health.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.2. Forest are natural good of public interest and all citizens have the right of free access in forests for enjoyment and recreation, on their own responsibility for their safety and with an obligation to respect legal provisions. The free entrance can be limited or prohibited in protected parts of the forests, in forest parts where the human safety is in danger, in period of year of existing threat of forest fires or performance of harvesting, silviculture and forest protection activities. For informing about restriction of free access to forests, all appropriate tools for information are used (local media, municipal info, web-site, info boards on the field).”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Forest sites with recognized historical, cultural or spiritual values and forest areas that essential for satisfying basic needs of local communities are managed with due attention, precaution and respect towards significance of that area.”
8.6.4 The standard requires that management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the forest management area, where appropriate supported by engagement with local communities and indigenous peoples.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Procedures for improved access to the forest products and services for communities living in forest areas shall be analysed and simplified.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.4. Where relevant, local forest knowledge and experience are applied to improve sustainable forest management. In cases when certain knowledge, practice, new approach or innovation comes from another stakeholder and contributes to the benefit of forest user / owner, they shall propose mechanism for sharing the benefit with the stakeholder.”
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 indigenous peoples.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Forest management shall consider its positive impact to local economy including opportunities for employment of local population and cooperation with local service providers. Indicator 1. When labor force has to be engaged, priority is given to inhabitants from the rural municipalities from forest area.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.4. At the request of relevant institutions and organizations, forest users and owners, within their capabilities, contribute to research activities and the collection of data needed to support research activities.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “1.1. (...) 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.”
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	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “2.1. Health and vitality of forest is followed by permanent monitoring on the key biotic and abiotic factors and their influence on forests The monitoring is conducted by professional institutions on annual basis in accordance with the national legislation. Monitoring shall be



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
ecosystems, such as pests, diseases, overgrazing and overstocking, fire, and damage caused by climatic factors, air pollutants or by forest management operations.		conducted by forest managers and forest owners on annual basis. (...) naturally and regular occurrence of forest fires, forest pests and other factors that disrupt the stability of forest ecosystems is taken in consideration.”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “3.1. Commercial and non-commercial utilization of non-timber forest products is regulated and performed under monitoring and control and is in compliance with the regulations. With aim to secure sustainability in use of non wood products, forest planning shall determine quantities for commercial use and to guarantee sustainability of species that are collected in nature.”
9.1.4 The standard requires that working conditions shall be regularly monitored and adapted as necessary.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “6.5. The owner or user of the forest is obliged to monitor safe working conditions for all employees and contractors. Based on the results of the conducted supervision, the forest owner or user takes measures to improve working conditions, where possible. Indicator 8. Existence of analysis for possible improvement of working conditions per year.”
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 • the organisation’s requirements for its management system; • the requirements of the national sustainable forest management standard	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.3. The organization shall organize and implement programme for annual internal control with aim to confirm if forest management is: a) in accordance with standard requirements and internal regulations;”
b) is effectively implemented and maintained.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.3. The organization shall organize and implement programme for annual internal control with aim to confirm if forest management is: b) effectively conducted and maintained;”
9.2.2 Organisation		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.3. The organization shall plan, organize and implement annual internal control programme (...) The programme for internal control is composed of: a) plan for implementation, frequency, methods, responsible person and reporting; (...) This programme shall take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous audits.”
b) define the audit criteria and scope for each audit;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “b) the scope and criteria defined for each control;
c) select the auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “c) selection of appropriate auditors by check of their qualifications d) definition of implementing procedures including part to secure objectivity and impartiality of the process;
d) ensure that the results of the audits are reported to relevant management;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “e) reporting on the results from the implemented internal control to the relevant management; ”
e) retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “e) reporting on the results from the implemented internal control to the relevant management; f) definition of records keeping procedures; Indicator 2. Existence of annual reports for implemented internal control and results from it.”
9.3 Management review		
9.3.1 The standard requires that an annual management review shall at least include		
a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.5. (...) the organization conducts an annual management audit (...). The management audit must include: a) status of implemented activities from previous revision.”
b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		“7.5. (...) the organization conducts an annual management audit (...). The management audit must include: b) changes in external or internal factors that are relevant for the management system;”
c) information on the organisation’s performance, including trends in: • nonconformities and corrective actions; • monitoring and measurement results; • audit results;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.5. (...) the organization conducts an annual management audit (...). The management audit must include: c) information on the quality of the management that includes: • identified non compliances and corrective measures taken; • results from implemented monitoring and evaluation; • results from internal and external controls;”
d) opportunities for continual improvement	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.5. (...) the organization conducts an annual management audit (...). The management audit must include: • opportunities for continuous improvement;”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.5. Results from the management revision and the outputs of the management review shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the management system.”
9.3.3 The standard requires that documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews shall be retained.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.5. All reports from the management revision shall be archived and available on request.”
10. Improvement		
10.1 Nonconformity and corrective action		
10.1.1 The standard requires that when a nonconformity occurs, the organisation shall:		
a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: i. take action to control and correct it; ii. deal with the consequences;	NO	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.4. As part of internal regulation, the organization shall prepare procedures to deal with non-conformities in written. As part of it, the content shall provide:



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		a) the way organization reacts if non conformity appears; b) description of corrective actions and the ways to deal with the consequences;" <i>The clause requires forest management to prepare procedures which include description of corrective actions and ways to respond to non-conformities. However, the PEFC benchmark requires the Scheme to develop this, not the organisation. From the standard it must be clear that organisation shall react, take action and deal with the consequences when a nonconformity is raised.</i>
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 "7.4. the organization shall prepare complaint and appeal procedures (...) the content shall provide: c) instructions to investigate the cause for non compliances and proposal to take eventual measures to remove the cause and potential recurrence of non compliance; d) determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur;"
c) implement any action needed;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 "7.4. the organization shall prepare complaint and appeal procedures (...) the content shall provide: c) instructions to take corrective measures that are in line with the level of identified non compliance"
d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 "7.4. the organization shall prepare complaint and appeal procedures (...) the content shall provide: c) instructions to take corrective measures that are in line with the level of identified non compliance and revision of efficiency of the measures;"
e) make changes to the management system, if necessary.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 "7.4. the organization shall prepare complaint and appeal procedures (...) the content shall provide: d) instructions for changes in the management system if that prove as necessary."



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
10.1.2 The standard requires that corrective actions shall be appropriate to the effects of the nonconformities encountered.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.4. the organization shall prepare complaint and appeal procedures (...) the content shall provide: c) instructions to take corrective measures that are in line with the level of identified non compliance”
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	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.4. All information that relates to appearance of non compliance and corrective measures taken and results from corrective measures shall be documented and archived.”
b) the results of any corrective action.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.4. All information that relates to appearance of non compliance and corrective measures taken and results from corrective measures shall be documented and archived.”
10.2 Continual improvement 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.	YES	PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020 V2 “7.1. Indicator 1. The established system for SFM is efficient, well elaborated and understood among employees, is regularly monitored and improved where possible.”



Part IIIB: PEFC Checklist for Sustainable Forest Management – North Macedonia

1 Scope

Part III covers requirements for sustainable forest management as defined in PEFC ST 1003:2018, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements.

2 Checklist

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 forest management 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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. This standard is applicable at the forest management unit level, or at another level as appropriate (programme for management of forests with size of 10-30 ha, book for evidence in cadaster parcel of forest in private ownership with size up to 10 ha). Forest managers and forest owners are responsible to ensure full compliance to forest management standard including activities that are conducted by contracted forest operators in certified forest area.”
b) be clear, performance based and auditable;	YES	<i>The standard and requirements are clearly structured, performance based and auditable. One general observation is made: the use of the English language is not always clear. There are various spelling mistakes, incorrect use of grammar and words</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
c) apply to activities of all forest operators in the defined forest area who have an impact on achieving compliance with the requirements;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. Forest managers and forest owners are responsible to ensure full compliance to forest management standard including activities that are conducted by contracted forest operators in certified forest area.”
d) require record-keeping that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the forest management standards;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. Forest managers and forest owners shall secure record-keeping procedures that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of this Standard. Minimum period for keeping records and documents that are relevant as evidence is 5 (five) years.”
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 .	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. Only products that are generating from certified forest according to requirements of this Standard shall use the claim “100% PEFC certified”.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. Only products that are generating from certified forest according to requirements of this Standard shall use the claim “100% PEFC certified”.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. (...) This claim shall be used only by forest managers and forest owners with valid PEFC certificate issued by accredited Certification Body.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
h) specify requirements concerning the information which need to be provided to a PEFC chain of custody certified customer;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. (...) When forest managers/owners are selling forest products with PEFC claim “100% PEFC certified”, to secure proper information for input material, following information shall be provided to customers: a) supplier identification, b) product identification, c) quantity of products, d) delivery identification based on date of delivery, delivery period, or accounting period, e) the organisation’s name as the PEFC customer of the delivery, f) the claim “100% PEFC certified” specifically for each claimed product covered by the documentation, g) the certificate number of the supplier’s PEFC recognised certificate.”
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.	N.A.	<i>No overview of applicable legislation is found for requirements of the benchmark which are not reflected in the standard because they are already addressed through the legislation. It is assumed that all requirements of the benchmark are met through the requirements in PEFC MK 03:2020 V2. Nevertheless, the standard provides reference to relevant laws under each criterion (when applicable).</i>
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. Forest managers and forest owners shall determine: a) the affected stakeholders that are relevant to the sustainable forest management;”
b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders;”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. Forest managers and forest owners shall determine: c) determine the boundaries and applicability of the management system to establish its scope;”
4.3.2 The standard requires that forest management shall comprise the cycle of inventory and planning, implementation, monitoring and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.1. Forest management is based on permanent inventory cycles, planning, implementation, monitoring and analysis of the management taking in consideration economical, ecological and



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.		social influence of forest management with aim to avoid unnecessary negative impacts. The results from the monitoring and analysis of the management are conducted for period of 10 years and 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. These results shall provide basis for assessment on the social, environmental and economic impact of the forest management and used for the new planning cycle.” <i>Observation: although monitoring and analysis of management are conducted each 10 years (and thus form a cycle), the length of this cycle is considered quite long to allow for adequate response in the meantime, especially when forest operations are adjusted compared to what was planned initially.</i>
5. Leadership		
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.1.(...) The organizational management fully understand requirements of all forest certification system and for SFM and demonstrate its commitment for compliance with requirements for SFM. For that purpose, the organization compulsory has to prepare statement as a part of internal policy regulation, where: - organization declares its commitment to fulfill requirements of the FC system; - organization declares its commitment to fulfill requirements for SFM; - organization declares its commitment to implement regular monitoring on implementation of requirements for SFM and improvement where is possible; - organization is committed to equal opportunities, prevention for discrimination and harassment on work; - support to gender equal wrights where possible;”
b) to continuously improve the sustainable forest management system.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.1.(...) For that purpose, the organization compulsory has to prepare statement as a part of internal policy regulation, where:



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		- organization declares its commitment to implement regular monitoring on implementation of requirements for SFM and improvement where is possible;"
5.2 The standard requires that this commitment shall be publicly available.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "7.1.(...) The statement shall be publicly available, while employees are familiar with the content and understand their role in commitment of the organization."
5.3 The standard requires that responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "7.2.(...) The management of the organization shall define and secure necessary structure among employees and service providers and to have clearly defined responsibilities for implementation of SFM. Update on the roles of all persons in the system shall be implemented on annual level through written instructions and training provision. This includes all resources and documented information to place, implement, maintain, and improve system efficiency. The organization has to define main responsible person that will prepare and keep records of all the documented information is relevant, and updated as appropriate, to the activities of the organisation."
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "7.2.(...) Forest managers that are managing forest area bigger than 3.000 ha shall conduct analyze on the threats and opportunities for compliance with standard requirements and measures for risk mitigation. Forest manager and owners that manage forest area smaller of 3.000 ha shall at least prepare list for current threats for SFM."
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "1.1. The results from the monitoring and analysis of the management are conducted for period of 10 years and 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. Forest inventory and mapping is conducted on appropriate way which reflects the structural elements of the stand, management measures and is in compliance with law regulation. Borders of forest area managed on sustainable way are clearly defined and mapped. The surface of certified forest area is equal to the area of forest management unit



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		defined by Forest Management Plan, Plan for Management with Protected Area, Plan for Forest Silviculture and Protection. For forests that are of smaller area, in use are equivalent documents (programme for management of forests with size of 10-30 ha, book for evidence in cadaster parcel of forest in private ownership with size up to 10 ha). Indicator 1. The goals of forest management are in line with criterion requirement and are comprised in the FMP, PFSP or their equivalents. Indicator 2. Quantity and quality of data obtained through regular forest inventory provides all information and data in compliance with criterion and are in use for forest management planning according to FMP, PFSP;”
6.2 Management plan		
6.2.1 The standard requires that management plans shall be:		
a) elaborated and periodically updated or continually adjusted;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.1. Forest management is based on permanent inventory cycles, planning, implementation, monitoring and analysis of the management (...). The results from the monitoring and analysis of the management are conducted for period of 10 years. (note: FMP by the law are regularly updated after 10 years). 1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated based on the existing forest legislation (...) Indicator 1. The Content of the FMP and the PFSP and their equivalents comprised all aspects that are subject of the criterion requirements.”
b) appropriate to the size and use of the forest area;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated based on the existing forest legislation, taking in consideration existing spatial plans, current land use and other relevant documentation for specific area and treating the forest resources in balance with their volume and value, the ownership structure as well the purpose and intensity of their utilization.”
c) based on applicable local, national and international legislation as well as existing land-use or other official plans; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated based on the existing forest legislation, taking in consideration existing spatial plans, current land use and other relevant documentation for specific area”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) adequately covering forest resources.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.1. Forest inventory and mapping is conducted on appropriate way which reflects the structural elements of the stand, management measures and is in compliance with law regulation. Indicator 2. Quantity and quality of data obtained through regular forest inventory provides all information and data in compliance with criterion and are in use for forest management planning according to FMP, PFSP; Indicator 3. Data contained in forest maps provides all information and data in compliance with criterion and FMP, PFSP; 1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated (...) and treating the forest resources in balance with their volume and value, the ownership structure as well the purpose and intensity of their utilization.”
6.2.2 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated (...) and treating the forest resources in balance with their volume and value, the ownership structure as well the purpose and intensity of their utilization. 3.1.(...) Forest management planning shall also identify all important functions and services of the forest area and to secure that all of these functions will be retained with the forest management activities foreseen.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.1. (...) Forest inventory and mapping is conducted on appropriate way which reflects the structural elements of the stand, management measures and is in compliance with law regulation. Borders of forest area managed on sustainable way are clearly defined and mapped. The surface of certified forest area is equal to the area of forest management unit defined by Forest Management Plan, Plan for Management with Protected Area, Plan for Forest Silviculture and Protection. Indicator 1. The goals of forest management are in line with criterion requirement and are comprised in the FMP, PFSP or their equivalents.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Indicator 2. Quantity and quality of data obtained through regular forest inventory provides all information and data in compliance with criterion and are in use for forest management planning according to FMP, PFSP; Indicator 3. Data contained in forest maps provides all information and data in compliance with criterion and FMP, PFSP; 1.3. Forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are aimed towards maintaining of forests and forests lands as well towards improvement of economic, ecological, cultural and social values of the forests, including soil and water protection. 1.4. Indicator 1. Forest classification according to: composition, designation and management and silviculture methods (ha, map description) applied. 1.4. Indicator 3. Ratio between increment and allowable cut is in function for forest sustainability in quality and quantity and is comprised in forest management plan, programme for management or in their equivalents. Min. requirement: Allowable cut is not higher than 80% from the increment. 3.1. Forest management planning shall provide economic goals of the forest management with observation on annual basis. Indicator 3. Ratio between increment and planned available cut (available quantity for utilization) of wood products is in function for fulfilment of the criterion request.
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.1. Commercial and non-commercial utilization of non-timber forest products is regulated and performed under monitoring and control and is in compliance with the regulations. With aim to secure sustainability in use of non wood products, forest planning shall determine quantities for commercial use and to guarantee sustainability of species that are collected in nature. Determination of quantities shall be based on sound methodology. Indicator 1. List of product types (from wood, mushrooms, forest fruits, herbs, game, stone and other) and annual/periodic quantities for use considered in FMP and FSPP and their equivalents.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
6.2.5 The standard requires that management plans specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation and damage to forest ecosystems.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2. In forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are defined measures for maintenance of health and vitality, minimizing the risk of forest degradation or appearance of damages, as well as measures for eventual revitalization of degraded forest ecosystems. Indicator 1. Selection of protection measures is in function for supporting the health and vitality of forest ecosystems with priority on application of biological measures.”
6.2.6 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the results of scientific research.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.2. Management plans or their equivalents are elaborated based on (...). Results from the recent scientific researches that are relevant and applicable in forest management are compulsory taken in consideration.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.2. A summary of the forest management plan (...), plan for silviculture and protection or their equivalent which contains information about general objectives and forest management principles, forest management measures and location where they will be applied shall be publicly available.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.2. The forest user / forest owner in accordance with national legislation decides what confidential information or information related to sensitive characteristics of the natural resources will not be part of the summary.”
6.3 Compliance requirements		
6.3.1 Legal compliance		
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	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
how these compliance obligations apply to the organisation. 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.		“6.6. Forest manager/owner shall identify relevant legislation related to forest management including elaboration how obligations from relevant legislation apply to the organisation and to provide access for all employees (...)”
6.3.1.2 The standard requires that the 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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.6 Forest manager/owner shall (...) as well to comply with legislation related to forestry, trade, nature and environment conservation; ownership and land tenure rights; occupational health and safety; labor law, and collective agreement (where is applicable), anticorruption, payment of fees, royalties and taxes. That includes national legislation and and international agreements accepted by the country. Note: no indigenous people in North Macedonia were identified.” Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “The Law on Nature conservation (67/04) in Macedonia includes protected and endangered species (articles 23, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 41, 47, 49, 182, 188). Reference on the red list of endangered species: http://redlist.moepp.gov.mk/ <i>Evidence was found that the Macedonian Law on Nature Conservation also includes legislation on protected and endangered species.</i>
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.	N.A.	<i>Anti-corruption legislation exists in North Macedonia (see for instance https://rai-see.org/learning-hub/mapping-anti-corruption-in-see/north-macedonia/legislation-macedonia-anti-corruption-institutional-framework/) and is applicable for this standard.</i>
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.7. Forest managers shall implement all legal provisions for protection of the forests from illegal activities and with that to ensure the implementation of systemic protection of forest. Systematic protection of forests is secured by the national legislation and is applied by regular functioning of institutions and bodies responsible for carrying out such kind of activities. On



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		annual basis, forest owners shall monitor, record, investigate and report cases of illegal acts at their forests to institutions responsible for systematic protection of forests from illegal activities.”
6.3.2 Legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land		
6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property 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. 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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.3. Property rights and land tenure arrangements are clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. The legal, customary and traditional rights related to forest and forest land are recognized and respected in accordance with national regulations.”
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	N.A.	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.3. The activities undertaken in forest management respects legal rights, while customary and traditional rights are respected up to level that is not conflicting with national regulation. Note: UN Declaration for the rights of indigenous people is not applicable for Macedonia.” <i>It shall be noted that there are no indigenous people in North Macedonia.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
out in the policies and laws where the certification takes place.		
6.3.2.3 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall respect human rights as defined by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.6.(...) That includes national legislation and and international agreements accepted by the country. Fundamental rights of ILO and UN Declaration of Human Rights are integral part of this criterion.”
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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.6.(...) That includes national legislation and and international agreements accepted by the country. Fundamental rights of ILO and UN Declaration of Human Rights are integral part of this criterion.” <i>North Macedonia has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions.</i>
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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.5. Forest management activities shall be planned, organized and applied on the way that identify all possible risks for health and accidents and at the same time taking all resonable measures to protect forest workers. The forest manager/owner shall inform all employees and service provider’s staff about existence of the risks that are attached to their working position and to organize and conduct training for safety measures at work.”
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	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.5. Forest management activities shall (...) and at the same time taking all resonable measures to protect forest workers. The forest manager/owner shall (...) organize and conduct



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
those assigned to a task in forest operations. Working hours and leave shall comply with national laws or applicable collective agreements. Note: Guidance for specifying national standards can be obtained from the ILO Code of Good Practice: Safety and Health in Forestry Work.		training for safety measures at work. The forest manager/owner shall organize regular monitoring on safety conditions on work for all employees and service providers. Based on results from the monitoring, forest manager/owner shall take measures for improvement of working conditions where is possible.” 6.6 Forest manager/owner shall (...) comply with legislation related to (...) occupational health and safety; labor law and collective agreement (where is applicable) (...). That includes national legislation and and international agreements accepted by the country.” Explanation provided by the Council for SFM “Note: the Law on labour relations regulates working hours and leave, articles 116 to 131 and 139 to 150.” <i>Evidence is found that the Macedonian labour regulations law also regulates working hours and leave.</i>
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. 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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2. Forest managers and forest owners are responsible to ensure full compliance to forest management standard including activities that are conducted by contracted forest operators in certified forest area. 6.6. Forest manager/owner shall (...) comply with legislation related to (...) occupational health and safety; labor law and collective agreement (where is applicable) (...). That includes national legislation and and international agreements accepted by the country. Fundamental rights of ILO and UN Declaration of Human Rights are integral part of this criterion. Forest manager/owner and service providers as well shall provide fair salaries for the employees and engaged forest workers on level that is at minimum in accordance with the national legislation.” Labour regulations law “Article 4 Application of the law (1) The present law shall apply to labour relations between employers established or residing in the Republic of Macedonia and their employees when they continually pursue the activity on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as in cases when the employer temporarily assigns the employees to work abroad. Article 5 Definitions 2. "Employee" shall mean any natural person who has established a labour relation by virtue of entering into an employment contract;



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		3. „Fixed term employee" shall mean a person with employment contract entered into directly between the employer and the employee, where the termination of the employment contract is defined by the fulfilment of objective conditions and the arrival of a specific date, completion of a specific task or the occurrence of a specific event; 4. "Permanent employee" shall mean a person who has entered into an employment contract for an indefinite period of time; 5. "Assigned employee" shall mean an employee who has been temporarily assigned to work on the territory of a member state other than the state where the person has regular employment. <i>The Council for SFM explained that the minimum wage in MK is lower than the living wage in the country, especially in urban areas. However, this is not the case for the forestry sector. The sector pays comparatively well, because workers in forestry are scarce and are known to work abroad if they are not paid well.</i>
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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.1 For that purpose, the organization compulsory has to prepare statement as a part of internal policy regulation, where: - organization is committed to equal opportunities, prevention for discrimination and harassment on work; - support to gender equal wrights where possible;”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.2.(...) The management of the organization shall define and secure necessary structure among employees and service providers and to have clear defined resssponsibilities for implementation of SFM. (...) This includes all resources and documented information to place, implement, maintain and improve system efficiency.”
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-	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
date through continuous training in relation to sustainable forest management, as a precondition for all management planning and practices described in this benchmark.		“7.2. The expert and technical staff employed in organization, service providers and forest owners shall possess all relevant information related to implementation of SFM. Based on that precondition, forest managers / owners shall prepare and implement training for employees and service providers in forest operations as precondition to comply with requirements of the standard. Indicator 3. Internal training on requirements for SFM is conducted in a period of 30 days after provision of written instructions. For new employees and service providers, organization is implementing training in a period of 60 days after engagement. For person employed on field works, training is conducted before their engagement on the field.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.1.(...) Effective and continuous communication and consultation with local population and other stakeholders shall be maintained and are basic tools for resolving potential appeals and complaints in regards to forest management. Indicator 3. Consultative meetings among the forest managers and local community for issues of interest to the local community related to forest management are regularly organized. <i>It shall be noted that there are no Indigenous peoples in North Macedonia.</i> <i>Observation: clause 6.1 is written as an explanatory note (“are basic tools”), without a clear normative direction. It’s only the indicator that makes the clause normative.</i>
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.1.(...) Effective and continuous communication and consultation with local population and other stakeholders shall be maintained and are basic tools for resolving potential appeals and complaints in regards to forest management. In cases when consultations will not resolve the cases of appeals and complaints, forest managers/forest owners shall make use of prescribed mechanism for resolving disputes in effective way. Indicator 6. Appeals and complaints procedures available.
7.5 Documented Information		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.2. This includes all resources and documented information to place, implement, maintain and improve system efficiency. Indicator 4. Internal regulation related to keeping records and necessary documentation for maintenance of the system is prepared, including nomination of responsible person.
7.5.2 The standard requires that the documented information is relevant, and updated as appropriate, to the activities of the organisation.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.2. The organization has to define main responsible person that will prepare and keep records of all relevant and updated information related to activities implemented by the organization.
8. Operation		
8.1 Criterion 1: Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle		
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.3. Forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are aimed towards maintaining of forests and forests lands as well towards improvement of economic, ecological, cultural and social values of the forests, including soil and water protection. The objectives shall be achieved by use of appropriate means and are focused towards nature protection.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.3. Forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are aimed towards maintaining of forests and forests lands as well towards improvement of economic, ecological, cultural and social values of the forests, including soil and water protection. 1.4. Forest management techniques and practices in the medium and long term shall safeguard the quantity and quality of the forest resources to the level that is economically, ecologically and socially desirable. Maintenance of the balance of the forest resources is secured through application of adequate silviculture measures and techniques for work in forest that minimize direct or indirect damage to forest, soil and water resources. 3.1. Maintenance of the forests resource capacities for production of timber and non-timber forest products and services is one of the main goals of forest management planning. (...)”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Forest management planning shall also identify all important functions and services of the forest area and to secure that all of these functions will be retained with the forest management activities foreseen. Indicator 2. Identified services and functions from the forest (recreation, sport, landscape, tourism, culture, water retention, soil protection, carbon storage) identified in FMP and FSPP and their equivalents. Indicator 3. Ratio between increment and planned available cut (available quantity for utilization) of wood products is in function for fulfilment of the criterion request.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.5. Where possible, it is compulsory to analyze and implement forest practice friendly to climate changes, as well as reduction of green house gasses during implementation of forest activities on the field or at facilities that belongs to forest managers or owners, including administrative buildings. Indicator 4. Study and internal rulebook for implementation of climate friendly activities on organizational and / or forest management unit level are prepared.”
8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion 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 including consultation with affected stakeholders; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.3. It is prohibited to decrease the area of forest and forest land through conversion to other types of land use, including conversion of primary forests to forest plantation unless in justified circumstances where the conversion is in compliance with: a) national legislation relevant for land use and is a result of government authorities planning and decision including consultations with materially and directly affected people and organizations (...)” Annex 1 to PEFC National standard for sustainable forest management in North Macedonia “3.8 Forest plantation represents afforested surface of (forest/non forest) land with forest tree species that are distinguished by their ability of fast growing, quality and other characteristics that are viable for intensive growth and use.” 3.23. Primary forest



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Naturally regenerated forest of native species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed.” Macedonian Law on Forests “Article 6 (1) Forest, in the sense of this Law, is a forest ecosystem that exists on forest land overgrown with forest species of trees and shrubs, bare land adjacent to the forest, as well as other bare land and meadows inside the forest, forest nurseries, forest roads, seed plantations, forest fire belts, windbreaks over an area of more than two acres, as well as forests in protected areas. A forest also consists of young stands and forest cultures with an area of more than two acres, as well as areas that are an integral part of the forest, and are temporarily unforested as a result of human impact or natural disasters on which natural regeneration has begun. (2) Forest does not mean separate groups of trees and an area of less than two acres, border trees between agricultural land, plantations of fast-growing tree species, as well as coastal vegetation outside the forest, tree lines and parks in settlements.”
b) entails a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area; and	NO	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “a) (...) and if conversion of forest area is lower of 1%,” <i>It is insufficiently ensured that the 1% will be of the forest type within the certified area.</i>
c) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “b) does not have negative impact on the threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species and other protected areas;”
d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock;
e) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “c) contribute to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits;”
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	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority; and		“1.3 (...) In areas where ecologically significant areas that are not forests exists, afforestation shall be implemented if: a) it is in compliance with national legislation and is part of planning processes; b) it is not in breach with regional/national policy; <i>Observation: requirement 8.1.5a of the PEFC benchmark standards prescribes that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur, unless in certain justified circumstances. However, requirement 1.3 of PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 requires that afforestation shall be implemented under certain conditions. Although the outcome is similar, it is remarkable that the standard seems to encourage such conversion, whereas the benchmark standard is discouraging such conversion.</i>
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “c) 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;”
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	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “d) 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;
d) entails a small proportion of the ecologically important non-forest ecosystem managed by an organisation; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.3 (...) in the same time do not take more than 1% of the area of these non forest important areas (...)”
e) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.3 (...) and do not endanger areas where significant storage of carbon exists.”
f) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.	NO	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.3. Increasing the forest areas through conversion of abandoned agricultural and bare lands into forest land shall be always taken in consideration whenever it enrich economic, long-term conservation and social and/or cultural values.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<i>It is not ensured that afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems shall not occur unless it makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits. it is insufficiently ensured that 1.3 also covers all types of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems</i>
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2 Rehabilitation of severely degraded forests by afforestation shall be implemented only by native forest species that are well adapted to the site conditions. In cases of conversion of degraded forests by afforestation or seeding in to forest culture, 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;” PEFC MK 03:2020 V2, Annex I “3.7. Forest culture Forest culture represents young forest up to age of 20 years generated by afforestation or seeding on forest land. 3.8. Forest plantation Forest plantation represents afforested surface of (forest/non forest) land with forest tree species that are distinguished by their ability of fast growing, quality and other characteristics that are viable for intensive growth and use.” Explanation provided by the Council for SFM The work group considered forest plantations as N/A, because forest plantations in Macedonian national context are seen as not valuable for forest certification. In raising forest plantations, the main objective is to produce wood by fast growth (as using Poplar species) and these forests does not support natural processes as in other forests. For afforestation with native species or other forest species that are well adapted to the site conditions and do not have negative impact



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		on native forest species we use the term “raising of forest cultures” and that fits in to requirements for SFM according to national interpretation. More relevant for this case is to look at the definition of forest culture: Forest culture represents young forest up to age of 20 years generated by afforestation or seeding on forest land. In addition to this explanation, according to article 6 from the Law on forests, plantations of fast growing species are not considered as forests.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2 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” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
c) has a positive impact on long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2 c) has a positive impact on long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
d) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2 d) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
e) safeguards protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2 e) safeguards protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
f) safeguards socio-economic functions of forests, including the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests and other cultural services; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.2 f) safeguards socio-economic functions of forests, including the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests and other cultural services; and” <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM under 8.1.6 (a)</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
g) has a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices; and	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "2.2 g) has a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices; and" <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
h) is based on credible evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "2.2 h) is based on credible evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery." <i>See also explanation of the Council for SFM under 8.1.6 (a)</i>
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "2.2. In forest management plans, plans for silviculture and protection or their equivalents are defined measures for maintenance of health and vitality, minimizing the risk of forest degradation or appearance of damages, as well as measures for eventual revitalization of degraded forest ecosystems. Forest management is based on natural processes and in determining the measures to maintain the health of forests primary is taken care for utilization of preventive biological measures in cases where it is feasible and economically justified."
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "2.2. One of main objectives of forest management is maintenance of genetic, species and structural diversity and with that to contribute to maintenance of health and vitality of forest ecosystems. 4.3 In forest stands where diversity by species and age structure is established, forest management measures are applied with aim to support their existence as well as in forest stands with recognized values in landscape diversity perspective. In forest stands where diversity of species and age structure is not established, silviculture measures for ensuring their promotion shall be established."
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	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "2.4. It is not allowed starting the fire in forest."



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
recognized practice of indigenous peoples. In these cases adequate management and control measures shall be taken.		
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 and transport techniques that minimise tree and/or soil damages shall be applied.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.2. Usage of tools, mechanization and forest technique during activities in harvesting, extraction and transport are conducted with due attention to avoid unnecessary damage to trees remaining in the forest stand, soil and water flows. Activities are conducted according to provisions of operational plans, while their content depends on the size of the forest property. 4.4. In selection of forest species for afforestation, priority has to be given to native tree species of local provenance that are well adapted on the habitat conditions. Only provenances and varieties of introduced species may be used if their impact on the ecosystem and genetic integrity of native species is evaluated by independent expert institution and there are not negative impacts.”
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.	NO	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.3. During forest harvesting, skidding and transport in forests, the risk of oil spillage is strictly avoided and indiscriminate disposal of waste. Non-organic waste is collected (...) stored (...) and later on disposed on locations designated for that purpose. Indicators Indicator 1. Prescribed rules and measures for minimizing the risk of oil spillage and waste disposal are provided to conductors of forest operations and are implemented. Indicator 3. The existence of materials and absorbents for oil in the cutting area and in the forest machinery that is in use in forest operations.” <i>The references include rules and measures meant to minimize the risk of oil spillage and waste disposal, however, the clause makes no mention of emergency measures for when spillage has already taken place.</i>
8.2.6 The standard requires that integrated pest management, appropriate silviculture alternatives and other biological measures shall be preferred to minimise the use of pesticides.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.5. The use of pesticides in forest is minimized and used in cases when application of silvicultural and biological measures is not justified. The application of pesticides is recommended by an expert or relevant institution”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
8.2.7 The standard requires that any use of pesticides is documented.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.5. Indicator 1. Documented utilization of pesticides by type, quantity, treated areas, remaining quantities and storage of chemicals.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.5. It is prohibited usage of pesticides WHO* Type 1A and 1B. In cases where no other viable alternatives are available, type 1A and 1B may be applied on request only with prior written approval by the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Health and Ministry for Environment and Physical Planning.”
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 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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.5. Usage of pesticides such as chlorinated hydrocarbons it is prohibited, as well as any pesticides prohibited with 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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.5. Usage of pesticides is applied according to the instructions given by the producer and implemented only with proper equipment and persons specially skilled for this purpose.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.6. Usage of fertilizers in forest is avoided. The fertilizers can be applied only by recommendation of respective institution on controlled and prescribed manner, taking in consideration their influence on the environment.”
8.3 Criterion 3: Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood)		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.1. Maintenance of the forests resource capacities for production of timber and non-timber forest products and services is one of the main goals of forest management planning.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.1. Forest management planning shall provide economic goals of the forest management (...). This includes establishment of thresholds and their monitoring to properly assess if economic performance of the forest manager/owner is applied. The forest structure and its productive capacities are base for determining the economics goals in forest management plans or their equivalents, taking in consideration the current need for different forest products and services and the market flows.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.2. Forest silviculture and regeneration measures are conducted by use of adequate techniques and technologies, in time and manner that support maintenance of productive capabilities of the forest habitat by avoiding un-necessary damage towards remaining forest trees in the stand as well towards soil layer in the forest.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.1. The level of utilization of the products (timber and non-timber) shall contribute to their long-term sustainability and shall be elaborated in the management plans or their equivalents. Utilization of timber products shall be planned with due regard to nutrients off-take from the soil at the level of optimum utilization of the products.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.3. Construction of forest infrastructure (roads for transport and skidding, bridges and other objects) is performed in accordance with FMPs and their equivalents, including plans for development and establishment of forest infrastructure. (...) During the construction of forest infrastructure measures are applied that preserves the natural level and function of water resources. Maintenance of the infrastructure is adequate and (...) with minimal negative impact



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		on environment. Maintenance and drainage of forest roads is conducted according to plans and in accordance with the category of forest road.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.1. Forest management goals shall aim to maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity on ecosystem, species and genetic level and, where is appropriate to reach diversity at landscape level.”
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. Note: This does not prohibit forest management activities that do not damage the important ecologic values of those biotopes.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.1. During forest management planning, inventory and mapping of forests, if ecologically important forest exists, areas will be identified, protected and/or conserved, containing significant concentration of: (a) protected, rare, sensitive, virgin or representative forest ecosystems; (b) threatened or protected endemic species and habitats of threatened species, defined and recognized in referent lists; (c) endangered and protected genetic in situ resources, (d) nationally significant, large landscape areas with natural distribution and abundance of naturally occurring species.”
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. Note: The requirement does not preclude trade according to CITES requirements.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.2. Protected and endangered species of forest plants, mushrooms and forest animals shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures shall be taken for their protection, nursing and increase of their population.”
8.4.4 The standard requires that successful regeneration shall be ensured through natural regeneration or planting that is adequate to ensure the quantity and quality of the forest resources.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.4. Forest management measures have a goal to ensure successful natural forest regeneration. If this is not possible, afforestation measures shall secure adequate quantity and quality of forest resources in accordance with habitat conditions.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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. 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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.4. In selection of forest species for afforestation, priority has to be given to native tree species of local provenances and varieties that are well adapted on the habitat conditions. Only provenances and varieties of introduced species may be used if their impact on the ecosystem and genetic integrity of native species is evaluated by independent expert institution and there are not negative impacts. Indicator 2. Selection of measures and species for planting is in line with criterion requirement including assessment of the impact of introduced species.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.4. Afforestation and reforestation that contributes to improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity shall be promoted and implemented.”
8.4.7 The standard requires that genetically-modified trees shall not be used. 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	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.4. Forests that were planted with genetically modified trees does not comply for certification. It shall not be allowed to use genetically-modified trees.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
traditional methods, no genetically-modified trees will be used.		
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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.3. In forest stands where diversity by species and age structure is established, forest management measures are applied with aim to support their existence as well as in forest stands with recognized values in landscape diversity perspective. In forest stands where diversity of species and age structure is not established, silviculture measures for ensuring their promotion shall be established.”
8.4.9 The standard requires that traditional management practices that create valuable ecosystems on appropriate sites shall be supported, where appropriate.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.8. Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be practiced on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.5. Forest silviculture and utilization activities must be conducted on a way that doesn't cause lasting damage on ecosystems, according to provisions of annual execution plans. Wherever is possible, practical measures shall be taken to improve or maintain biological diversity.” <i>Observation: it is assumed that the wording “utilization activities” includes harvesting operations.</i>
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.3. Maintenance of the infrastructure is adequate and according with conditions and needs, with minimal negative impact on environment. Maintenance and drainage of forest roads is conducted according to plans and in accordance with the category of forest road. Therefore, more importance is given in rare, sensitive and representative ecosystems or genetic reserve stands, and on the pathways of migration of key or endangered animal species. Indicator 1. Plan for construction and maintenance of forest road and other infrastructure with focus on the possible influence on ecosystem and migration corridors.”
8.4.12 The standard requires that, with due regard to management objectives, measures shall be taken to control the pressure of animal populations	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
on forest regeneration and growth as well as on biodiversity.		“4.6. Forest management measures shall be oriented towards establishing balance between the pressure of animal populations toward regeneration, forest development and biodiversity protection. Indicator 1. Existence of evidence for monitoring on the presence of animal populations and their influence on forest ecosystem and elaboration of preventive and other measures where risks towards forest ecosystem are identified.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “4.7. Standing and fallen dead trees, monumental trees, trees with holes, old trees and rare tree species are left in the stand in quantity and composition necessary for preserving biodiversity, taking in consideration potential impact on health and stability of the forest and neighboring ecosystems. Min. requirements - Minimum 3 trees per hectare according to criterion description are left in the stand. - The wood waste after cutting thinner than 3 cm remains at harvesting area with respect to the provisions for conduction of forest order.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “5.1. Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance protective forest functions, such as erosion protection; wind protection; protection of water resources; protection from harmful effect of water (floods, avalanches); and infrastructure protection. Silviculture and protection measures are adapted to maintain or enhance their protective function.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “5.1. Forest of protective purposes are registered and mapped in Forest Management Plans or their equivalents. Silviculture and protection measures are adapted to maintain or enhance their protective function.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “5.2. In forests exposed on risk from soil erosion, selection and implementation of measures for forest protection and silviculture is appropriate with their purpose and is aimed at protecting of the soil. In forest with water protection functions, special attention is given to implementation of forest practices in order to avoid negative impact on the water quantity and quality. This includes measures for ban of grazing or passing corridors for cattle in these forests. Indicator 1. Selection of silviculture and regeneration measures in forests with protective purpose is in line with the criterion requirement. Indicator 2. Usage of adequate technology is in line with the criterion requirement. Indicator 3. Clear cut is forbidden in forests with a protective function, except in cases for forest rehabilitation due to extraordinary phenomena (fire, calamities, etc.) Indicator 4. It is prohibited the use of invasive techniques or use of heavy machinery which rupture and damage the soil layer in forests that are at risk of soil erosion or forests are of protective function.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “5.2. In forest with water protection functions, special attention is given to implementation of forest practices in order to avoid negative impact on the water quantity and quality. Inappropriate chemical and harmful substances which has negative impact on the water quality are prohibited for use during activities in forests. In principle, forest management shall at least sustain and where possible aiming to improve identified forest ecosystem services relevant for the forest area.”
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	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.3. Construction of forest infrastructure (roads for transport and skidding, bridges and other objects) is performed in accordance with FMPs and their equivalents (...). Natural field configuration is used for avoiding unnecessary removal of soil layer and its spilling in water courses. During the construction of forest infrastructure measures are applied to preserve the natural level and function of water resources. Maintenance of the infrastructure is adequate and



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
road drainage facilities shall be installed and maintained.		according with conditions and needs, with minimal negative impact on environment. Maintenance and drainage of forest roads is conducted according to plans and in accordance with the category of forest road.”
8.6 Criterion 6: Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of socio-economic functions and conditions		
8.6.1 The standard requires that forest management planning shall aim to respect all socio-economic functions of forests.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Forest management maintains socio-economical forest functions, their contribution to rural development and employment possibilities, community well-being, recreational and esthetic values as well as their positive impact on human health.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.2. Forests are natural resource of public interest and all citizens have the right of free access in forests for enjoyment, vacation and recreation, on their own responsibility for their safety and with an obligation to respect legal provisions and ownership rights. The free entrance can be limited or prohibited in protected parts of the forests, in forest parts where the human safety is in danger, in period of year of existing threat of forest fires or performance of harvesting, silviculture and forest protection activities. Information related to restriction of free access to forests shall be provided by all appropriate means for information (local media, municipal info tab, web-site, info boards on the field).”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Forest sites with recognized historical, cultural or spiritual values and forest areas that essential for satisfying basic needs of local communities are managed with due attention, precaution and respect towards significance of that area.”
8.6.4 The standard requires that management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the forest management area, where appropriate supported	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Procedures for improved access to the forest products and services for communities living in forest areas shall be analysed and simplified.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
by engagement with local communities and indigenous peoples.		
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.4. Where relevant, local knowledge and experience related to forests may be used with aim to improve sustainable forest management. In cases when certain knowledge, practice, new approach or innovation that derives from another stakeholder contributes to the benefit of forest user / owner, they shall propose mechanism for sharing of the benefit with the stakeholder.”
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 indigenous peoples.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.1. Forest management shall consider its positive impact to local economy including opportunities for employment of local population and cooperation with local service providers. Indicator 1. When labor force has to be engaged, priority is given to inhabitants from the rural municipalities from forest area.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.4. On request from relevant institutions and organizations, forest users / owners are contributing in collection of data and research activities in the frame of their available time and resources.”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “1.1. Forest management is based on permanent inventory cycles, planning, implementation, monitoring and analysis of the management taking in consideration economical, ecological and social influence of forest management with aim to avoid unnecessary negative impacts. The results from the monitoring and analysis of the management are conducted for period of 10 years and monitoring of forest resources and evaluation of their management, including



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		ecological, social and economic effects, shall be periodically performed, and results fed back into the planning process. Indicator 4. Results from the monitoring and analyze of the management during period of 10 years are elaborated.” Explanation provided by The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in Republic of Macedonia “by the Law on forests, in forest management planning (FMP) most of the parts refers to description of forest resources. FMP also includes periodic measurements and observations of the forest conditions, while annual observations are recorded in the part called “forest chronicle”. All of the rules on preparation of FMP are regulated by the Law on forests (articles 27 to 39) and are part of the Rulebook for preparation of forest management plans. (Official Gazette nr. 248, 03.12.2019, page 90-99)”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “2.1. Health and vitality of forest is followed by permanent monitoring on the key biotic and abiotic factors and their influence on forests The monitoring is conducted by professional institutions on annual basis in accordance with the national legislation. Monitoring shall be conducted by forest managers and forest owners on annual basis. (...) naturally and regular occurrence of forest fires, forest pests and other factors that disrupts the stability of forest ecosystems is taken in consideration. “
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “3.1. Commercial and non-commercial utilization of non-timber forest products is regulated and performed under monitoring and control and is in compliance with the regulations. With aim to secure sustainability in use of non wood products, forest planning shall determine quantities for commercial use and to guarantee sustainability of species that are collected in nature.”
9.1.4 The standard requires that working conditions shall be regularly monitored and adapted as necessary.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “6.5. The forest manager/owner shall organize regular monitoring on safety conditions on work for all employees and service providers. Based on results from the monitoring, forest manager/owner shall take measures for improvement of working conditions where is possible.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Indicator 8. Analyze for possible improvement of work conditions is prepared on annual level.”
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 • the organisation’s requirements for its management system; • the requirements of the national sustainable forest management standard	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.3. The organization shall organize and implement programme for annual internal control with aim to confirm if forest management is: a) in accordance with standard requirements and internal regulations;”
b) is effectively implemented and maintained.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.3. The organization shall organize and implement programme for annual internal control with aim to confirm if forest management is: b) effectively conducted and maintained;”
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.3. The organization shall plan, organize and implement annual internal control programme (...) The programme for internal control is composed of: a) plan for implementation, frequency, methods, responsible person and reporting; This programme shall take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous audits.”
b) define the audit criteria and scope for each audit;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “b) the scope and criteria defined for each control;”
c) select the auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “c) selection of appropriate auditors by check of their qualifications d) definition of implementing procedures including part to secure objectivity and impartiality of the process;”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) ensure that the results of the audits are reported to relevant management;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “e) reporting on the results from the implemented internal control to the relevant management;”
e) retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “e) reporting on the results from the implemented internal control to the relevant management; f) definition of records keeping procedures”
9.3 Management review		
9.3.1 The standard requires that an annual management review shall at least include		
a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.5. (...) the organization shall perform annual revision of the management with aim to identify eventual weak points in the management system and with that to secure base for improved mnagement. The internal revision shall include: a) status of implemented activities from previous revision;”
b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.5. (...) The internal revision shall include: b) changes in external or internal factors that are relevant for the management system;”
c) information on the organisation’s performance, including trends in: • nonconformities and corrective actions; • monitoring and measurement results; • audit results;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.5. (...) The internal revision shall include: c) information on the quality of the management that includes: • identified non compliances and corrective measures taken; • results from implemented montirong and evaluation; • results from internal and external controls;”
d) opportunities for continual improvement	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.5. (...) The internal revision shall include: • opportunities for continuous improvement;”
9.3.2 The standard requires that the outputs of the management review shall include decisions related	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.5. Results from the management revision shall be take in consideration by the management of the organization. If weak points or opportunities for improvement are identified, then there



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the management system.		shall be decisions in written by the management prepared. In case of no weak points identified, the management shall anyway prepare decisions for continual improvement in written.”
9.3.3 The standard requires that documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews shall be retained.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.5. All reports from the management revision shall be archived and available on request.”
10. Improvement		
10.1 Nonconformity and corrective action		
10.1.1 The standard requires that when a nonconformity occurs, the organisation shall:		
a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: i. take action to control and correct it; ii. deal with the consequences;	NO	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “7.4. As part of internal regulation, the organization shall prepare procedures to deal with non-conformities in written. As part of it, the content shall provide: a) the way organization reacts if non conformity appears; b) description of corrective actions if non compliance with the SFM standard is identified and the ways to deal with the consequences; ;” <i>The clause requires forest management to prepare procedures which include description of corrective actions and ways to respond to non-conformities. However, the PEFC benchmark requires the Scheme to develop this, not the organisation. From the standard it must be clear that organisation shall react, take action and deal with the consequences when a nonconformity is raised.</i>
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 “c) instructions to investigate the cause for non compliances and proposal to take eventual measures to remove the cause and potential recurrence of non compliance; d) determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur;”
c) implement any action needed;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		"e) instructions to take corrective measures that are in line with the level of identified non compliance"
d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "e) (...) revision of efficiency of the measures;"
e) make changes to the management system, if necessary.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "f) instructions for changes in the management system if that prove as necessary."
10.1.2 The standard requires that corrective actions shall be appropriate to the effects of the nonconformities encountered.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "7.4. As part of internal regulation, the organization shall prepare procedures to deal with non-conformities in written. As part of it, the content shall provide: e) instructions to take corrective measures that are in line with the level of identified non compliance and revision of efficiency of the measures;"
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	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "7.4. All information that relates to appearance of non compliance, and corrective measures taken and results from corrective measures shall be documented and archived."
b) the results of any corrective action.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "7.4. All information that relates to appearance of non compliance, and corrective measures taken and results from corrective measures shall be documented and archived."
10.2 Continual improvement 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.	YES	PEFC MK 03:2020 V2 "7.1. Indicator 1. The established system for SFM is efficient, well elaborated and understood among employees, is regularly monitored and improved where possible."



Part IIIC: PEFC Checklist for Sustainable Forest Management – Slovenia

1 Scope

Part III covers requirements for sustainable forest management as defined in PEFC ST 1003:2018, Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements.

2 Checklist

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 forest management 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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Scope of the Standard This document summarizes PEFC International’s Sustainability Benchmark for PEFC and national sustainable requirements for the management of Slovenian forests. Trees outside forests and forest plantations on agricultural land are not part of this Standard. The Standard requirements apply to owners and managers responsible for assuring compliance with Forest Management Standard, as well as to contractors and other operators operating in PEFC-certified areas. They cover all necessary processes of a management system, from forest management planning to proper felling and harvesting.” <i>The requirements of PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 include management and performance requirements that are applicable at the forest management unit level.</i>
b) be clear, performance based and auditable;	YES	<i>The standard and requirements are in general clearly structured, performance based and auditable.</i> <i>Observations:</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<i>Use of the English language is not always correct or concise, which creates room for different interpretations, such as in:</i> <i>clause 3.2 “Planning and forest management must permanently provide for optimal wood yield from forest without diminishing the biotic diversity of the forest, its life potential”.</i> <i>Moreover, parts of the standard almost entirely copy the PEFC benchmark wording, but the phrasing “the standard requires” has not always been removed, such as in clause 9.1.1: “The standard requires that monitoring of forest resources (...) shall be periodically performed (...)” It shall be noted that this is typically a benchmark standard, for the assessment of another standard, and as such would not be included in standard requirements for forest operators.</i>
c) apply to activities of all forest operators in the defined forest area who have an impact on achieving compliance with the requirements;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Scope of the Standard The Standard requirements apply to owners and managers responsible for assuring compliance with Forest Management Standard, as well as to contractors and other operators operating in PEFC-certified areas. They cover all necessary processes of a management system, from forest management planning to proper felling and harvesting.”
d) require record-keeping that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the forest management standards;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “Scope of the Standard Forest owners and managers must ensure that evidence-keeping processes demonstrate compliance with forest management standards. The minimum period for keeping records which are important as an evidence-based demonstration of compliance with these standard requirements, is 5 (five) years. 4. d) Record-keeping is required that provides evidence of compliance with the requirements of the forest management standards.”
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;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4. e) Specifying “100% PEFC certified”, or another system specific claim, typical of a system 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.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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 .		
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4. f) 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.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4. g) Claims on the origin of products in an area covered by the standard are only used on the basis of a PEFC recognised certificate issued against the standard or on the basis of a certificate of membership in regional certification system;”
h) specify requirements concerning the information which need to be provided to a PEFC chain of custody certified customer;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4. h) Upon their requests, a forest owner/manager submits to organisations from the PEFC chain of custody a copy of the certificate or a copy of a certificate on membership in regional certification system.” <i>Observation: it is remarkable that 1) no specific information is required, unless it is requested by the PEFC chain of custody certified customer, and 2) that in such cases only information regarding the copy of a certificate shall be provided. It would have been more logic to also include information on product quantity, identification, and the claim “100% PEFC certified”.</i>
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4. Requirements, which are not reflected in the national standard and which must be satisfied by forest owners/managers, are already addressed through the legislation. Note: The list of currently applicable forestry legislation is accessible on the web site of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (MKGP).



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		1. Criteria and indicators have been prepared taking into account the following international and national documents: - National Forest Development Programme (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 14/96), - The Forest Act (Official Gazette of the RS no. 30/1993, 13/1998 Decision of the Const. Court: U-I-53/95, 24/1999, Decision of the Const. Court: U-I-51/95, 56/1999 (31/2000 - cor.), 67/2002, 110/2002), - Rules on the Protection of Forests (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 92/00), - Safety and Health in Forestry Work, ILO 1998, (official translation into the Slovenian language, 2003), - Regulation on the Forest Management and Silviculture Plans (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 5/98), - other international commitments adopted by Slovenia and other documents affecting forest management in Slovenia” <i>Observation: a list of applicable legislation is found. No specific reference is found to benchmark requirements which are not reflected in the standard, as they are already addressed through the legislation.</i>
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.2. 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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “b) the relevant needs and expectations of these stakeholders.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		“4.3.1 The organisation, which holds a certificate, or in case of a regional certification system, a regional representative shall determine the boundaries and applicability of the management system to establish its scope.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
5. Leadership		
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “5.1 The organisation shall commit: a) to comply with the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the certification system;”
b) to continuously improve the sustainable forest management system.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “b) to continuously improve the sustainable forest management system.”
5.2 The standard requires that this commitment shall be publicly available.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “5.2 Above mentioned commitment shall be publicly available.”
5.3 The standard requires that responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “5.3 The standard requires that responsibilities for sustainable forest management shall be clearly defined and assigned.”
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	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
compliance with the requirements for sustainable forest management. Size and scale of the operations of the organisation shall be considered.		"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."
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "6.1.2 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 standard."
6.2 Management plan		
6.2.1 The standard requires that management plans shall be:		
a) elaborated and periodically updated or continually adjusted;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "6.2.1 The standard requires that management plans shall be: a) elaborated and periodically updated or continually adjusted;"
b) appropriate to the size and use of the forest area;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "b) appropriate to the size and use of the forest area;"
c) based on applicable local, national and international legislation as well as existing land-use or other official plans; and	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "c) based on applicable local, national and international legislation as well as existing land-use or other official plans;"
d) adequately covering forest resources.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "d) adequately covering forest resources."
6.2.2 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "6.2.2 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area."
6.2.3 The standard requires that management plans shall include at least a description of the current forest management unit, long-term	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
objectives, and the average annual allowable cut, including its justification.		“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.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
6.2.5 The standard requires that management plans specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation and damage to forest ecosystems.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.2.5 The standard requires that management plans specify ways and means to minimise the risk of degradation and damage to forest ecosystems.”
6.2.6 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the results of scientific research.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.2.6 The standard requires that management plans shall take into account the results of scientific research.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
6.3 Compliance requirements		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
6.3.1 Legal compliance		
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. 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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.3.1.1 Organisation shall identify and have access to the legislation applicable to its forest management and determine how these compliance obligations apply to the organisation.”
6.3.1.2 The standard requires that the 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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.3.1.2 The standard requires that the 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, local communities or other affected stakeholders; health, labour and safety issues; 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.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.” <i>Observation: the exact copy of the PEFC benchmark standard is strange, as the NGB shall know whether there is anti-corruption legislation in Slovenia. An adjusted requirement would have been expected that fits the Slovenia context.</i>
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,	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
illegal land use, illegally initiated fires, and other illegal activities.		“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.”
6.3.2 Legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land		
6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property 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. 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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.3.2.1 The standard requires that property 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.”
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	N.A.	<i>It shall be noted that there are no indigenous people in Slovenia.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
the processes and roles and responsibilities laid out in the policies and laws where the certification takes place.		
6.3.2.3 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall respect human rights as defined by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.3.2.2 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall respect human rights as defined by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights issued by the United Nations”
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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.3.3.1 The standard requires that forest practices and operations shall comply with fundamental ILO conventions.” <i>Slovenia has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions.</i>
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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
6.3.4.2 The standard requires that working conditions shall be safe, and guidance and training	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
in safe working practices shall be provided to all those assigned to a task in forest operations. Working hours and leave shall comply with national laws or applicable collective agreements. Note: Guidance for specifying national standards can be obtained from the ILO Code of Good Practice: Safety and Health in Forestry Work.		“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 who participate in the forest management process. Training in safe working practices must be provided to all those assigned to a task in forest operations. Working hours and leave shall comply with national laws or applicable collective agreements.”
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. 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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
7.2 Competence		



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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 document.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “7.3.1 Effective communication and consultation with local communities and other interested parties relating to sustainable forest management shall be provided.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “7.4.1 Appropriate mechanisms must be in place at the level of organisation and national governing body for resolving complaints and disputes relating to forest management operations, land use rights and work conditions.” <i>Observation: the clause also provides requirements for the national governing body, whereas the applicability of the standard does not cover national governing bodies, and forest owners/ organisations are not in the legal position to fulfil this requirement for the national governing bodies, rather only for their own organisation.</i>
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “7.5.1 Organisation's management system shall include rules of procedures or another form of documented information determined by the standard as being necessary for the effectiveness of the sustainable forest management system.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
7.5.2 The standard requires that the documented information is relevant, and updated as appropriate, to the activities of the organisation.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “7.5.2 The Rules of Procedure and other documented information must be regularly updated and relevant to the activities of the organisation.” <i>Observation: as “regularly updated” is not further defined, it is hard to audit.</i>
8. Operation		
8.1 Criterion 1: Maintenance or appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle		
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1. Forest management must be adequately planned and focused on conservation of forests and of their ecosystem functions by conserving and enhancing economic, ecological and social functions.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1. The quality of forest stands and their carbon sink capacity shall be ensured by means of a balanced increment utilisation and appropriate silviculture measures and techniques. The efficient utilisation of forests shall be encouraged together with their management which aims at increasing carbon sink. 1.2. Suitable silviculture and other measures must be introduced to improve the utilisation of site potential in terms of quantity and quality to increase growing stock and increment.” Additional explanation by NGB “Balancing harvesting with growth rates is to be expected at a larger areas as mentioned in regional forest management plans and plans for management unit and not at the level of a forest owner.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1. The quality of forest stands and their carbon sink capacity shall be ensured by means (...) appropriate silviculture measures and techniques. The efficient utilisation of forests shall be encouraged together with their management which aims at increasing carbon sink.”
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)
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	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5 Deforestation of a certified forest which is aimed at converting land into agricultural or other non-forest land use, including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when such conversion is compliant to the national and regional spatial planning programme and legislation; - when agreement has been reached with materially and directly interested persons and organisations”
b) entails a small proportion (no greater than 5 %) of forest type within the certified area; and	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5 Deforestation (...) shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - it represents a small share (no greater than 5 %) of an individual forest type”
c) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5 Deforestation (...) shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: (...) has no negative impacts on (...) forest eco-systems, cultural and social functions and on important habitats of threatened species or on other protected areas,” <i>Observation: The clause is quite strict, and factually excludes any possibility for forest conversion, as it must not have negative impacts on forest eco-system (which are all forests, not only ecologically important forest areas) and no negative impacts on cultural and social functions (which again are almost all forests, not only culturally and socially significant areas).</i>
d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5 Deforestation (...) shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - does not destroy larger areas of forests with significantly high carbon stock” <i>The use of the word ‘larger’ indicates that deforestation of smaller areas of significantly high carbon stock would be accepted, which is not in agreement with the requirement.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
e) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5 Deforestation (...) shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when it contributes to the long-term preservation of economic and social benefits.” <i>No reference is found requiring that forest conversion must contribute to long-term conservation benefits.</i>
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems in forest is not allowed.”
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	“1.1.a.5. Afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems in forest is not allowed”
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	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems in forest is not allowed”
d) entails a small proportion of the ecologically important non-forest ecosystem managed by an organisation; and	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems in forest is not allowed”
e) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems in forest is not allowed”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
f) makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Afforestation of ecologically important non-forest ecosystems in forest is not allowed”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when such conversion is compliant to the national and regional spatial planning programme and legislation” Additional explanation provided by NGB “Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees. Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.” <i>From discussions with the NGB, it is concluded that planting can occur (legally) to improve degraded forests.</i>
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	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when agreement has been reached with materially and directly interested persons and organisations;” Additional explanation provided by NGB



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		“Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees. Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.” <i>It is insufficiently ensured that agreement shall be reached in a process where affected stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making on conversion through transparent and participatory consultation processes.</i>
c) has a positive impact on long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - does not destroy larger areas of forests with significantly high carbon stock” Additional explanation provided by NGB “Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees. Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.” <i>It is not ensured that long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation will not only not be destroyed, but also positively impacted.</i>



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - it (...) has no negative impacts on threatened species (including vulnerable and rare species), forest eco-systems, cultural and social functions and on important habitats of threatened species or on other protected areas,” Additional explanation provided by NGB “Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees. Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.”
e) safeguards protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when it contributes to the long-term preservation of economic and social benefits.” Additional explanation provided by NGB “Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.” <i>It is insufficiently ensured that the conversion shall safeguard protective functions of forests as well as other regulating or supporting ecosystem services.</i>
f) safeguards socio-economic functions of forests, including the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests and other cultural services; and	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.1.a.5. Deforestation (...), including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - when it contributes to the long-term preservation of economic and social benefits.” Additional explanation provided by NGB “Severely degraded forests are by Slovenian legislation forest land. Any change to forest plantation would mean change of land use as forest plantation is agricultural land. This is not allowed lightly and does not happen in practice also due to lower taxes for forest land and support that you can get for planting and tending of forest. There is no support for plantation of trees. Conversion of severely degraded forest to better forest through plantation can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure and is not a conversion.”
g) has a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices; and	NO	Explanation by NGB “Degraded forests are forest land by spatial planning legislation. Deforestation for the purposes of agricultural land can be done to the size of 0,5 ha based on Forest act article 21 paragraph 6. Deforestation and land use change other than agriculture, or agricultural larger than 0,5 ha, is regulated by spatial legislation that is subjected to public debate and consultation. Planned changes are made only in public interest (constituting of economical, ecological and social interests) A collection of legislation can be found on the site of Ministry responsible for spatial planning: https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-okolje-in-prostor/zakonodaja-ministrstva-za-okolje-in-prostor/”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		<i>No reference is found ensuring that conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations may only take place given a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices.</i>
h) is based on credible evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.	NO	Explanation by NGB “Degraded forests are forest land by spatial planning legislation. Conversion of degraded forest is described in forest Act definitions. Conversion of severely degraded forest can occur and is mentioned in Forest act in definitions under article 3 paragraph 10 as silvicultural measure that can include planting but all possibilities of natural regeneration are considered beforehand as part of Slovenian forestry tradition and national strategies and consequently forest management plans. Forest act article 3 paragraph 10 http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO270# Deforestation for the purposes of agricultural land can be done to the size of 0,5 ha based on Forest act article 21 paragraph 6. Deforestation and land use change other than agriculture, or agricultural larger than 0,5 ha, is regulated by spatial legislation that is subjected to public debate and consultation. Planed changes are made only in public interest (constituting of economical, ecological and social interests)” <i>No reference is found ensuring that conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations must be based on evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.</i>
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.3. Suitable silviculture measures must be introduced in accordance with ecological characteristics of tree species and site conditions to promote the variety of horizontal and vertical structure as well as diversity of stands in terms of age, aimed at adequate balance between development stages and thickness structure of stands. 2.1 Planning and forest management must be targeted at the maintenance and the improvement of health and vitality of forest ecosystems. The integral forest protection is



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		implemented, as well as regular and systematic monitoring of threats to forests and to their ecosystem vitality, monitoring of natural impacts and human-induced impacts on forest. Preventive and other protective measures are implemented. Forest management measures are implemented to improve the quality of degraded stands. Forest tending, felling and skidding are implemented in a manner so as to prevent lasting damage being incurred on ecosystems.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “1.3. Suitable silviculture measures must be introduced in accordance with ecological characteristics of tree species and site conditions to promote the variety of horizontal and vertical structure as well as diversity of stands in terms of age, aimed at adequate balance between development stages and thickness structure of stands. 4.4 For the needs of artificial regeneration of forests and reforestation whereby a preference is given to domestic species and their local provenances, a constant supervisory care with quality reproductive material of different types and provenances must be provided. The planting of those tree species shall be encouraged which are more resilient to climate change and which fit to the local climate conditions. 4.5 Natural forest regeneration must strive for the maximum share of natural regeneration of stands in a manner most similar to natural processes, while at the same time ensuring that species, which are suitable in terms of commercial demand, and the stand design of high quality is observed.”
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	Additional explanation provided by NGB “ Use of fire is allowed by Forest act only in special circumstances in regard to preventing calamities and diseases. Forest Act, article 33 states in paragraph 1 "Use of fire in the forest is not allowed, except in regulated fireplaces and due to the control of overpopulated insect populations and forest tree diseases that threaten forests" Rules on forest protection (Official Gazette RS, No. 114/09 in 31/16), Article 40.a further describes the allowed use of fire.”
8.2.4 The standard requires that appropriate forest management practices such as reforestation and	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
afforestation with tree species and provenances that are suited to the site conditions or the use of tending, harvesting and transport techniques that minimise tree and/or soil damages shall be applied.		“4.1. Tending and harvesting operations shall be conducted in a way that does not cause lasting damage to ecosystems. 4.4. For the needs of artificial regeneration of forests and reforestation whereby a preference is given to domestic species and their local provenances, a constant supervisory care with quality reproductive material of different types and provenances must be provided. The planting of those tree species shall be encouraged which are more resilient to climate change and which fit to the local climate conditions. Planting and sowing of foreign tree species and tree species (allochthonous) and not adaptable to the site (non-appropriate provenances) shall be prohibited, unless such activities are foreseen in the forests-management or silvicultural plans.”
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.	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “2.5. In operations carried out in forests with machines and equipment, residues of fuels and lubricants must be removed. Any disposals of waste in forests that would pose a threat to the growth and the fertility of earth, the stability or sustainability of forest or jeopardizing its function, subsistence and purpose, shall be avoided and is prohibited. The spillage of oil or fuel during forest management operations shall be prevented. Any such instance must be recorded and reported to a suitable institution or organisation.” <i>No reference is found ensuring that emergency procedures shall be in place.</i>
8.2.6 The standard requires that integrated pest management, appropriate silviculture alternatives and other biological measures shall be preferred to minimise the use of pesticides.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “2.3. Integrated forest protection shall be implemented. The use of pesticides and other chemical substances in the forest shall be prohibited, unless by virtue of a decision by the public forestry services aimed and controlling the gradation of harmful insects and for ensuring protection against game wildlife. The use of chemical substances must be targeted and limited to the minimum, taking into account the alternative silviculture and other biological measures.”
8.2.7 The standard requires that any use of pesticides is documented.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “2.3. Integrated forest protection shall be implemented. The use of pesticides and other chemical substances in the forest shall be prohibited, unless by virtue of a decision by the public forestry services aimed and controlling the gradation of harmful insects and for ensuring



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		protection against game wildlife. The use of chemical substances must be targeted and limited to the minimum, taking into account the alternative silviculture and other biological measures.” Additional explanation provided by Institute for forest certification in Slovenia “Usage of chemicals is only due to official permission that is issued law on regular administrative procedure Law on Administrative Procedure (ZUP) that is prescribing decisions being archived. Decisions are archived by Slovenian forestry service. Forest Act in Article 31 states: (1) The use of chemical agents in the forest is prohibited. (2) Notwithstanding the previous paragraph, certified chemical agents that do not endanger the biotic balance may exceptionally be used in the forest to protect forest juveniles from wildlife and to control overpopulated insect populations that cannot be reduced in any other way, and to control forest diseases. trees that can endanger the forest. (3) A permit for the exceptional use of chemical agents referred to in the preceding paragraph, which shall also determine the manner of their use, shall be issued by the Institute in an administrative procedure. The deadline for issuing a permit is two days. (4) Irrespective of the prohibition referred to in the first paragraph of this Article, certified chemical agents that do not endanger the biotic balance may be used for extinguishing forest fires.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “2.3. Prohibited pesticides are: i) the World Health Organisation Type 1A and 1B pesticides and other very poisonous pesticides” <i>It shall be noted that SLO 03:2021 does not allow any exceptions to the use of the WHO Class 1A and 1B pesticides.</i>
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 intended use, and any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “2.3. Prohibited pesticides are: (...) ii) chlorinated hydrocarbons pesticides whose derivatives remain biologically active and are accumulated in the food chain, and iii) any pesticides banned by international agreements.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "2.3. Producer's instructions are observed for the use of pesticides. Proper equipment and recognized training must be completed if pesticides are used."
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "2.3. Integrated forest protection shall be implemented. (...) The use of chemical substances must be targeted and limited to the minimum, taking into account the alternative silviculture and other biological measures. If fertilizers are used, this must be supervised and the fertilization executed in an ecologically acceptable manner"
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "3.1. (...) Plans must encourage various forest uses and functions. (...) Forest management planning shall promote wood and non-wood forest products and services. 3.3. As wood production is promoted, more intensive silviculture works and investments in the implementation of protective measures must be provided to improve the quality and ecologic stability of forest stands."
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "3.2. The goal of the holding planning shall be an adequate economic performance which, when planned, shall take into account the available market studies, sale potentials of new markets and economic activities related to products and services provided by forests."
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	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "3.2. Forest operations shall be carried out in those periods of time and in such a manner so as to prevent the reduction in the production capacity of plots of land and to limit the damage being incurred to soil and trees to the greatest possible extent."



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
example by avoiding damage to soil and retained stands and trees.		
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “3.2. Planning and forest management must permanently provide for optimal wood yield from forest without diminishing the biotic diversity of the forest, its life potential or weakening its generally useful functions. Wood scrap shall be used in an optimum manner whereby excessive removal of nutrient substances from stands must be limited on weaker sites. 3.5. Forest management must provide sustainable production and exploitation of non-wood forest products and services, which does not exceed the capacity of forests and does not deteriorate their quality and general condition. The sustainable exploitation of non-wood forest products must be promoted, including in the form of ancillary activities within the scope of forest holding activities.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “3.4. In order to ensure efficient forest management, the network of forest traffic routes must be suitably planned, set up and maintained, while ensuring adequate permanent production and exploitation of forest resources as well as the functioning of forest for generally beneficial functions, and minimising negative impacts of the road network on the environment. A special attention shall be dedicated to the planning of forest roads in the area of ecosystems with rare and sensitive species and endangered genetic resources. The construction of forest roads and hauling roads and bridges shall be carried out in a manner which minimises the danger of erosion on non-protected soil and the threat of leaching into near water courses. An adequate drainage of forest routes shall be provided for.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.1. Planning and forest management must be targeted at sustainable maintenance, conservation and enhancement of biotic diversity at the level of the landscape, the ecosystem, species, and at the genetic level.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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. Note: This does not prohibit forest management activities that do not damage the important ecologic values of those biotopes.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.2. When planning and managing forests, the ecologically significant, typical, rare and sensitive forest biotopes, habitat types and species must be preserved, especially within the scope of the network of special areas of conservation (the so-called NATURA 2000 areas and ecologically significant areas - ESAs).”
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. Note: The requirement does not preclude trade according to CITES requirements.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.3. Forest management must provide for protection and conservation of rare and threatened animal and plant species. Protected and threatened animal and plant species must not be used for commercial purposes. When necessary, measures shall be adopted for protection or spatial distribution of the threatened species.”
8.4.4 The standard requires that successful regeneration shall be ensured through natural regeneration or planting that is adequate to ensure the quantity and quality of the forest resources.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.5. Natural forest regeneration must strive for the maximum share of natural regeneration of stands in a manner most similar to natural processes, while at the same time ensuring that species, which are suitable in terms of commercial demand, and the stand design of high quality is observed.”
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.	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.4. For the needs of artificial regeneration of forests and reforestation a preference is given to domestic species and their local provenances, a constant supervisory care with quality reproductive material of different types and provenances must be provided. The planting of those tree species shall be encouraged which are more resilient to climate change and which fit to the local climate conditions. Planting and sowing of foreign tree species and tree species (allochthonous) and not adaptable to the site (non-appropriate provenances) shall be prohibited, unless such activities are foreseen in the forests-management or silvicultural plans and negative impacts of introduction can be avoided or minimized.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.		<i>It is insufficiently ensured that any used introduced species, provenances or varieties are scientifically evaluated.</i>
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.4. For the needs of artificial regeneration of forests and reforestation whereby a preference is given to domestic species and their local provenances, a constant supervisory care with quality reproductive material of different types and provenances must be provided. The planting of those tree species shall be encouraged which are more resilient to climate change and which fit to the local climate conditions. (...) Improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity shall be promoted.”
8.4.7 The standard requires that genetically-modified trees shall not be used. 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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.4. Genetically modified trees shall not be introduced into the forest and used in forest certification.”
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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.8. Forest management must promote tree structure suitable for the site as well as species diversity and mixed stands. Where applicable, the diversity of horizontal and vertical structures, such as uneven-aged structure and mixed stands, shall be stimulated by means of forest managing plans.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		4.9. In forest management, it shall be necessary to strive for the preservation and the promotion of tree diversity at the landscape level, whenever possible.”
8.4.9 The standard requires that traditional management practices that create valuable ecosystems on appropriate sites shall be supported, where appropriate.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.8. Traditional management systems which have created special ecosystems (such as coppicing) shall be promoted at suitable sites, if applicable.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.1. Tending and harvesting operations shall be conducted in a way that does not cause lasting damage to ecosystems. 4.2. When planning and managing forests (...) Wherever possible, practical measures shall be taken to maintain or improve biological diversity.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “3.4. In order to ensure efficient forest management, the network of forest traffic routes must be suitably planned, set up and maintained, while ensuring adequate permanent production and exploitation of forest resources as well as the functioning of forest for generally beneficial functions, and minimising negative impacts of the road network on the environment. A special attention shall be dedicated to the planning of forest roads in the area of ecosystems with rare and sensitive species and endangered genetic resources. 4.6. Forest management must provide the conservation of favourable condition for forests and forest habitat types, in which case a special emphasis is given on habitat types that are important on the European level.” Additional explanation by NGB “Forest roads can be built only with building permit that includes checking if the planned route includes any ecosystems with rare and sensitive species and endangered genetic resources. A forest route can be approved only in cases where Agency of Nature Protection has a positive opinion as obligatory consulting party. The process of official building permit and consequent official consents ensures that threatened or other key species and their migration patterns are considered.



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
		Building of public roads that could have fences is outside the scope of forestry. Building permits that are needed for the construction include official consents of Nature Protection Agency and other consenting parties that include provisions on migration patterns of protective and key species.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.10. The impact of game wildlife on regeneration, growth and biodiversity of forests must be monitored regularly. The results of the monitoring process must be observed when planning measures for game wildlife management.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “4.2 Rare tree species shall be left in quantities and distribution to safeguard biological diversity. 4.7. In forest management, it shall be necessary to systematically preserve and not to remove the suitable quantity and distribution of standing, fallen dead trees and hollow trees, as this ensures the preservation of favourable conservation status of plant and animal species in forests. When drying coniferous trees are not removed, the potential impact on the health and stability of forests has to be considered.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “5.1. Forests having protective function must be mapped in forest management plans. Forest management must be targeted to maintain and enhance protective function, notably in terms of soil erosion and different effects of water, such as floods and landslides. Support ecosystem services must be promoted and maintained.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “5.1. Forests having protective function must be mapped in forest management plans. Forest management must be targeted to maintain and enhance protective function, notably in terms of soil erosion and different effects of water, such as floods and landslides. Support ecosystem services must be promoted and maintained.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “5.2. In forest planning and management, a special attention must be paid to on sensitive soils and erosion-prone areas and forests with water protection function to prevent harmful impact on the quantity and quality of water resources. Inappropriate use of chemicals and other harmful substances as well as other activities having an adverse impact on the quality of water must be prevented.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “5.2. In forest planning and management, a special attention must be paid to on sensitive soils and erosion-prone areas and forests with water protection function to prevent harmful impact on the quantity and quality of water resources. Inappropriate use of chemicals and other harmful substances as well as other activities having an adverse impact on the quality of water must be prevented.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “3.4. The construction of forest roads and hauling roads and bridges shall be carried out in a manner which minimises the danger of erosion on non-protected soil and the threat of leaching into near water courses. An adequate drainage of forest routes shall be provided for. 5.4. When managing forests close to infrastructure facilities, special attention must be paid to maintaining and enhancing protective function of forests, particularly for the protection of infrastructure and other facilities. Natural level and function of water courses and river beds shall be preserved when constructing roads, bridges and other infrastructure.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.1. When managing forests, the multi-purpose role of forests and their general social significance must be considered, and the recognition of the role of forestry by other sectors must be advocated”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.5. Free access and movement of forest visitors for the purpose of recreation and other similar activities must be enabled, whereby ownership and other rights, impact of recreation and other similar activities on the forest ecosystem as well as compatibility of such activities with other forest functions must be taken into account. Management and visits in forest with particularly emphasised social functions are adapted to such functions so as not to have a negative impact on forest resources and soil. Forest visitors are informed that relevant codes and forest visiting etiquettes must be observed during visits in nature.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.10. In areas of recognized cultural, historical or other spiritual significance, forests must be managed to protect and maintain them as suitable to their significance.” <i>It shall be noted there are no indigenous peoples in Slovenia.</i>
8.6.4 The standard requires that management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the forest management area, where appropriate supported by engagement with local communities and indigenous peoples.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.5. Free access and movement of forest visitors for the purpose of recreation and other similar activities must be enabled 6.9. Forest owners, local communities, non-governmental organisations, local population and other interested public groups must be mobilised to participate in planning and directing forest management, their opinions must be reasonably taken into account.”
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	NO	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.6. The know-how on good practices and innovations including knowledge obtained by forest owners and non-governmental organisations as well as the existing traditional know-how



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge shall be encouraged.		present in local communities shall be taken advantage of. Benefits arising from the utilization of local and traditional knowledge shall be encouraged. Forest work must be carried out in compliance with fundamental international conventions by the International Labour Organisation.” <i>No mention is made of the sharing of the mentioned benefits arising from utilization of local knowledge.</i>
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 indigenous peoples.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.2. (...) special attention must be paid to the role of forestry in the rural development, in particular in the field of employment in connection with timber production and forestry industry as well as with other socio-economic functions of forests.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “6.6. Forest management shall be done with cooperation with research activities and data collection.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
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	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
and overstocking, fire, and damage caused by climatic factors, air pollutants or by forest management operations.		
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
9.1.4 The standard requires that working conditions shall be regularly monitored and adapted as necessary.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “9.1.4 The standard requires that working conditions shall be regularly monitored and adapted as necessary.”
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 • the organisation’s requirements for its management system; • the requirements of the national sustainable forest management standard	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “9.2.1. The standard requires that an internal audit programme at planned intervals shall provide information on whether the management system a) conforms to - the organisation’s requirements for its management system; - the requirements of the national sustainable forest management standard”
b) is effectively implemented and maintained.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “b) is effectively implemented and maintained”
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	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “9.2.2. The standard requires that the organisation shall:



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
reporting, which shall take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous audits;		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;”
b) define the audit criteria and scope for each audit;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “b) define the audit criteria and scope for each audit;”
c) select the auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “c) select the auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;”
d) ensure that the results of the audits are reported to relevant management;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “d) ensure that the results of the audits are reported to relevant management;”
e) retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “e) retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.”
9.3 Management review		
9.3.1 The standard requires that an annual management review shall at least include		
a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “9.3.1 The standard requires that an annual management review shall at least include a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;”
b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system; Internal audit reviews are taken into consideration which have reviewed a significant part of the area of operation.”
c) information on the organisation’s performance, including trends in: • nonconformities and corrective actions; • monitoring and measurement results; • audit results;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “c) information on the organisation’s performance, including trends in: • nonconformities and corrective actions; • monitoring and measurement results; • audit results;”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) opportunities for continual improvement	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “c) opportunities for continual improvement.” <i>Observation: the numbering in PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 clause 9.3.1 has two times a sub c).</i>
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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.”
9.3.3 The standard requires that documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews shall be retained.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “9.3.3 The standard requires that documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews shall be retained.”
10. Improvement		
10.1 Nonconformity and corrective action		
10.1.1 The standard requires that when a nonconformity occurs, the organisation shall:		
a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: i. take action to control and correct it; ii. deal with the consequences;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “10.1.1 The standard requires that when a nonconformity occurs, the organisation shall: a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: • take action to control and correct it; • deal with the consequences”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “b) evaluate the need for action to eliminate the causes of the nonconformity, in order that it does not recur or occur elsewhere, by: • reviewing the nonconformity; • determining the causes of the nonconformity; • determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur;”
c) implement any action needed;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “c) implement any action needed;”



PEFC benchmark requirement	YES /NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;”
e) make changes to the management system, if necessary.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “e) make changes to the management system, if necessary.”
10.1.2 The standard requires that corrective actions shall be appropriate to the effects of the nonconformities encountered.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “10.1.2 The standard requires that corrective actions shall be appropriate to the effects of the nonconformities encountered.”
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	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “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;”
b) the results of any corrective action.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “b) the results of any corrective action.”
10.2 Continual improvement 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.	YES	PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 “10.2. 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.”



Part IV: PEFC Checklist for Certification and Accreditation Procedures

1 Scope

This document covers requirements for certification and accreditation procedures for PEFC forest management certification outlined in Annex 6 of the PEFC Council Technical Document (Certification and accreditation procedures).

The requirements of Annex 6 stipulated for chain of custody certification are not reflected in this checklist, as these requirements have been replaced by PEFC ST 2003, Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard.

References to ISO Guide 65 in Annex 6 have been removed from this checklist, as PEFC forest management certification is expected to be carried out as management certification under ISO 17021 since 2018.

2 Checklist

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	PEFC BS 04-2021 “Annex 1, 4.2 The certification body must: 6. Be impartial, independent third party that cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making body, or in the forest management and is independent of the certified entity”
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	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.3 CB’s conducting conformity assessment for sustainable forest management (SFM) and group certification shall fulfil the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1 (recent version) “Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing



No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES / NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
				audit and certification of management systems” supplemented by the specific requirements of the PEFC NGB for the needed sector expertise”
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 certification criteria?	Annex 6, 3.1	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.3 The CB shall: 3. Good understanding on the PEFC Balkan System for sustainable forest management. 4. Possess competency for forest management and its economic, social and environmental impact”
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	PEFC BS 04-2021 “Annex 1, 4.2 The certification body must: 5. Have a good knowledge on the PEFC BFCS with regard to forest management”
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	PEFC BS 04-2021 “Annex 1, 3.1 The qualification criteria for auditors engaged in certification audits are based on the general auditing guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems, or the general criteria for certification bodies operating management system certification, and complemented with sectoral expertise. The auditors must: 3. Have a good knowledge on the PEFC BFCS with regard to forest management. 4. Have a general understanding on the forest management sector, practice and legislation in the countries that are part of the BFCS (North Macedonia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) and its environmental, social and economic impacts. Additional and detailed expertise on the above mentioned fields shall be supported by the local experts”



No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES / NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
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	PEFC BS 04-2021 “Annex 1, 3.1 The auditors must: 1. Fulfil general criteria for quality and environmental management systems as defined in ISO 19011”
7.	Does the scheme documentation include additional qualification requirements for auditors carrying out forest management audits? [*1]	Annex 6, 3.2	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “3.1 The auditor must: 5. Professional expertise in forest management and its environmental impacts is proved on the basis of appropriate education and/or professional experience. The auditor shall at minimum have a bachelor degree in forestry and minimum 5 years of experience in forest management. 6. Practical experience in auditing (at least 5 audit days as co-auditor with PEFC, there- of 3 days at on-site-audits)”
Certification procedures				
8.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies shall have established internal procedures for forest management certification?	Annex 6, 4	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.3 The CB shall: 2. Implement documented method according to which forest management can be audited (certification procedure)”
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	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.3 CB’s conducting conformity assessment for sustainable forest management (SFM) and group certification shall fulfil the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1 (recent version) (...) supplemented by the specific requirements of the PEFC NGB for the needed sector expertise”
10.	Does the scheme documentation require that applied auditing procedures shall fulfil or be	Annex 6, 4	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “Annex 1, 4.2 Applied auditing procedures shall be compatible with requirements of ISO 19011”



No.	PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
	compatible with the requirements of ISO 19011?		
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	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.5.9 The certification body informs the PEFC NGB for all individual or group certificates issued as well as for all current changes in their scope and validity”
12.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification body shall carry out controls of PEFC logo usage if the certified entity is a PEFC logo user?	Annex 6, 4 YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.6.1 Upon certification the compliance to the following standard shall be assessed: - PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements - PEFC ST 2001:2020” PEFC BS 05-2021 “6.3 The certification body notified by the NGB for Chain of Custody certification shall: 1. Carry out PEFC logo usage verification against PEFC ST 2001:2020 and PEFC BS 07:2020 within the scope of the valid accreditation”
13.	Does a maximum period for surveillance audits defined by the scheme documentation not exceed more than one year?	Annex 6, 4 YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.5.10 The CB shall conduct supervision on certified forest areas (individual and group certification) at least once a year while the certificate is valid in order to verify the continuity of compliance with the requirements of the PEFC Balkan certification system”
14.	Does a maximum period for assessment audit not exceed five years for forest management certifications?	Annex 6, 4 YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.5.5 The main revision is concluded once in a period of five years. The maximum period for main revision audit not exceed period of five years”



No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES / NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
15.	Does the scheme documentation include requirements for public availability of certification report summaries?	Annex 6, 4	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.5.5 g) The report on the revision conducted is prepared according to the procedures of the CB. A summary of the certification report, including a summary of findings on the auditee’s conformity with the Forest Management Standard for the country, written by the certification body, shall be made available to the public by the NGB participating in the Balkan Certification System. The requirements for public consultation and public availability of the certification report’s summary shall be implemented within six months of the official adoption of this document”
16.	Does the scheme documentation include requirements for usage of information from external parties as the audit evidence?	Annex 6, 4	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.5.5 a) Prior to the assessment for compliance with the requirements of the PEFC National SFM Standard - PEFC MK, SL, B&H 03:2021, a consultation with relevant interested parties from the area where assessment takes place is required (...) when assessing compliance, the relevant remarks and comments from other persons shall be taken into consideration”
17.	Does the scheme documentation include additional requirements for certification procedures? [*1]	Annex 6, 4	NO	
Accreditation procedures				
18.	Does the scheme documentation require that certification bodies carrying out forest management certification shall be accredited by a national accreditation body?	Annex 6, 5	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.1 The bodies conducting FM certification in accordance with the PEFC National Standards for SFM requirements, including the group certification shall be accredited. The accreditation shall be obtained from the National Accreditation Body (NAB) that is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and/or European co-operation for Accreditation (EA)”
19.	Does the scheme documentation require that an accredited certificate shall bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body?	Annex 6, 5	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 “4.6 The certificate shall contain at least the following information: - Name of accreditation body, an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body and number of accreditation of the certification body”



No.	PEFC benchmark requirement		YES / NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
20.	Does the scheme documentation require that the accreditation shall be issued by an accreditation body which is a part of the International Accreditation Working Group (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	PEFC BS 04-2021 "4.1 The accreditation shall be obtained from the National Accreditation Body (NAB) that is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and/or European co-operation for Accreditation (EA). The NAB conducting accreditation of CB shall implement the procedures according to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 (recent version) "Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies". Accreditation shall be conducted in accordance with the legislation" <i>It shall be noted that EA is a member of IAF.</i>
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 standard(s) shall be covered by the accreditation scope?	Annex 6, 5	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 "Annex 1, 4.2 The certification body must: (...) 3. Undertake forest management certification as "accredited certification" based on latest version of ISO 17021 and have the relevant forest management standard(s) covered by the accreditation scope"
22.	Does the scheme documentation include a mechanism for PEFC notification of certification bodies?	Annex 6, 6	YES	PEFC BS 04-2021 "4.2 CB's conducting individual or group forest management certification shall be notified by the NGB authorized by the PEFC Council for management of PEFC system in the country of operation and in accordance with the "Notification of certification bodies, PEFC BS 05:2021"
23.	Are the procedures for PEFC notification of certification bodies non-discriminatory?	Annex 6, 6	YES	PEFC BS 05-2021 "4 The certification body applying for notification by the NGB shall: - be a legal entity;



No.	PEFC benchmark requirement	YES / NO	Reference to system documentation (including quotation of relevant text)
			- agree to be listed on the publicly available, web based PEFC Information Register, including the certification body's identification data and / or other data as specified by the PEFC Council and/or the NGB; - sign a notification contract with the NGB (Appendix 1). a) The certification body applying for notification for Forest Management certification under the Balkan Forest Certification System shall have valid accreditation, issued by National Accreditation Body (NAB) that is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and/or European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) that is signatory of the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) for Quality Management Systems certification of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). The accreditation shall be issued against ISO/IEC 17021-1 (most recent version) and the scope of the accreditation shall explicitly include PEFC National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in North Macedonia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in its valid version. b) The certification body applying for notification for Chain of Custody certification under the BFCS shall have valid accreditation, issued by an accreditation body that is signatory of the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) for product certification of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). The accreditation shall be issued against ISO/IEC 17065 (most recent version) and the scope of the accreditation shall explicitly include PEFC ST 2002:2020, Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements, in its valid version. The notification procedure does not include any discriminatory measures, such as the certification body's country of origin, affiliation to an association, etc.” <i>No discriminatory clauses are found in the procedures.</i>

[*1] This is not an obligatory requirement



Annex 2 Results of Stakeholder Survey

Part I: Results of stakeholder survey in Republic Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The paragraphs below present the summarized results of the stakeholder survey conducted by the Assessor. The national stakeholder survey was held from 17 November 2021 to 26 November 2021. Form International sent out questionnaires to all stakeholders that were members of the Working Group (WG) and additional stakeholders that were invited and/or participated in public consultation meetings during the scheme development process.

General

In total 13 stakeholders responded to the request to fill-out the questionnaire:

- 3 respondents who are forest owners
- 2 respondents from business and industry
- 6 respondents from a non-governmental organization
- 2 respondents from the scientific and technological community
- 1 respondent from a workers and trade union
- 1 respondent from the government

The response rate was 13 out of 30 (43%).

Participation in the process

In total 8 respondents participated as a member of the WG; 3 respondents participated in the first public consultation (25 December 2020 until 25 February 2021); 3 respondents participated in the second public consultation (February-March 2021); and 3 participated in the field-testing exercise on 24 February 2021. 6 respondents further indicated that they also participated as member of the Council for SFM. 1 respondent did not participate in the process but gave no further explanation why this had been the case.

Participants had mostly similar interests which caused them to participate in the process:

- 10 respondents indicated the improvement of (the quality of) sustainable forest management
- 1 respondent wanted to contribute to the establishment of a new sustainable forest management standard for BiH/RS
- 1 respondent noted an interest in the certification of raw wood materials from private forests, similarly to state forest.
- 2 respondents also had an interest in acquiring knowledge in the field of forest certification



Respondents had various concerns about the SFM standard:

- 7 respondents noted that their main concern was that all forest owners should have the same conditions for sustainable forest management and forest resources;
- 2 respondents stated that there are small areas per forest owner, fragmentation of plots, and poor knowledge of forest management by forest owners.
- 1 respondent was concerned with the provision of funds for the visit of an independent controller appointed by PEFC.
- 1 respondent was concerned with whether there will be improvements (new opportunities) in relation to the existing FSC standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina and whether the new standards will allow for the certification of privately owned forests.
- 1 respondent noted irresponsible management and stewardship by public companies, private forest owners, and with contractors hired by public companies, and wanted to contribute to sustainable management and raise awareness of the importance of forests.

All respondents that had participated in the standard setting process (12) who had a concern stated that the organizers of the PEFC BiH/RS standard setting process provided them with an opportunity to address their concern and stated that they had been able to do so particularly through discussions in the working group with the various stakeholders, including forest users, as well as with the Ministry and scientific institutions.

The same 12 respondents also found they were provided with relevant documents to participate in the scheme development and further indicated that the process had been transparent and that the necessary documents had been available in time.

Balanced representation of the Working Group

According to all 12 respondents that participated in the process all relevant stakeholders were actively identified invited to the process. 1 respondent further noted that some of the identified stakeholders did not apply to participate in the standard despite efforts made to include them, and that some others had stopped their work in the WG or had become inactive. The 12 respondents also stated that disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders were proactively invited to the standard development process. 1 stakeholder mentioned that there was no restriction for actors to participate in the standard setting development process. Nearly all (12) respondents found that the WG had a balanced representation of the various stakeholder groups. The same respondents also found that the WG had good representation from all areas of BiH/RS, although 1 respondent disagreed without any additional comment.



Complaints

Out of all respondents, only 1 said there had been a complaint, but explained that the appeals commission had resolved this issue to the satisfaction of the proposers. 3 other respondents did not know if complaints had been validated and objectively evaluated, while 9 other respondents did not reply, although this respondent also indicated there had been no complaints.

(Sensitive) issues indicated by respondents

7 respondents indicated that there had been sensitive issues in the assessment, but 6 of these commented “Due to the important impact of forests on the environment” without further comment. 1 other respondent pointed out the complex state system of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sensitive issue.

The Working Group

The respondents that had been part of the Working Group (5) all answered positively to the questions whether:

- The WG stakeholders had relevant expertise for the subject matter of the standard;
- They received invitations for meetings and documents in a timely manner;
- All working draft documents (draft versions of the standard) had been available to all members of the WG;
- They were given meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the standard and submit comments to the working drafts;
- Feedback and views submitted by any member of the WG had been considered in an open and transparent way where the outcome of these considerations was recorded;
- Feedback received during the public consultation had been considered in an objective manner by the WG;
- All working draft documents have been available to all stakeholders involved in the WG activities;
- The decision of the WG to recommend the final draft for formal approval was taken on the basis of consensus.

Consequences to the overall assessment decision

All the above findings are further considered in the assessment of the respective topics / requirements. Respondents gave no specific comments or remarks that require further explanation from the assessor.

Stakeholders that were invited for the survey

This survey was received by 30 E-mail addresses.

Stakeholder group	Name	Organisation
Economic	Boris Marković	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Srpska



Stakeholder group	Name	Organisation
Economic	Milan Tepić	PFE “ Forest of Republic of Srpska”
Economic	Slaviša Opačić	PFE “ Forest of Republic of Srpska”
Economic	Miladin Bačić	PFE “ Forest of Republic of Srpska”
Economic		Wood Cluster “Banja Luka”
Economic	Mile Došen	Cluster “Wood” Prijedor
Economic	Ratko Macanović	Cluster “Wood” Prijedor
Economic		Woodworkers Association Mrkonjic Grad
Economic		Cluster “Drina Drvo” Milići
Economic	Lazo Šinik	Association of Forestry and Wood Processing of the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Srpska
Economic	Vitomir Kuzmanović	Municipality Čelinac
Economic	Dubravka Kršić	Šuma Plan
Economic	Đorđe Topić	Šuma Plan
Environmental	Dragan Romčević	NP Kozara
Environmental	Zoran Cancar	NP Sutjeska
Environmental	Boro Marić	NVO “Zelene Staze”
Environmental	Dragan Kovačević	Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage
Social sector and youth	Zoran Vuković	“INTERFOB”-Association of Forestry and Wood Processing
Social sector and youth	Duško Topić	APFO “Naša Šuma”
Social sector and youth	Aleksandar Mrkobrada	APFO “Naša Šuma”
Social sector and youth	Vukašin Vojinović	Hunting Association of Republic of Srpska
Social sector and youth	Darko Jovanić	Hunting Association of Republic of Srpska
Social sector and youth	Srdjan Kašić	“UŠIT”-Udruženje šumarskih inženjera i tehničara Republike Srpske”:
Social sector and youth	Ranko Kozomara	NGO Association of Forestry Engineers
Education, science and other institutions	Dr. Dragan Čomić	Faculty of Forestry Banja Luka
Education, science and other institutions	Dr. Dane Marčeta	Faculty of Forestry Banja Luka
Education, science and other institutions	Dr Mersudin Avdibegović	Faculty of Forestry Sarajevo
Education, science and other institutions	Dr. Stefan Bojić	Faculty of Agriculture East Sarajevo- PFIS Sarajevo
Education, science and other institutions	Dr. Milena Stanković Neđić	Faculty of Agriculture East Sarajevo- PFIS Sarajevo



Stakeholder group	Name	Organisation
Education, science and other institutions	Prof dr Srđan Ljubojević	Independent Faculty Banja Luka Banja Luka- NUBL



Part II: Results of stakeholder survey in North Macedonia

The paragraphs below present the summarized results of the stakeholder survey conducted by the Assessor. The national stakeholder survey was held from 17 November 2021 to 26 November 2021. Form International sent out questionnaires to all stakeholders that were members of the Working Group (WG) and additional stakeholders that were invited and/or participated in public consultation meetings during the revision process.

General

In total 7 stakeholders responded to the request to fill-out the questionnaire:

- 2 respondents are a forest owner
- 1 respondent from business and industry
- 4 respondents from another stakeholder category including hunting and an employee of PE “national forests”

The response rate was 7 out of 43 (16%).

Participation in the process

All 7 respondents participated as a member of the WG.

Participants had various interests which caused them to participate in the process:

- 3 respondents had an interest in the PEFC Balkan system and the further development of the Macedonian standard
- 1 respondent wanted to represent its company's interest
- 2 respondents noted an environmental / sustainable forest management interest.
- 1 respondent did not reply

Respondents had various concerns about the SFM standard:

- 5 respondents had a concern relating to unsustainable use and illegal activities in the forest, including illegal logging, poor waste management, organized crime, insufficient control of sustainable forest management.
- 2 respondent's concern was concerned with the application of inappropriate forestry techniques
- 1 respondent pointed out major problems in functioning of all institutions
- 1 respondent noted undefined use of the forest by different entities

All respondents who said they had a concern (6) also found that the organizers of the PEFC MK standard revision process provided them with an opportunity to address their concern in the working group sessions and by commenting on the documents.



The same 6 respondents also found they were provided with relevant documents to participate in the scheme revision and further indicated that the process had been transparent and that the necessary documents had been available in time.

Balanced representation of the Working Group

According to 5 respondents that participated in the process all relevant stakeholders were actively identified invited to the process. Of these respondents, 4 respondents also found that disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders were proactively invited to the standard revision process. 1 respondent replied “don’t know” to these questions and 2 respondents did not reply. Most (6) respondents found that the WG had a balanced representation of the various stakeholder groups. 4 respondents were not sure if the WG had good representation from all areas of MK, 2 respondents found that it did, and 1 respondent did not reply.

Complaints

Out of all respondents, 5 said they did not know if there had been any complaint, 1 replied “no” and 1 did not answer. Respondents provided mostly the same answer to the question on whether complaints had been validated and objectively evaluated.

(Sensitive) issues indicated by respondents

Only one respondent replied yes to the question if there were any sensitive issues in the assessment, stating that “it is good to have compliance”. Other respondents said that there are no sensitive issues.

The Working Group

The respondents that had been part of the Working Group (7) all answered positively to the questions whether:

- The WG stakeholders had relevant expertise for the subject matter of the standard;
- They received invitations for meetings and documents in a timely manner;
- All working draft documents (draft versions of the standard) had been available to all members of the WG;
- They were given meaningful opportunities to contribute to the revision of the standard and submit comments to the working drafts;
- Feedback and views submitted by any member of the WG had been considered in an open and transparent way where the outcome of these considerations was recorded;
- Feedback received during the public consultation had been considered in an objective manner by the WG;
- All working draft documents have been available to all stakeholders involved in the WG activities;
- The decision of the WG to recommend the final draft for formal approval was taken on the basis of consensus.



Only to the question whether feedback received during the public consultation had been considered in an objective manner 1 respondent answered: “don’t know”.

Consequences to the overall assessment decision

All the above findings are further considered in the assessment of the respective topics / requirements. Respondents gave no specific comments or remarks that require further explanation from the assessor.

Stakeholders that were invited for the survey

This survey was received by 43 E-mail addresses.

Stakeholder group	Name	Organisation
Scientific community	Mr. Nikolcho Velkovski	Forest Faculty
Forest owners	Mr. Goran Licovski	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy – forestry sector
Institutions and managers of protected areas	Ms. Smiljka Teneva	Directorate for Environment
Forest owners	Ms. Anica Simonova	MAFWE – forestry police
Forest owners	Mr. Vojo Sokolovski	National Association of Private Forest Owners
Business and industry	Mr. Milorad Andrijević	PE National Forests
Business and industry	Mr. Gjorgjevski Milcho	Hunting Federation
NGOs	Ms. Despina Kitanova	Macedonian Ecology Society
NGOs	Ms. Ana Cholovich	WWF Adria and Eco-consciousness
NGOs	Mr. Goran Nikolovski	Mountaineering Sports Federation of Macedonia
NGOs	Mr. Gjorgji Vivkov	DREN (young students from Forest Faculty)
Workers and labour union	Mr. Strahil Kostovski	Labor Union - forestry workers
Institutions and managers of protected areas	Mr. Tomo Gjorgjevski	National Park Mavrovo
Other	Mr. Slave Chorbev	ZELS (Association of municipalities)
Forest owners	Mr. Aelksandar Nikolovski	Macedonian Forest Association
Forest owners	N.A.	MAFWE – forestry sector
Forest owners	N.A.	MAFWE – forestry inspection



Stakeholder group	Name	Organisation
Business and industry	N.A.	PE National Forests
Business and industry	N.A.	PE National Forests
Business and industry	N.A.	Chamber of Commerce – wood processing group
Business and industry	N.A.	Chamber of Commerce – non wood forest products
Business and industry	N.A.	Hunting Federation
NGOs	N.A.	MES
NGOs	N.A.	Eco- consciousness
NGOs	N.A.	The Ecologist's Movement of Macedonia
NGOs	N.A.	Mountaineering Sports Federation of Macedonia
NGOs	N.A.	DREN
Scientific community	N.A.	Faculty of Forestry
Scientific community	N.A.	Faculty of Forestry
Scientific community	N.A.	Faculty for design and technology of furniture
Scientific community	N.A.	Forestry Secondary School in Kavadarci
Scientific community	N.A.	Forestry Secondary School in Demir Hisar
workers and labour union	N.A.	Labor Union of workers in forestry
workers and labour union	N.A.	Labor Union of workers in forestry
Institutions and managers of protected areas	N.A.	National Park Pelister
Institutions and managers of protected areas	N.A.	National Park Galichica
Institutions and managers of protected areas	N.A.	National Park Mavrovo
Institutions and managers of protected areas	N.A.	Jasen
Institutions and managers of protected areas	N.A.	Municipality of Vevchani
Institutions and managers of protected areas	N.A.	Directorate for Environment



Stakeholder group	Name	Organisation
Institutions and managers of protected areas	N.A.	Directorate for Environment
Other	N.A.	ZELS
Other	N.A.	Agency for Cadaster



Part III: Results of stakeholder survey in Slovenia

The paragraphs below present the summarized results of the stakeholder survey conducted by the Assessor. The national stakeholder survey was held from 17 November 2021 to 1 December 2021. Form International sent out questionnaires to all stakeholders that were members of the Working Group (WG) and additional stakeholders that were invited and/or participated in public consultation meetings during the scheme development process.

Only 2 respondents out of 18 invitations replied to the stakeholder survey. One stakeholder came from an NGO and the other from the business and industry stakeholder group. Both stakeholders had been part of the WG. The respondents answered positively to nearly all questions in the survey and indicated that there had been a balanced working group; key and disadvantaged stakeholders had been adequately identified and invited; documents were available; invitations were sent on time; and that there had been meaningful opportunities to contribute to the working group.

They also found that consensus was reached on the final draft and that all feedback and views from stakeholders was taken into account in an open and transparent matter. No particularities were found in the surveys. One stakeholder was concerned with the overburdening of forest managers with administrative requirements which are not necessarily improving forest management. This respondent also found that his concern and suggestions had been included into the standard development. It was further noted that all comments on the standard were considered with consent from all stakeholders.

Stakeholders that were invited for the survey

This survey was received by 19 E-mail addresses.

Stakeholder group	Contact person	Organisation
Forest based sector	N.A.	Chamber of Agriculture and forestry of Slovenia
Forest based sector	N.A.	Cooperative union of Slovenia
Industry	N.A.	N.A.
Industry	N.A.	N.A.
Industry	N.A.	Cooperative union of Slovenia
Industry	N.A.	N.A.
Industry	N.A.	Company gg Bled
Industry	N.A.	Chamber of wood processing industry
Research institutions and ministries	N.A.	Biotechnical faculty – forestry:
Research institutions and ministries	N.A.	Biotechnical faculty – wood based sciences



Research institutions and ministries	N.A.	Slovenian forest service
Research institutions and ministries	N.A.	Slovenian forest service
Research institutions and ministries	N.A.	Ministry for agriculture and forestry
NGO	Katarina Žakelj	CIPRA Slovenia
NGO	N.A.	Umanotera
NGO	N.A.	Greenpeace
Business and industry	N.A.	Alpine Association of Slovenia
Forest based sector	Marjan Hren	ZLGS
Workers and Trade Union	N.A.	Union of workers in the Wood based sector

Questionnaire on the standard setting process of the PEFC
National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in
Republic of Srpska/ Bosnia and Herzegovina under the PEFC
Balkan Forest Certification Scheme

Question to stakeholder	Answer
1. What stakeholder category do you represent?	• ☐ Forest owners • ☐ Business and industry • ☐ Indigenous people • ☐ Non-government organisations (NGO); please specify: • ☐ Environmental • ☐ Social • ☐ Other: Click here to enter your comments • ☐ Scientific and technological community • ☐ Workers and trade unions • ☐ Other; please specify: • Click here to enter your comments



Question to stakeholder	Answer
2. Did you actively participate in the standard setting process of the National Standard for Sustainable Forest Management in Republic of Srpska/B&H (more than 1 answer possible) ► If no, why not?	☐ Yes, as a member of the Working Group ☐ Yes, I participated in the first public consultation (from 25 December 2020 until 25 February 2021) ☐ Yes, I participated in the second public consultation (February-March 2021) ☐ Yes, I participated in the field testing exercise (24 February 2021) ☐ Yes, namely: Click here to enter your comments ☐ No, because: Click here to enter your comments
3. What was your main interest to participate in the standard setting process of the PEFC Balkan scheme?	Interest: Click here to enter your comments
4. What, if any, was your main concern(s) regarding the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) standard of Republic of Srpska/B&H?	Concern: Click here to enter your comments
5. Were you provided with an opportunity to address these concerns?	☐ Yes, please indicate how: Click here to enter your comments ☐ No, please elaborate: Click here to enter your comments
6. Did the organisers provide you with relevant documents to participate in the standard setting process?	☐ Yes, because: Click here to enter your comments ☐ No, because: Click here to enter your comments ☐ I don't know: Click here to enter your comments
7. In your opinion, have all stakeholders that are relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard setting/standard revision process been proactively identified and invited?	☐ Yes ☐ No, other stakeholders that should have been involved: Click here to enter your comments ☐ I don't know



Question to stakeholder	Answer
8. In your opinion, have disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders been proactively identified and invited to the standard-setting activities and were any constraints to their participation addressed?	☐ Yes ☐ No, other stakeholders that should have been involved: Click here to enter your comments ☐ No, there were constraints to their participation: Click here to enter your comments ☐ I don't know
9. In your opinion, did the Working Group (WG) have a balanced representation of various stakeholder categories? (meaning no single concerned stakeholder group was dominant nor dominated)	☐ Yes ☐ No, underrepresented stakeholder categories are: Click here to enter your comments ☐ No, overrepresented/dominant stakeholder categories are: Click here to enter your comments ☐ I don't know
10. Did the stakeholder representatives in the WG come from all relevant regions from your country? ► If no, which regions were not or poorly represented?	☐ Yes ☐ I don't know ☐ No, the following region(s) was (were) not / poorly represented: Click here to enter your comments
11.a) Are you aware if any substantive and/or process complaints and appeals relating to the standard setting process were formally submitted to PEFC Balkan, by you or any other stakeholder?	☐ Yes, there was a formal complaint / appeal about Click here to enter your comments ☐ No ☐ I don't know
b) In case of any complaints, have these complaints and appeals been validated , impartially and objectively evaluated , and is the decision communicated to the complainant?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
12. Should we be aware of certain (sensitive) issues in our assessment of the PEFC Balkan Scheme?	☐ Yes (please specify) Click here to enter your comments ☐ No ☐ I don't know

Questions 13-20 are for Working Group (WG) members only.

If you did participate in the WG, please continue with **question 13**.



Question to stakeholder	Answer
13. Did the working group include stakeholders 1) with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, 2) those affected by the standard, and 3) those that can influence implementation of the standard ?	☐ Yes ☐ No, please provide an explanation: Click here to enter your comments ☐ I don't know
14. Did you receive invitations and documents for WG meetings in a timely manner ?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
15. Have all working draft documents (draft versions of the standard) been available to all members of the WG?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
16. Have you been provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and to provide feedback on the working drafts?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
17. Have feedback and views submitted by any member of the WG been considered in an open and transparent way where the outcome of these considerations is recorded?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
18. Has all feedback received during the public consultation been considered in an objective manner by the WG?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
19. Was the decision of the WG to recommend the final draft for formal approval taken on the basis of consensus ? Consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity, as long as there was no sustained opposition to a substantial issue.	☐ Yes ☐ No, the issue was resolved in the following way: Click here to enter your comments ☐ I don't know
20. In case no consensus was reached by the WG on certain issues, were these issues resolved and in which way?	☐ Yes, the issue(s) was resolved in the following way: Click here to enter your comments ☐ No (please explain): Click here to enter your comments

Please return the answers latest by 26th of November 2021. You can direct your response by E-mail to: info@forminternational.nl

Thank you for your time and cooperation.



Annex 3 Results of International Consultation

There were no comments received during the International Consultation.



Annex 4 Internal review

Report chapter / Page	Assessor's report statement	PEFCC's Internal Review comment	Assessor's response
PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020, criteria 1.3	(no specific session) Text in standard: "It is prohibited to decrease the area of forest and forest land through conversion to other types of land use unless in justified circumstances where the conversion is in compliance with: a) (...) if conversion of forest area is lower than 1%,"	1% of what?	This is indeed too vague, and added as a nonconformity.
PEFC RS-BiH 03:2020, criteria 4.8	(no specific session) Text in standard: "Traditional way of management of coppice forest can be conducted on appropriate habitats and in cases where it is ecologically, socially and economically viable. Deforestation and permanent change of use of forest land is allowed only in cases defined by law.	What is the connection to 1.3? Does this allow conversion of coppice forest only with legal compliance?	This risks misinterpretation or discussion on interpretation and therefore might lead to conversion coppice forests without complying with PEFC benchmark requirement 8.1.4. The nonconformity is added.
PEFC MK 03:2020, criteria 1.3	"It is prohibited to decrease the area of forest and forest land through conversion to other types of land use(...) unless in justified circumstances where the conversion is in compliance with: a) (...) if conversion of forest area is lower of 1%,"	1% of what?	This is indeed too vague, and added as a nonconformity.
PEFC SLO 03:2021 title (Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable	(no specific session)	What does "at the Regional Level" refer to? The note on page 1 defines Slovenia as one region. Recommend to find an alternate wording for	This is included as observation in section 11.1.



Report chapter / Page	Assessor's report statement	PEFCC's Internal Review comment	Assessor's response
Forest Management at the Regional Level)		this document, because in its current for it's misleading.	
PEFC SLO 03:2021, Chapter 8	(no specific session)	Duplication of description of criteria and indicators	This is included as observation in section 11.1.
Chapter 11.2 (nonconformities in the Slovenia Forest Management Standard)	Requirement: 8.1.4 The standard requires that forest conversion shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion: d) does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and Evidence: PEFC SLO 03:2021 V2 "1.1.a.5 Deforestation (...) shall not be allowed except in justified cases. Following criteria shall be met: - does not destroy larger areas of forests with significantly high carbon stock" Assessor's comments: The use of the word 'larger' indicates that deforestation of smaller areas of significantly high carbon stock would be accepted, which is not in agreement with the requirement.	In addition this should be covered by forest conversion. Please reflect on this in the "assessor's comments" section	This is covered by the full text of 1.1.a.5 which is now added to chapter 11.2: "Deforestation of a certified forest which is aimed at converting land into agricultural or other non-forest land use, including the conversion of forest into a plantation of forest trees, shall not be allowed except in justified cases."
Annex 1, Part II	Requirement: 4.3.3 The standard shall define which requirements of the sustainable forest management standard may be fulfilled on group level. Evidence of compliance: PEFC BS 06:2021 V2 "4.4. Fulfilling requirements of the sustainable forest management standard at group level	Please clarify, because this does not deliver clear answer on what requirements are fulfilled at group and at participant level	The procedures do not specifically indicate which requirements may be fulfilled on group level, rather it indicates that requirements of the standard that are normative due to national



Report chapter / Page	Assessor's report statement	PEFCC's Internal Review comment	Assessor's response
	Requirements that are normative due to national legislation should be fulfilled and monitored at regional or group level"		legislation are those that may be fulfilled on group level.



Annex 5 Report on the Field Assessment

From 13 to 17 December 2021, one of the Assessors (Ms. Esther Boer) visited Bosnia and Herzegovina for the field assessment. The field assessment consisted of:

- Meetings with APFO “Naša Šuma” to discuss general matters of the PEFC Balkan scheme and remaining issues in the various standards and procedures;
- Meetings with stakeholders, including members from each stakeholder group: economic, environmental, education, science and other institutions, and the social sector and youth; and members from different organisations within these groups, to discuss how the standard setting was done and to discuss specific forestry matters in RS-BiH, and to get a better picture of the RS-BiH forestry sector;
- Field visit to one wood processing company in RS to get a better picture of the RS forestry sector and to discuss specific matters with field operators.

The itinerary of the field assessment is presented in the table below.

Date	Stakeholder group / Sector	Organization	Person / representative
13-1-2021	1	N.A.	NGB APFO Nasa Suma to discuss general matters of the PEFC Balkan system and remaining issues in the standard setting procedures and procedures.
	2	Economic	Šuma Plan
	3	Environmental	Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage
	4	Economic	Hunting Association of Republic of Srpska
14-1-2021	5	Economic / Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Srpska
	6	Economic	Association of Forestry and Wood Processing of the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Srpska
	7	Education, science and other institutions	Faculty of Forestry Banja Luka
15-1-2019	8	Economic	Public Forest Enterprise “Forest of Republic of Srpska”



Date	Stakeholder group / Sector	Organization	Person / representative	
16-12-2019	9	Environmental	NGO “Zelene Staze“	Mr. Boro Marić
	10	Social sector and youth	APFO “Naša Šuma”	Mr. Aleksandar Mrkobrada
	11	N.A.	Field visit wood processing enterprise Elgrad Teslić	-
	12	Education, science and other institutions	Faculty of Agriculture East Sarajevo-PFIS Sarajevo	Dr. Stefan Bojić

Main outcomes of the field assessment:

- Stakeholders were positive on the standard setting process, they are looking forward to have the System endorsed by PEFC Council;
- No concerns came up by interviewing the stakeholders on the standard setting process;
- No concerns came up by interviewing the stakeholder on specific issues from the forest management standard;
- Stakeholders are focused on getting PEFC certification for the certification of private forests. They are particularly interested in group certification as there are many private forest owners with small plots (0.8 ha on average).
- Following interviews with stakeholders it became clear that various discussions about the standard have also taken place informally. There seems to be an informal cultural where people call each other or discuss elements of the standard over coffee. Although the WG only comprised 5 people, other interviewed stakeholders and members of the Council for SFM found that they did have sufficient options to put their ideas and wishes into the standard. It was mentioned numerous times that it had been a very transparent and open process and that emails on the process had been constant.
- Stakeholders are often representing multiple interest, it is not always the case that they are only representing one industry. Members of the faculty were e.g. also promoting environmental and social interest, and members of the economic group were also focused on the interest of trade unions.
- A main problem for wider participation in the WG was the lack of a salary for the work. Some people had indicated that they only wanted to be in the WG if they received financial compensation (a salary, not just compensation for travel) for the work. BiH/RS costs of living are high compared to the salaries people can earn, which may contribute to the unwillingness of people to do voluntary work.



