

PEFC General Assembly Minutes

(Virtual meeting with online voting)

Wednesday 16 November 2022

11:00 - 14:00 Geneva time

27th General Assembly

PRESENT:

National Governing Bodies from:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.

International Stakeholder Members:

Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI), Celulosa Arauco, International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA), International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA), Metsä Group, Mondi, SAPPI, Smurfit Kappa, Stora Enso and WestRock Company.

Members of the Board

Richard Ali, Lena Ek, Sara El Kadri, David Ford, Guy Gleysteen, Mohd Nurudeen Iddrisu, Riikka Joukio, Fatimah Mohammad, Gerald Pfiffinger, Kurt Ramskogler, Eduardo Rojas Briaes, Suzette Weeding, Dradjad Wibowo.

APOLOGIES:

National Governing Bodies:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Congo, Gabon, Guyana, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Slovenia and Turkey.

International Stakeholder Members:

Suzano Pulp and Paper, UPM Kymmene, European Panel Federation (EPF), APP Timber, Olam Global Agri, CEPF, DoubleA 1991 Public Co Limited, ETTF, EPIS,

RECOFTC, APRIL Asia, Bio Energy Europe, CEETTAR, CEPI, ETS European Tissue Symposium, Purinusa Ekaperinusa (APP), USSE, and Weyerhaeuser.

Members of the Board:

Sarah Khatib, Josien Tokoe

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Michael Berger - Secretary General and CEO- PEFC International
- PEFC International Staff
- Esa Härmälä – Chair of the Nominations Committee
- Brian Kernohan – Former PEFC Board Member
- Eva Ursula Müller – Board Member candidate
- Scott Robertson – Board Member candidate

Of a total of 132 eligible votes, 111 votes were present (84%)

1. AGENDA

Unanimously Agreed:

- To approve the Agenda of the 27th General Assembly.

2. MINUTES OF THE 26TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Agreed:

- To approve the minutes of the 26th General Assembly held virtually on 17th November 2021.

92 votes "For" and 7 votes "Abstain" (New Zealand, Portugal, Russia)

3. PEFC REFLECTIONS

Keynote speech: Chair ([see recording](#), speech starts at 00:09:48). Mr Eduardo Rojas Briales highlighted at length the key points which have affected PEFC for the past 12 months, how these challenges and opportunities have shaped our work internally and externally and how PEFC has had to adapt these with agility. His focus points were the changes related to the PEFC frame (reality vs. pressure points), how crucial it is to build legitimacy of forestry, strengthening forest certification, visualise the social dimension of forestry, how to further develop our work including general budget, membership, following the forest discussion and science development, regionalisation, what our mid-term priorities are in relation to partners, and what the way forward is for PEFC.

Message: Secretary General ([see recording](#), speech starts at 01:05:48). Mr Michael Berger defined what the composition of the Secretariat was and where its staff and offices are located. Then, he highlighted what the key issues were in 2022: changes in top leadership, "conflict timber" following the outbreak of the Ukraine war, stakeholder outreach and politics and collaborative spirit at large. PEFC needs to further enhance its strengths to explore and reach out for more opportunities.

A Q&A session followed, focussing on the "conflict timber" vis-à-vis the Board's standpoint and the 31 December deadline, the time (budget) constraints to hold our GA in November, and the issue of communication (network vs. budget).

4. FINANCES

4.1 Audited Accounts for Year-End 2021

Agreed:

- To approve the audited accounts for the period 01 January to 31 December 2021, as prepared by Interexperts SA.

82 votes "For" and 3 votes "Abstain" (Celulosa Arauco, ICFPA, UPM Kymenee)

4.2 Budget and membership fees 2023

The Chair of the Management Accounts Committee (MAC) presented the 2023 budget. He explained the current deficit and how to balance it. The funds are present to operate our activities, and the figures represent the best approach to allow our operations to be sustainable. He confirmed that there would be no changes to the underlying membership rate / cap structure for 2023.

Agreed:

- To approve the 2023 budget (and note that the retained profit from 2021 will be used to fund the expected losses for both 2022 and 2023).

84 votes "For" and 2 votes "Abstain" (Belgium, ICFPA)

The Chair answered a question related to budget sustainability and he indicated the need to explore other sources of funding.

4.3 Appointment of Auditor

Agreed:

- To appoint "Interexperts SA" as the PEFC Council Auditor for the year end accounts (as at 31 December 2021), in accordance with the PEFC Council Statutes, Article 5, Chapter 10, section V.

84 votes "For" and 6 votes "Abstain" (Russia, ICFPA)

The Secretary General explained that the Board was currently discussing changing our auditor when our new finance IT system is in place.

5. ELECTIONS

5.1 Election of The two Vice-Chairs and four Members of The Board

Mr Esa Härmälä, Chair of the PEFC Council Nominations Committee, presented the Nominations Committee report for 2022.

He explained in great detail what the Nominations Committee tasks and mandate were, what the various candidate categories were, the selection requirements and how the process was implemented. He expressed his disappointment that the ENGO position could not be fulfilled this time round.

Agreed:

- To appoint two Vice Chairs:
 - David Ford as first Vice Chair - 2022-2025
 - Suzette Weeding as second Vice Chair - 2022-2023 (completing one year of a three-year term Vice Chair position being vacated by the departing Vice Chair)
- To appoint four Board members:
 - Eva Müller - 2022-2025
 - Guy Gleysteen - 2022-2025
 - Kurt Ramskogler – 2022-2025
 - Scott Robertson – 2022-2025

*86 votes “For” and 6 votes “Abstain”
(Russia, ICFPA)*

Ms. Eva Ursula Müller and Mr. Scott Robertson, the newly nominated Members to the Board of Directors took the opportunity to introduce themselves. Re-elected Vice-Chairs and Members briefly took the floor too.

The Chair officially welcomed them to the PEFC Board of Directors.

5.2 Election of Nominations Committee

The Chair briefly introduced Ms. Jan McAlpine.

Agreed:

- To re-appoint Mrs Jan McAlpine as member of the Nominations Committee.

*87 votes “For” and 7 votes “Abstain”
(Russia, Celulosa Arauco, ICFPA)*

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair noted that it was the last General Assembly for Ms. Riikka Joukio. On behalf of the Board and the PEFC family, he expressed his thanks for her contribution as Member (for 6 years) and Vice-Chair (since 2020) of the Board, her commitment and support provided, recalling the General Assembly held in Helsinki in 2017. Ms. Joukio then said a few words.

The Chair then acknowledged the work done by departing Board Members Ms. Josien Aloema and Ms. Sarah Khatik.

7. PEFC COUNCIL MEETING DATES & SUBMISSION DEADLINES 2023

The General Assembly noted the meeting dates and submission deadlines for 2023 as agreed by the Board.

7.1 Date and venue of 28th and 29th PEFC General Assemblies

Monday 15 May 2023 – Vancouver

Wednesday 15 November 2023 – Virtually

SFI President and CEO gave a comprehensive overview on the upcoming GA meeting in Vancouver, which will be an SFI / PEFC joint event. She highlighted what was to be expected about these governance meetings, joint sessions with SFI and what the key learning from this conference will be. She also gave some practical organisational advice on how best to get prepared.

Signed:

Eduardo Rojas Brialess, Chair

Michael Berger, Secretary General