FAQ: PEFC’s alignment with EUDR

This FAQ answers your questions related to PEFC’s alignment to EUDR. It is updated regularly. For the European Commission EUDR FAQ, please click here.

PEFC mission related

1) What is PEFC?
PEFC, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, is a leading global alliance of national forest certification systems. As an international non-profit, non-governmental organization, we are dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management through independent third-party certification.

With over 280 million hectares of PEFC-certified forest, we are the largest forest certification system in the world covering 76% (September 2023) of global certified forests. To this must be added more than 20,000 companies that have obtained PEFC chain of custody certification, demonstrating their commitment to responsible sourcing of certified products.

Dedicated to safeguarding forests, we thrive to balance all dimensions to ensure healthy forests, healthy forest communities, healthy forest workers and healthy forest economy. For a summary of the PEFC Alliance 2030 strategy, click here.

2) How do PEFC and EUDR relate to each other?
Both initiatives share the same goal of fighting illegal logging. Since its creation in 1999, PEFC has always had deforestation-free requirements in its sustainable forest management standard. The EUDR is adding a new complementary framework that PEFC will incorporate in both Sustainable Forest Management and Chain of Custody standards and modules. To reduce complexity and cost for all actors, forest owners and supply chain, PEFC’s principles of agility, dialogue, and pragmatism are applied to our alignment roadmap.

3) How is PEFC working with the European Commission?
At PEFC, we have a longstanding commitment to halting deforestation through the promotion of sustainable forest management and products that do not contribute to forest loss. We are committed to continuing this work and strongly support the objectives of the EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR). PEFC has a dedicated EU Affairs representative based in Brussels at the European Forestry House and we regularly engage with the European Commission through the working groups that are established.
PEFC system related

4) When is the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management benchmark standard going to be aligned to EUDR?

Our established roadmap takes us to a (European) summer 2024 readiness, after approval by the PEFC International Board and vote by the PEFC members. We have three taskforces made of multistakeholder experts dedicated to three work streams: sustainable forest management, chain of custody, and data integrity.

5) When will the PEFC national systems be aligned to EUDR?

In parallel to the development of the EUDR alignment solutions, we are working with our members to get their revision process ready, in most cases under an approved fast-track approach.

Sustainable Forest Management related

6) Which PEFC SFM requirements are already aligned with EUDR?

The PEFC Sustainable Forest Management standard (ST 1003) covers a much wider spectrum of sustainability safeguards that reach far beyond the EUDR requirements and its scope. For example, enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle, forest ecosystem health and vitality, enhancement of biological diversity or enhancement of protective functions. But beyond these, the fundamental pillar is legal compliance, which is covered already to a great extent in PEFC ST 1003.

7) What are the EUDR SFM related requirements that PEFC needs to align with?

The EUDR has very specific approach to forest conversion and forest degradation, which deviate from the well-established PEFC definitions. This is understandable given the wider scope of the EUDR in terms of commodities and these approaches should be seen as a reflection of the additional attention for forests on a global scale.

8) How is PEFC working on SFM requirements alignment?

PEFC relies on thematic task forces and working groups to consider and address the potential gaps. The leading work on the SFM requirements will be implemented by the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management Working Group in close cooperation with the Task Force on Forest Management aspects of the EUDR, but contributions will be called on for specific sections from the Trees outside Forests Task Force or from the EUDR Data Task Force.

Chain of Custody related

9) What are the EUDR chain of custody related requirements that PEFC needs to align with?

EUDR has introduced geolocation and harvesting date range data, which need to be presented by Operators as part of their DDS statement, and PEFC is researching potential solutions to help PEFC chain of custody certified organisations with this.
Other alignment issues include refining definitions of recycled materials, ensuring that any claims are technically correct, and ensuring that the DDS system includes checks on deforestation and degradation as per the EU definitions.

10) How is PEFC working on chain of custody requirements alignment?

PEFC has a permanent Chain of Custody Working Group (CoC WG), which includes experts, auditors, companies, practitioners and PEFC members from around the world. The CoC WG is working to create a modular alignment solution by analysing the EUDR requirements and carrying out gap analysis.

11) How can PEFC support businesses to comply with EUDR traceability requirements?

The PEFC Data Task Force and the SFM and CoC Working Groups are working closely on solutions for gathering and sharing EUDR traceability data such as geolocation of land plots and time of harvesting.

The existing PEFC chain of custody system already contains important data on certified organisations, products, and species. The database will be developed to improve the amount of data and information available to organisations who need to create an EUDR DDS statement, or who need to contribute data into a DDS.

12) Is there a difference between PEFC certified and uncertified material in terms of achieving EUDR compliance?

The PEFC chain of custody system already requires Due Diligence to be done on certified and uncertified materials, and these DDS requirements will be aligned with EUDR through a modular solution. Operators and Traders will be required to check that uncertified materials entering a supply chain linked to the EU have the necessary geolocation and harvesting time data available.

PEFC has the capability to capture and appropriately share geolocation data from PEFC certified forests, and this is currently being assessed by the SFM Working Group and Data Task Force.

13) What digital system is PEFC planning on using to ensure traceability and transparency of data?

Currently PEFC has a Data Task Force comprising 20 industry experts from around the world examining the best data solutions for PEFC to adopt. Likely solutions may include developing the PEFC database and/or collaborating with other service providers to obtain and share appropriately certified forests geolocation and/or harvesting date range data.

14) Will the PEFC system be connected to the EU Commission database?

The EU have not yet announced any data linkage possibilities for their database. As and when the EU complete their trials, PEFC will follow any developments closely that relate to possibilities to send data to the EU database automatically.
Certification bodies related

15) How can PEFC certification bodies assess conformity with both PEFC standards and EUDR requirements?

Once the various PEFC Task Forces and Working Groups have completed their work, and when the standards are aligned, training will be offered to certification bodies and auditors. This is planned for the second half of 2024 and more details will be released later in the year. The training will include details of how certification bodies will need to adapt their systems and audit checklists to be able to audit the aligned requirements.

16) When will the SFM auditor training about the SFM changes start?

Sustainable Forestry Management EUDR alignment training will be offered in the second half of 2024 and details will be advertised on the PEFC International website and released via regular EUDR newsletters.

17) How do I register?

Registration details for individual courses will be advertised on the PEFC International website training page.

18) When will the chain of custody auditor training about the chain of custody changes start?

Chain of Custody EUDR alignment training will be offered in the second half of 2024 and details will be advertised on the PEFC International website and released via regular EUDR newsletters.

19) How do I register?

Registration details for individual courses will be advertised on the PEFC International website training page.

PEFC Benefits

20) Can businesses use PEFC certification to automatically comply with the EUDR?

Voluntary certification schemes cannot offer automatic compliance with EUDR as the legal liability always rests with the Operators and Traders. Through aligning PEFC standards to EUDR, PEFC will assist supply chain actors in their due diligence, risk assessment and data requirements for EUDR compliance.

21) How is PEFC approaching the alignment to EUDR roadmap?

We have three works streams: sustainable forest management, chain of custody, and data, working in a fast-track process with experts organised in taskforces recommending solutions to working groups. This is aligned with our multi-stakeholder engagement according to UN agenda 21.
22) How does PEFC certification support forest owners and businesses in complying with the EUDR?

Our important principles of agility, dialogue, and pragmatism apply and will help PEFC, its members and partners to develop solutions attainable by all large and small operators. As always, we don’t want to leave anyone out of sustainable forest management practices and responsible sourcing.

Communications related

23) How do I keep myself up to date with PEFC progress on EUDR alignment?

We are regularly updating our EUDR landing page and you can also contact us at EUDR@pefc.org