

PROJECT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONALISATION OF A PAFC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR THE CONGO BASIN



PAFC CONGO BASIN STANDARD DEVELOPMENT REPORT

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ACRONYMS

ATIBT	: Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux
CAGDF	: Cercle d’Appui à la Gestion Durable des Forêts
CAR	: Central African Republic
CEFDHAC	: Conférence des Ecosystèmes Forestiers Denses et humides d’Afrique Centrale
CERAD	: Centre de Recherche Appliqué pour le Développement
CIB-OLAM	: Congolaise Industrielle du Bois - OLAM
DGF	: Direction Générale des Forêts
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
DVRF	: Direction de la Valorisation des ressources Forestières
EGA	: Extraordinary General Assembly
ENSET	: Ecole Nationale Supérieure de l’Enseignement Technique
ENSYTG	: Entente Syndicale des Travailleurs
FLAG	: Forest Legality Advisory Group
GSEZ	: Gabon Special Economic Zone
IRAF	: Institut de Recherches Agronomiques et Forestières
NGB	: National Governing Body
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
PAFC CB	: Pan African Forest Certification Congo Basin
PAFC	: Pan African Forest Certification
PAFFB	: Projet d’Appui à la Filière Forêt Bois
PDGF	: Plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Forêts
PEFC	: Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes
PW-CEB	: Precious Woods –Compagnie Equatoriale des Bois
REPALEAC	: Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales pour la Gestion Durable des Ecosystèmes Forestiers d’Afrique Centrale
REPAR	: Réseau des Parlementaires pour la Gestion Durable des Ecosystèmes Forestiers d’Afrique Centrale
UTB TP BSP	: Union des Travailleurs du Bâtiment Travaux Public Bois Sciage et Placage
WCS	: World Conservation Society



SUMMARY OF THE STANDARD-SETTING PROCESS

The standard-setting process started in June 2019 with the recruitment of the regional coordinator Germain YENE YENE from Cameroon. After getting acquainted with PEFC and project documentation to appropriate the project, the coordinator held a meeting with each of the three national governing bodies (NGB) concerned namely PAFC Cameroon, PAFC Congo and PAFC Gabon for explanations and exchanges regarding the development of the standard and the scheme in general.

The PAFC Congo Basin standard-setting has gone through the steps presented in the time table below. It should be noted that the initial timeframe was adjusted as some actions and tasks were postponed due to the covid19 restriction's measures taken by the countries of NGB involved in the project.

Table 1: Steps followed in the PAFC Congo Basin standards-setting process

Schedule	Step	Description
August – September 2019	Standard-setting documentation drafting	Drafting of the PAFC Congo Basin standard development procedure
		Drafting and validation of the project proposal
		Stakeholders identification and drafting of stakeholders mapping
October 2019	Public announcement of the launch of the standard-setting process and invitation to stakeholders to express their interest	Emails and necessary documentation sent to stakeholders and publication of the announcement on websites, newspapers, radios
October – November 2019	Creation of the working group (named Forum) and review of the standard-setting process	Selection of the Forum members
		Publication of the list of Forum members and the selection report
		Analysis of the comments received on the announcement documents



Schedule	Step	Description
November 2019	First regional workshop of the standard-setting	Election of a Chairperson, Secretary and Forum facilitator
		Validation of the standard-setting procedure by taking into account all comments received since the invitation and the mapping of stakeholders
		Development by consensus of a version of the standard for the first public consultation
December 2019 - February 2020	First public consultation (60 days) and standard review	60 days to gather comments
		Analysis of comments
		Development of a new version of the standard based on first public consultation comments for pilot testing
April – May 2020	Pilot test	Validation of any modifications made by the members of the PAFC Congo Basin Forum (regional working group)
		Desktop testing of forest management standard
		Analysis of the pilot test results
		Development of a new version of the forest management standard for the second public consultation based on pilot test results analysis



Schedule	Step	Description
May – September 2020	Second Public consultation (35 days) and standard review	35 days to gather comments
		Analysis of comments
		Development of a new version of the standard based on first public consultation comments for pilot testing
		Pre-validation of changes proposed in the frame of the preparation of a version to be presented for validation at the Forum
October 2020	Holding of the second regional workshop for approval of the standard	Validation of the final version of the standard by consensus by the PAFC Congo Basin Forum members
November-December 2020	Approval and publication of the standard by ATIBT	Adoption of the standard at national levels by National governing bodies
December 2020		Summary report to be presented at the ATIBT approval meeting
December 2020		ATIBT approval decision
December 2020		Submission to PEFC International
November 2021		Mutual Recognition
November 2021		Publication of the PAFC Congo Basin standards

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope and preliminary information on the standard

The current development report revolves around the development process of the regional forest management certification standard of PAFC Congo Basin (PAFC CB). The PAFC CB forest management certification standard defines requirements in terms of forest management certification in the Congo Basin. That regional standard has been developed based on the PEFC requirements for the Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of Certification Systems and their Revision.

The PAFC Congo Basin regional forest management certification standard will be applicable to forest management and logging operations in forest concessions of Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Gabon. The Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) could later adopt the PAFC Congo Basin forest management standard once national governing bodies are set up if they intend to operate under the PAFC CB certification scheme.

National interpretation guides for the regional standard will be developed in collaboration with each NGB concerned. The aim of the guides will be to contextualize the regional standard for the assessments of compliance of the audited forest management systems. However, no requirement of the regional standard may be modified by these guides.

The standard development process summarised in this report did not concern the chain of custody standard. It has been agreed to adopt the PEFC chain of custody standard for PAFC CB certification scheme.

1.2. The objective of the development report

This report provides a description and evidence of the different steps followed in the PAFC Congo Basin forest management certification standard development process. The report demonstrates compliance with both the PAFC Congo Basin Standard Setting Procedures and PEFC's requirements.

2. STANDARD-SETTING PROCEDURE

For the development of the forest management certification standard, a draft procedure has been developed and validated by the project team. That draft was submitted to the PAFC CB regional standard working group for examination and validation during the first regional workshop. The procedure defines the stages of the standard development, the selection criteria and operating mode for regional working group members, experts and other stakeholders, and other requirements linked to the development process.

3. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

The objective of the stakeholder mapping was to identify the relevant stakeholders within the scope of the standard-setting process in the countries concerned. That stakeholder mapping, in the frame of our regional initiative, was also to identify stakeholders having activities across the Congo Basin region but who are located outside the three concerned countries namely Cameroon, Congo and Gabon. The three national governing bodies involved in the development process (PAFC Cameroun, PAFC Congo and PAFC Gabon) designed the stakeholder mapping with the support of the project team. Each PAFC was responsible for filling in the identification matrix of stakeholders in its country, and the project

team identified regional stakeholders and drafted the narrative part of the mapping report. Thus, four stakeholder identification matrices were created:

- Stakeholder matrix for Cameroon;
- Stakeholder matrix for Congo;
- Stakeholder matrix for Gabon
- Stakeholder matrix for regional stakeholders.

Stakeholders identified are forest owners, companies and forest industry organisations, local populations, NGOs, the science and technology community, and labour unions. These stakeholders have been separated into three different categories: non-disadvantaged key stakeholders, disadvantaged key stakeholders and disadvantaged stakeholders. Categorising the stakeholders allowed the project team to tailor our actions for the benefit of disadvantaged stakeholders if needed.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PROCESS AND INVITATION TO STAKEHOLDERS

The project proposal, the stakeholder mapping and the PAFC Congo Basin standard development procedure are three documents that have been developed by the project team to prepare the public launch of the standard development process. At the same time, we used the stakeholder mapping to invite the stakeholders to participate in the development process through a call for interest. The purpose of this call for interest was to constitute, among the expressions of interest received, a working group called "Forum" to work on the elaboration of the PAFC Congo Basin forest certification standard.

The public announcement of the development process launch and the call for interest have been published on the ATIBT and PAFC's websites. A few press releases were published in some local newspapers, some internet press sites and radio stations in each country concerned. Some PAFCs also distributed these publications and press releases to their personal networks (Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn...). These publications and broadcasts are gathered in appendix 1.

The public announcement of the development process launch and the call for interest were sent to identified stakeholders by emails attached with the necessary documents (see emails to the stakeholders identified in appendix 2, the form for comments, the form for the expression of interest and the call for interest in appendix 3). Reminder emails were sent ten days later (see reminder emails in appendix 4).

The call for interest was sent to 273 national stakeholders from the three countries and 20 regional stakeholders from stakeholder mapping contacts.

5. CREATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP – THE CONGO BASIN PAFC FORUM

5.1. Expressions of interest received

From the 293 stakeholders to whom the call for interest was sent, 88 have formally expressed their interest in participating in the process as members of the Forum by sending back their expression of interest form. The four groups of interest listed in the standard-setting procedure were identified among the expressions of interest received, namely:

- The interest of forest owners and administration;

- The interest of logging companies and timber processors;
- The interest of the preservation of nature;
- The interest of preserving the population livelihoods, and preserving the employees living and working conditions.

5.2. Criteria for selecting stakeholders for the Forum

The composition of the Forum was made on the basis of the following considerations:

- A balance between the interests of the different stakeholders: in order to achieve this balance, the number of members of the different categories of interest, presented above, was equal (+ or - one person);
- Geographic distribution: include stakeholders from each country covered by the PAFC Congo Basin standard and regional stakeholders;
- Presence of key stakeholders: include at least 50% of stakeholders identified as key stakeholders. Their participation was pro-actively sought.
- Presence of affected stakeholders: includes at least 40% of stakeholders identified as materially and directly affected by the implementation of standards.

5.3. Analysis of expressions of interest

The PAFC Congo Basin Forum member choice was therefore made according to the above criteria as well as on gender equity, the relevance of the organisation, the relevance of the personal experience of the representative and the resources available for the standard development process.

In order to constitute the Forum and to work as efficiently as possible, it was chosen to have in the Forum a representative of each category per country as well as, for each category, a representative of an organisation carrying out activities in different countries (regional stakeholders). Thus the Forum was made up of 16 members (4 "geographic areas" x 4 categories of interest).

So, each expression of interest was analysed by:

- Determining the status of each: key stakeholder, disadvantaged stakeholder, affected stakeholder (according to the definitions of the standard-setting procedure);
- Determining the expertise of the stakeholder concerning forest management and / or forest certification.

Then, the expressions of interest received were sorted according to the geographical area of operations (national, regional) and the stakeholder interest group.

The two "best" candidates (based on key or affected stakeholder status and expertise) were selected by geographic area for each category of interest. Thus, in case the first choice was unavailable, the second choice was retained (see analysis grid and selection of Forum members in appendix 5).

5.4. Composition of the Forum

Based on the considerations and criteria indicated above, the list of the stakeholders selected as members of the Forum is detailed below:

Table 1: Members of the Forum

	Industry	Social	Administration	Environment
Cameroun	Pallisco (NGOUE Cécile)	CERAD (BIGOMBE Patrice / NKOUMBELE Francis)	Directeur des Forêts (NGOMIN Anicet)	WCS (MBENDA Grâce)
Congo	CIB-OLAM (ISTAC Vincent)	PDGF (MFOUTOU Sylvie)	DVRF (EBINA Paulette)	CAGDF (NKODIA Alfred)
Gabon	PW-CEB (ZAKAMDI David)	UTB TP BSP (MEBIAME Léon)	DGF (MINANGA Béatrice)	IRAF (ESSONO Protet)
Regional	Groupe Vicwood Thanry (AZO'O Niçaise)	REPALEAC (KAPUPU Diwa)	REPAR (ESSAMA Mathurin)	FLAG (OWADA Cyrille)

These Forum members come from the four categories of interest mentioned previously. The sixteen members of the Forum are all stakeholders identified as key stakeholders, including eight affected stakeholders and seven stakeholders classified as disadvantaged. The Forum is also composed of six women (see the publication on the Forum members selection and the list in appendix 5c).

5.5. The experts

Experts on the different aspects of sustainable forest management have been identified to participate in the workshops and potentially feed the debates with their knowledge and experience. However, they did not have the right to vote on the decisions taken by the Forum.

Four experts were chosen at the rate of one expert per Forum chamber.

	Cameroun	Gabon	Gabon	Régionale
Experts	ENSET (BIWOLE Achille, environnement)	GSEZ (Boldrini Sylvie, industry)	PAFFB (NYARE Nathalie, administration)	CEFDHAC (ESSOLA Roger, social)

At the end of the Forum selection process, the selected stakeholders were asked by emails to confirm that they agree to be part of the Forum according to the conditions set (see information emails on the participation conditions in appendix 6a) and participate to the various workshops.

6. FIRST FORUM WORKSHOP IN LIBREVILLE

6.1. Preparation of the workshop

After accepting the conditions of participation in the PAFC Congo Basin Standards Development Forum, the members of the Forum received with two-week anticipation the documents and invitations to participate in the first workshop of the Forum in Libreville from 24th to 29th November 2019 (see invitations and documents transmission emails in appendixes 6b to 6ze).

Due to last-minute unavailability, two Forum members did not attend the workshop, and two others did not directly participate in the last day. They gave their colleague power of attorney to act in their stead during the workshop (see proxies in appendix 7). In addition to the members of the Forum, the

four selected experts took part in the discussions alongside representatives of the three national PAFCs concerned (see attendance lists in appendix 8 and the workshop report in appendix 9)

6.2. Workshop outputs

After five days of discussions on the PAFC Congo Basin forest management certification standards working document, the members of the Forum produced the first version of the forest management certification standard. This first version was used for the first public consultation opened to forest management stakeholders of the Congo Basin (see the version of the standard referred to in appendix 10a). At the end of the workshop, the participants drafted and agreed on the final communiqué before the official closing ceremony on 29th November 2019 (see the final communiqué in appendix 10b).

7. THE FIRST PUBLIC CONSULTATION

7.1. Launching of the public consultation

The launch of the first public consultation was announced to the public on 12th December 2019, and the official opening of this public consultation took place on 13th December 2019. The public consultation lasted 60 days from 13th December 2019 to 14th February 2020 (see the publications of the launch announcement of the first public consultation on various websites and newspapers in appendix 11).

Emails announcing the opening of this first public consultation on the PAFC Congo Basin regional forest management standard were sent to around 350 stakeholders involved in forest management in the Congo Basin (see emails launching the public consultation sent to stakeholders in appendix 12).

7.2. Comments from the first public consultation and treatments

At the end of this first public consultation on 14th February 2020, 191 comments were received from 17 stakeholders from industry, international organisations active in the field of natural resource management in the Congo Basin, education and research, civil society and consultants (see compilation table of comments in appendix 13). For each comments participants received an acknowledgement of receipt (appendix 14)

The comments received during this first public consultation were compiled into an Excel file and analysed. After these analyses, responses were formulated for each comment as well as proposed modifications (reformulations, additions, deletions or creation of new requirements) to the standard following some comments.

This Excel file with the proposed answers as well as the standard showing the proposed modifications were sent by email to the members of the Forum for discussion in order to validate, amend or reject them (see email transmission of documents and meeting date in appendix 16). Given the difficulty of working by email, it was proposed and agreed to run conference calls with the Forum to discuss the results of the first public consultation. A Skype teleconference was organised (see email proposing meeting date in appendix 17) for the adoption of a new version of the standard resulting from the contributions of the first public consultation. Unfortunately, the quorum, required for decision making was not reached. In addition, some participants experienced internet connection issues. Taking into account the limited time before the launch of the pilot test, the Forum agreed that the version of the standard with the propositions of modifications resulting from the first public consultation should be sent to the pilot test auditors (see standard with proposals for modifications in appendix 18). Thus, the

proposed modifications resulting from this public consultation and the results of the pilot test will be submitted to the Forum for approval in order to obtain the standard that will be submitted to the second public consultation.

An email with the Excel table of responses formulated for each comment was sent to stakeholders who submitted comments (see email transmission of responses to stakeholders in appendix 19).

8. THE PILOT TEST

8.1. Selection of the auditors

Taking into account the activity's limited budget, the restrictions imposed following covid-19 and PEFC's requirements for carrying out the pilot test, the project adopted the option of a pilot test carried out in desktop mode by two experienced auditors in forest management certification audits in Congo Basin countries. Following a call for tenders indicating the main expectations of the project: test the relevance, the applicability and the auditability of each requirement of the standard, and of the appendices (see the ToR in Appendix 20), two auditors were selected and signed contracts (see Appendixes 21a, 21b and 21c). The pilot test process consisted of comparing each requirement of the standard with the realities on the ground in an audit situation in order to receive feedback from the auditors on each element of the standard (see the pilot test report in Appendix 22).

8.2. Treatment of the results of the pilot test and the first public consultation

The results of the pilot test were shared and explained through a conference call to the project team. Some comments and propositions from the auditors were formulated as propositions for modifications to specific requirements and were sent to the Forum for validation, rejection or amendment (see emails proposing the date of the teleconference in appendix 23a and 23b, emails for transmission of documents to Forum members in appendix 24, emails confirming the teleconference date in appendix 25)

A conference call was organised with the Forum to seek for the validation, rejection or amendment of the modifications proposed by the first public consultation and the pilot test. Within the limited timeframe of the conference call, the Forum was able to vote on various propositions. Still, it could not cover all the points. A second teleconference was organised with the Forum on the 19th May 2020 (see email confirming the continuation of the teleconference on 19th May in appendix 26 and the zoom link in appendix 27) to finalise the discussion on the remaining points.

The second part of the teleconference held on 19th May 2020 enabled the members of the Forum to complete the discussions and validate the version of the PAFC Congo Basin forest management standard to be sent to the second public consultation (see the report of the meeting in Annex 28).

9. THE SECOND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

9.1. Launching of the second public consultation

The launch of the second public consultation was announced to the public on 22nd May 2020. It took place for 30 days until the 23rd June 2020 (see the publication of the announcement of the launch of the second public consultation on various sites and newspapers in appendix 29).

Emails announcing the opening of the PAFC Congo Basin regional forest management standard second public consultation were sent to 304 stakeholders involved in forest management in the Congo Basin. (see opening emails of the public consultation sent to stakeholders in appendix 30). Two weeks after the launch of the second public consultation reminder emails were sent to stakeholders who did not send feedback. (see reminder emails in appendix 31).

Following a stakeholder request, this second public consultation has been extended by five days, until 28th June, for a total of 35 days. This extension was brought to the attention of stakeholders by publication on the PAFC and ATIBT websites and by emails sent to the parties (see publications and emails announcing the postponement in appendix 32)

9.2. Comments from the second public consultation and treatments

At the end of the second public consultation on 28th June 2020, a total of 113 comments were received from 14 stakeholders from industry, international organisations active in the field of natural resource management in the Congo Basin, teaching and research, research firms and independent consultants.

The comments received during this second public consultation were compiled into an Excel file and analysed. After these analyses, responses were formulated for each comment as well as proposed modifications (reformulations, additions, deletions or creation of new requirements) to the standard following some comments.

This Excel file with the proposed answers as well as the standard showing the proposed modifications was sent by email to the members of the Forum (see email transmission of documents and proposition of meeting date in appendixes 33). Then a conference call was held on 2nd September 2020 for a pre-validation of the standard before the final validation workshop (see emails convening the teleconference on appendix 34a, 34b, 34c, 34d). The objective of that teleconference was to examine and adopt, reject and/or reword the propositions of modification formulated based on the comments received from the second public consultation. This conference call did not discuss the pending sustained oppositions concerning indicators on greenhouse gas and carbon stocks as well as indicators dealing with FPIC and some aspects on worker families' rights (see the second teleconference report on appendix 35).

To find a consensus between the main protagonists (members of the industry chamber) of the sustained oppositions mentioned above before the final workshop, 3 meetings were organized. The positive exchanges during these meetings made it possible to formulate new propositions of modifications for the indicators and appendixes concerned. These new propositions accepted by the protagonists were selected to be submitted to the Forum for examination during the final standard validation workshop.

10. THE FORUM FINAL VALIDATION WORKSHOP

10.1. Preparation of the workshop

The final workshop for the validation of the standard was initially scheduled to be held from 26th to 27th October 2020 in Brazzaville. But due to the restrictions imposed in the frame of Covid-19 crisis management, ambiguity of some requirements (uncertainty concerning the duration of the validity of PCR test and the systematic obligation for quarantine) and the hesitations of some Forum members to travel in that context, the option of a Video conference to be held at the same date was adopted. The members of the Forum received with two-week anticipation the documents to participate in the

second workshop of the Forum by video conference from 26th to 27th October 2020 (see documents transmission email in appendix 36a).

Thus, the video conference was held with 5 groups of participants in the virtual meeting room (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, DRC, France and Switzerland). A member of the Forum belonging to the industry chamber was unable to attend the workshop and give a proxy (see attendance lists in appendix 36b and 36c as well as the proxy in appendix 37).

10.2. Workshop outputs

After two days of exchanges between the members of the Forum and experts, the PAFC Congo Basin forest management certification standard was consensually validated by the Forum members on 27th of October (see the workshop report on appendix 38, the forest management standard validated on appendix 39, the different signatures of Forum members on validated documents in appendix 39a and the final communiqué of the workshop on appendix 40).

After the final workshop, an email with the Excel table of responses formulated for each comment was sent to stakeholders who submitted comments (see email transmission of responses to stakeholders in appendix 41) and the file of comments and answers were published on ATIBT website (see the link to the news in appendix 42).

11.ADOPTION BY THE NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES

After the regional working group validation of the PAFC CB forest management standard and the adoption of other PEFC standards and procedures for the PAFC CB certification scheme, Extraordinary General Assemblies (EGA) were organized by each national PAFC for the adoption of these documents.

11.1. PAFC Cameroon EGA

The PAFC Cameroon EGA was organized on December 03, 2020. Its ended by the adoption of the forest management standard PAFC BC by the members of PAFC Cameroon. This EGM also adopted the other PEFC standards as well as the operating procedures of the PAFC CB certification scheme (see minutes of the EGA with the list of other standards and procedures adopted by the members of PAFC Cameroon in appendix 43).

11.2. PAFC Gabon EGA

The PAFC Gabon EGA was organized on November 28, 2020. Its ended by the adoption of the forest management standard PAFC BC by the members of PAFC Gabon. This EGM also adopted the other PEFC standards as well as the operating procedures of the PAFC CB certification scheme (see minutes of the EGA with the list of other standards and procedures adopted by the members of PAFC Gabon in appendix 44).

11.3. PAFC Congo EGA

The PAFC Congo EGA was organized on November 28, 2020. Its ended by the adoption of the forest management standard PAFC BC by the members of PAFC Gabon. This EGM also adopted the other PEFC standards as well as the operating procedures of the PAFC CB certification scheme (see minutes of the EGA with the list of other standards and procedures adopted by the members of PAFC Congo in appendix 45).

12. VALIDATION BY ATIBT BOARD MEMBERS

After the regional working group validation of the PAFC CB forest management standard and the adoption of other PEFC standards and procedures for the PAFC CB certification scheme by national governing bodies namely PAFC Cameroon, PAFC Congo, PAFC Gabon, ATIBT held his board of directors on 18th December, 2020.

As the standardizing body in the frame of PAFC CB certification scheme development process, the gold of that board of directors was to operate the last validation of the documents mentioned above.

The board ended with the validation of the norm developed by the regional working group (see the minute of the board in appendix 46).