

The Danish PEFC certification system for sustainable forest management



PEFC
**Descriptive
document**

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Contents:

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. PURPOSE	4
3. REFERENCES	4
4. DEFINITIONS.....	5
5. DANISH FORESTRY – FACTS, INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKS AND LEGAL BASIS	5
6. STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENTATION.....	9
7. THE DANISH SCHEME – ORGANISATION.....	10
PEFC DENMARK’S OBJECTIVES:.....	10
PEFC DENMARK’S DUTIES:.....	10
ACCREDITATION BODY:.....	11
CERTIFICATION BODIES:.....	11
8. CERTIFICATION OPTIONS PURSUANT TO THE DANISH SCHEME	12
INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION:	12
GROUP CERTIFICATION:.....	12
9. USE OF THE PEFC TRADEMARK	13
10. APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES	13
11. IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES – TRANSITION PERIOD	14

1. Introduction

Forest management is a lengthy process, and the outcome of various management decisions often only becomes apparent after several decades. PEFC certification allows forest owners to document the fact that their forest management meets a number of established standards, and the wood can be sold as PEFC-certified. This allows them to comply with the increasingly stringent demands being seen in the market as consumers, businesses and authorities take more responsibility for their environmental footprints than ever before.

The purpose of certification of sustainable forest management is to use market-driven incentives to guide owners on the management and use of their forests in ways that are economically, ecologically and socially sustainable.

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification – PEFC Council was founded in 1999. PEFC is a private initiative with the aim of creating an internationally credible network of forest certification schemes promoting sustainable forest management. The scheme should provide consumers with an opportunity to purchase independently certified wood and wood products.

PEFC Denmark was founded in 1999, and the first Danish PEFC scheme was approved in 2002 before being revised in 2007, 2012 and, most recently, 2021. This version is the result of the third mandatory 5-year revision.

This document describes the structure of the Danish PEFC certification system for sustainable forest management (in the following referred to as “the Danish scheme”).

This document replaces *The Danish PEFC certification system for sustainable forest management, Revised document March 2012, with additions in October 2012 and November 2013*.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Danish scheme is to document and promote sustainable management of forests and to ensure that it is possible to track the certified wood throughout the entire processing and distribution chain, from forest to consumer.

PEFC Denmark is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Danish scheme, including revising the scheme at least once every 5 years in relation to practical experience and new knowledge in the field.

3. References

The Danish scheme is based on guidelines laid down by the PEFC Council in the international standards in force at any given time (PEFC ST) – www.pefc.org:

1. The PEFC Council's standard for sustainable forest management: Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements (PEFC ST 1003:2018)
2. The PEFC Council's standard for group certification of sustainable forest management: *Group Forest Management – Requirements (PEFC ST 1002:2018)*
3. The PEFC Council's requirements for certification and accreditation procedures: *Annex 6 to PEFC Technical document – Certification and Accreditation Procedures*

4. The PEFC Council's standard for chain of custody certification: *Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products – Requirements (PEFC ST 2002:2020)*
5. The PEFC Council's guidelines for logo usage: *PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements (PEFC ST 2001:2020)*
6. The PEFC Council's requirements for certification companies performing chain of custody certification: *Requirements for Certification Bodies Operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard (PEFC ST 2003:2020)*

The Danish Forest Management Standard is based on actual conditions for Danish forest management, the last 20 years of experience of certification and new information in respect of forest management and meets the PEFC Council's standard for sustainable forest management. The Danish requirements for group certification of sustainable forest management are also based on experience and actual conditions for Danish forest management and meet the PEFC Council's standard for group certification of sustainable forest management.

Danish requirements for accreditation and certification procedures are also based on experience and the requirements of the PEFC Council in respect of certification and accreditation procedures.

No specific Danish chain of custody standard has been developed, and the Danish scheme refers to the PEFC Council's international chain of custody standard for certification of chain of custody. The same applies to the requirements for the use of PEFC trademarks and requirements for certification bodies performing chain of custody certification according to the international chain of custody standard.

4. Definitions

Definitions found in *Terms and definitions – PEFC DK 007-3* are applicable in the Danish scheme.

5. Danish forestry – facts, institutional networks and legal basis

Conditions relating to forest management in Denmark are described in brief below to provide a basis for understanding the formulation of the Danish scheme.

5.1 Denmark's forests – the property structure

The Danish forest area covers around 625,600 hectares and so accounts for just over 14.5% of the total area of the country. In Denmark, 68% of land is owned by private individuals and enterprises, 4% is owned by funds and foundations and 23% is owned by the State or other public institutions. There are almost 24,000 forest owners in Denmark, few of whom own large areas, and there is a very large number of small properties.

A 2000 inventory from Statistics Denmark shows that 91% of properties are less than 20 hectares and occupy just 20% of the forest area.

The vast majority of small forest properties are situated adjacent to agricultural properties, and the forests are often too small and non-profitable to constitute an independent branch of management for the property. However, wood production from smaller forests nevertheless plays a significant part, as many owners join forces to form larger units with joint administration, thereby seeking to reduce the disadvantages in terms of their size.

Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of the area and the number of properties for different area classes (2000 figures).

Ejendomsfordelingen i Danmark (Danmarks Statistik 2000)

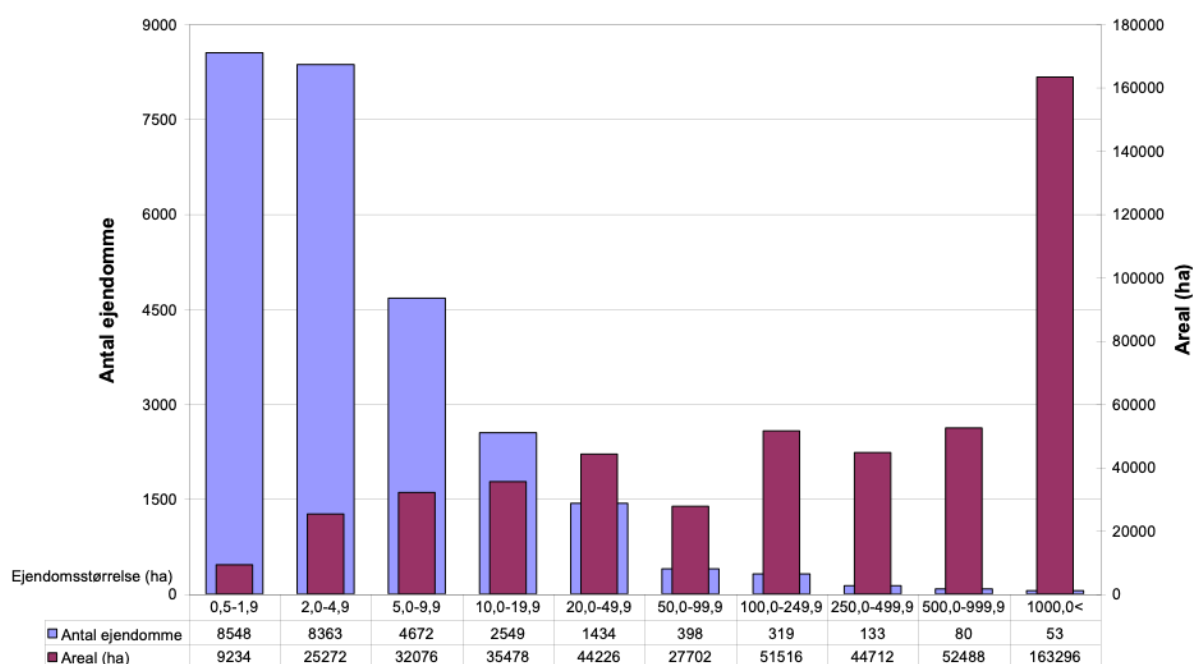


Figure 5.1: Distribution of property in Denmark by property size according to the number of properties and area in hectares.

5.2 The legal basis

Denmark has detailed laws and regulations on what activities forest owners can carry out on their properties. The Danish Forest Act is the primary law that defines which forests are designated as forest reserve land and what requirements are defined for the management of these. In some cases, it also specifies requirements for the management of forests that are not designated as forest reserve land. More than 90% of forest area is registered as forest reserve land and is thus covered by the Danish Forest Act. Forest reserve land cannot be converted to other land use without special exemption and requirements for replacement. The first major forestry regulation was issued in 1805. The current Danish Forest Act of 2004 aims to promote sustainable management of the country's forests.

The Danish Forest Act aims to safeguard forest resources and their production capacity. Hence it still reflects its historical starting point, a major collapse in Danish forest resources up to the late 18th century. Since 1989, however, the purpose of the act has been described as multifunctional, i.e. forest management that has to take into account factors such as nature conservation, cultural heritage and recreational activities, as well as considering production interests. Most recently, the requirement relating to sustainability has been included in the Danish Forest Act as an objective.

The Danish Forest Act is based on the principle of "freedom with responsibility". Forest owners are given a series of rules that make it possible to plan and perform forest management. The act contains a number of regulations on the use of forest area, which means that forest area must remain covered with trees that have the potential to form closed forests of standard trees, that felling must only be carried out when the stand is harvestable and that keeping animals in the forest is generally prohibited. There are a number of exceptions to these that allow for the use of old management

systems, cultivation of Christmas trees and ornamental foliage or other special management over up to 10% of the area.

The act also protects oak thickets and other valuable habitats (bogs, watercourses, etc.). The act also incorporates subsidy options that allow the State to create subsidy schemes to promote sustainable forest management at existing forests.

The Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive (referred to collectively as called Natura 2000) are implemented in Danish law via the Danish Forest Act, the Nature Conservation Act and the Executive Order on species conservation, among other laws. Natura 2000 rules require EU member states to preserve a number of species and habitats that are rare, endangered or characteristic. This has to be done by designating specific areas for protection of these species and habitats.

Forest habitat types covered by Natura 2000 protection also have special protection pursuant to the Danish Forest Act. A national plan has to be compiled for these areas and agreements have to be made with forest owners in order to safeguard forest habitats. A notification scheme is also applicable here so that clear cutting of hardwood stands, promotion of softwoods in hardwood forests, etc. have to be reported to the authorities prior to implementation if the forest is located in a Natura 2000 area.

Other laws include in particular the Nature Conservation Act, the primary purpose of which is general protection of a number of habitat types above a certain size, ensuring public access to nature – including Danish forests – and defining setting for conservation of larger areas or particularly vulnerable nature.

The Water Framework Directive is implemented in the Environmental Objectives Act, which includes general provisions on water districts, the responsibilities of authorities, environmental objectives for fulfilment of the purpose of the Directive, planning and monitoring, etc.

5.3 The institutional network for forest management in Denmark

The Minister for the Environment is responsible for forestry. Similarly, legal administration is delegated to the Danish Environmental Protection Agency. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for ensuring at appropriate intervals – generally at maximum intervals of 6 to 10 years – that private forest districts are operating in compliance with forest legislation. The Danish Nature Agency is made up of a central board in Randbøl and 16 local units dotted all over the country. The Danish Nature Agency manages approximately 200,000 hectares of State forests and natural areas.

Danish forest owners are well organised in various local and national associations. The Danish Forest Association is the trade association for private forest owners. There are also up to 6,000 owners of small forest properties who are organised into local silvicultural associations, which assist owners with advice and management of their forests and deal with forest policy. Many private forest owners cooperate with HedeDanmark and other forestry consultants in a similar way. A large number of green and social organisations are actively involved in dialogue relating to forest policy. These include the Danish Society for Nature Conservation, the WWF World Wide Fund for Nature, BAT-Kartellet, the Danish Outdoor Council and Forests of The World. In addition, a number of organisations such as Danmarks Jægerforbund, DGI, the Spejderbevægelsen and DOF BirdLife have special interests in forests.

5.4 Forest planning

The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for implementing national and international forest policy and so is responsible for the overall planning of forest management at a national level.

Slightly atypically, Danish forest legislation includes no requirements relating to the planning of forest management on individual properties, and forest owners do not have to submit applications or provide notification for cutting operations in their forests.

The authorities have devised strategies for sustainable forest management, conservation of Danish natural forests and a national forest programme in connection with the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Helsinki Process) and the indicators and pan-European management guidelines decided upon in Lisbon. The national forest programme defines Danish forest policy. The most recent forest programme was in 2018.

5.5 Forest monitoring and advice

The Minister for the Environment is responsible for monitoring the condition and development of forests in cooperation with other national and international authorities and institutions. In Denmark, the task of monitoring is delegated to the Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management at the University of Copenhagen. Monitoring includes the state of forests and the development of forestry with a view to:

- Monitoring changes in forest growth and condition and viewing these in relation to man-made and natural influences
- Monitoring Danish forest resources and forest production
- Providing the knowledge base for decisions relating to management, as well as nature strategy and environmental strategy
- Providing national and international reports

Monitoring includes factors such as area, tree species, wood production, biodiversity, forest health, recreational activities and forest ecology processes, including air pollution and climate change.

The status and development of forests forms part of the monitoring and is documented in the “National Forest Inventory (NFI)”, Danish forest statistics. The purpose is:

- To provide the knowledge base for decisions relating to management, as well as nature strategy and environmental strategy
- To provide national and international reports
- To monitor changes in forest growth and condition and view these in relation to man-made and natural influences

Some of the forest monitoring results are presented in a book entitled *Skove og Plantager*, which is updated with key figures every year. A collective report is published every five years¹.

The Minister for the Environment is also obliged to provide guidance and information on forests and the forestry industry and can initiate research and development relating to forestry issues.

Advice on forest management in connection with sustainable forest management can thus be found in publications from the Danish Nature Agency, the Department of Geosciences and Nature Resource Management and various national and local organisations.

¹ <https://ign.ku.dk/samarbejde-med-ign/forskningsbaseret-raadgivning/skovovervaagning/>

6. Structure of the documentation

The Danish scheme is built up around a number of documents defining the requirements for certification in Denmark. The structure of these documents can be seen in Figure 6.1.

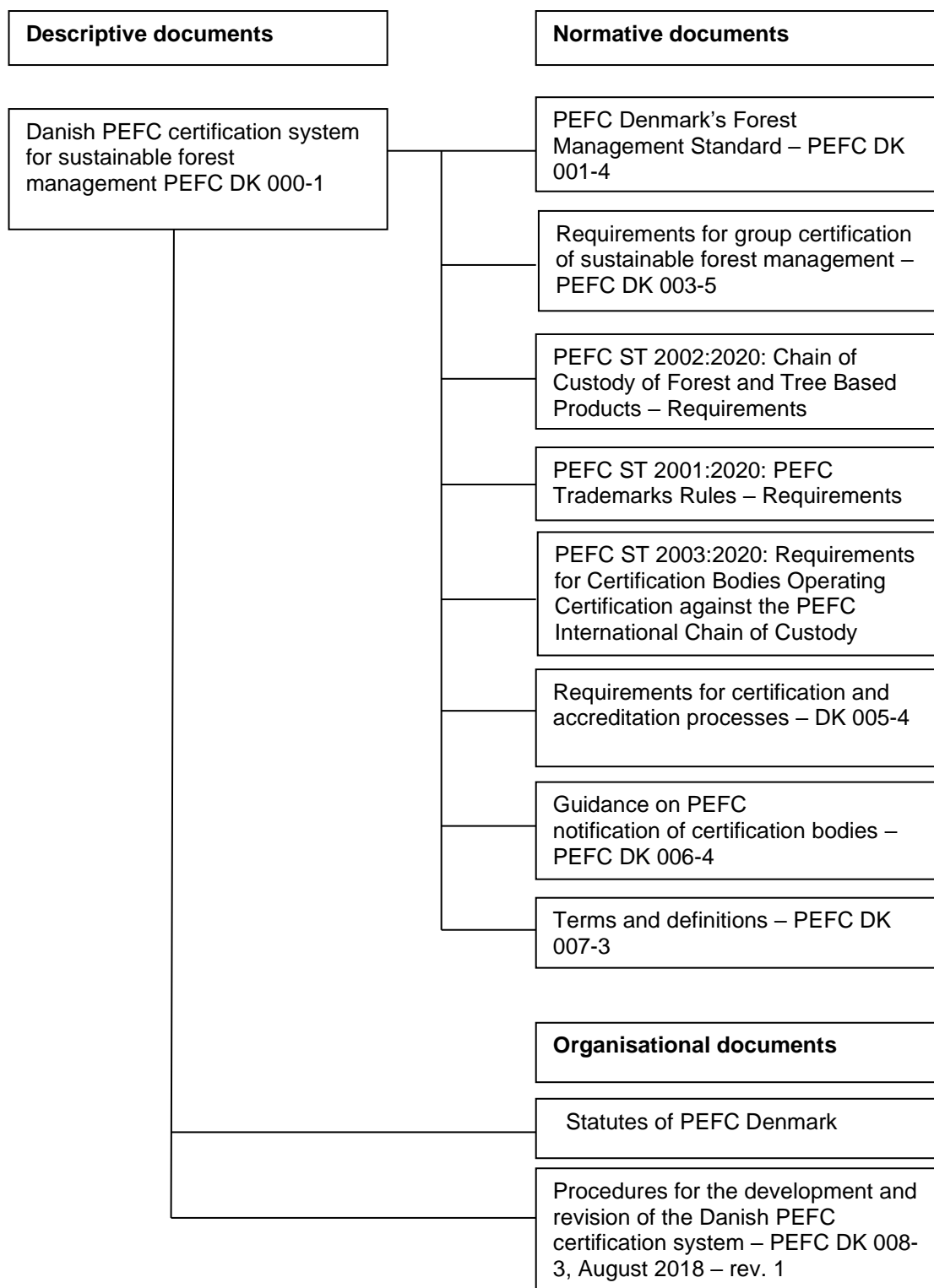


Figure 6.1: Structure of documents pursuant to the Danish scheme

7. The Danish scheme – organisation

7.1. PEFC Denmark

PEFC Denmark is a member-led, non-profit, self-owned and independent legal association that owns and is responsible for the development, administration and maintenance of the Danish scheme. PEFC Denmark has a board, a secretariat and an annual general meeting. Working groups are set up on an ad hoc basis where necessary; in connection with revision of the scheme, for example.

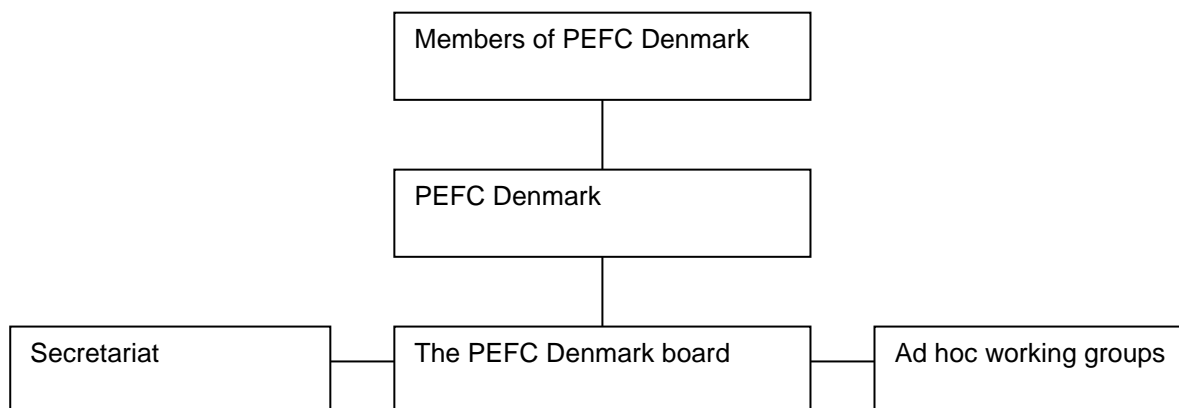


Figure 7.1: Organisation chart for PEFC Denmark

PEFC Denmark's objectives:

- To promote PEFC Denmark's Forest Management Standard as the standard for certification of forest management in Denmark
- To promote the PEFC Council's international chain of custody standard as the standard for certification of chain of custody in Denmark
- To ensure that the Danish scheme is a credible, cost-effective and user-friendly certification scheme that can be used by the full spectrum of forest and owner types in Denmark
- To meet criteria and indicators for participation in an international forest certification network with mutual recognition
- To go on developing and improving the Danish scheme in line with advances in the field of research and altered conditions in general

PEFC Denmark's duties:

The PEFC Denmark secretariat in cooperation with the PEFC Denmark board is in charge of the day-to-day management of PEFC Denmark.

PEFC Denmark performs the following tasks:

- Development and revision of the Danish system in line with progress and altered conditions
- Marketing of the Danish scheme
- Maintenance of a database containing information on certified forests, businesses and groups
- PEFC notification of certification bodies
- Issuing PEFC trademark licences
- Contact with the PEFC Council and distribution of information
- Maintenance of a register of accredited certification bodies in Denmark
- Maintenance of the PEFC Denmark website – www.pefc.dk
- Establishment of an appeals committee to deal with complaints and appeals relating to the implementation and interpretation of the standards pursuant to the Danish scheme that cannot be addressed according to the certification body's or accreditation body's own procedures

7.2 Accreditation and certification bodies

Accreditation body:

PEFC is based on independent accreditation of certification bodies. It is therefore a mandatory requirement that all certifications performed pursuant to the Danish scheme should be performed by independent, PEFC-notified certification bodies accredited for the purpose. The Danish Accreditation and Metrology Fund, (DANAK) or a similarly recognised accreditation body that is a member of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) and/or the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and has signed the European co-operation for Accreditation's multilateral agreement on mutual recognition of accreditation bodies, MLA Multilateral Agreement (MLA) may perform accreditation.

Certification bodies:

A certification body is an independent and recognised third party that is PEFC-notified by PEFC Denmark and that performs PEFC certification upon request in accordance with the rules stipulated by PEFC Denmark. The certification body issues PEFC certificates to applicants and carries out checks on the use of certificates issued. Certification bodies must not be directly involved in the development and revision of PEFC Denmark's normative documents.

Procedures and requirements for accreditation and PEFC notification of certification bodies for certification of forest management, including group certification, are stipulated in *PEFC Denmark's requirements for certification and accreditation procedures – PEFC DK 005-4* and *Guidance for notification of certification bodies – PEFC DK 006-4*

Requirements for certification bodies performing PEFC chain of custody certification are specified in PEFC international standard: *Requirements for Certification Bodies Operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard (PEFC ST 2003:2020)*

7.3 Group certification – group leaders

In this context, a group leader is an enterprise that offers and administers group certification of sustainable forest management. Group certification is the designation for individual issuing of memberships to forest owners who form part of a collective group of forest owners (a group) who have chosen to be certified under a specific group leader.

The requirements for certification of group leaders can be found in *Requirements for group certification of sustainable forest management – PEFC DK 003-5*.

7.4 Distribution of skills among the parties

The distribution of skills among the different parties involved in certification in Denmark is summarised in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2: Distribution of skills among the bodies involved

Body	Action	Target group
PEFC Denmark	Owns, administers and maintains the scheme, as well as providing notification	Certification bodies
National accreditation body	Accredits	Certification bodies wishing to perform certification pursuant to the Danish scheme
Certification body	Certifies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Larger forest owners requiring individual certification. Issues forest management certificates 2. Wood trading, wood industry, retail and service enterprises requiring chain of custody certification. Issues chain of custody certificates 3. Group leaders for administration of group certification. Issues group certificates for forestry 4. Group schemes for enterprises. Issues group certificates for chain of custody 5. A limited project. Issues project certificates for chain of custody
Group leader	Administers	Group certification of smaller forest properties.

8. Certification options pursuant to the Danish scheme

The Danish PEFC certification system for sustainable forest management offers two options for certification of forest management:

- Individual certification
- Group certification

Group certification is implemented via a group leader who is certified for this.

8.1 Certification of forest properties

Individual certification:

In the case of individual certification of forest properties, the forest owner applies for certification of their forest property. Individual certification is open to forest properties of all types and sizes, although it is most appropriate for larger forest properties with independent administration.

The individual certification of forestry management is performed according to *PEFC Denmark's Forest Management Standard – PEFC DK 001-4*. A forest management certificate is issued to the forest owner by the certification body.

Group certification:

The purpose of group certification is to spread the cost of certification over a group of forest owners for whom the cost of individual certification might otherwise be disproportionate to the benefits. The premise for this cost reduction is that only a certain percentage of the group's forest area is audited each year by the certification body. The group leader also has the opportunity to provide advice and otherwise ensure compliance with the requirements.

All forest owners under a group certification must meet criteria and documentation requirements in *PEFC Denmark's Forest Management Standard – PEFC DK 001-4*.

Administration, policy and planning of relevance to the entire group can be organised by a group. This allows even greater savings to be achieved.

8.2 Certification of groups

Group leaders apply for certification of their enterprises to be able to administer group certification of forest properties.

Group leaders are certified according to *Requirements for group certification of sustainable forest management – PEFC DK 003-5*, and according to *PEFC Denmark's Forest Management Standard – PEFC DK 001-4* for the forests participating in the group. A group certificate for forestry must be issued to the group leader of the certification body.

9. Use of the PEFC trademark

All use of the PEFC trademark or other marks associated with certification of sustainable forest management pursuant to the Danish scheme must take place in accordance with *PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements PEFC ST 2001:2020*.

The right to use the PEFC trademark is issued by PEFC Denmark on behalf of and subject to a contract concluded with the PEFC Council, while trademark use is controlled by the certification body in the case of the general audits.

10. Appeals, complaints and disputes

Appeals, complaints or disputes relating to the issuing and suspension of certificates must be appealed and dealt with according to the certification body's own procedure.

Other appeals relating to the implementation and interpretation of the standards pursuant to the Danish scheme and that cannot be addressed according to the certification body's or accreditation body's own procedures must be dealt with by an appeals committee appointed by PEFC Denmark (see PEFC Denmark's Articles of Association, Article 7).

When receiving an appeal, the PEFC Denmark board must:

- Acknowledge receipt of the appeal
- Collect and verify the information necessary to validate the appeal
- Appoint an impartial appeals committee with the necessary expertise to assess the appeal objectively and impartially: this committee will make a recommendation for a resolution to the board within one month of its establishment
- Make a decision on the appeal on the basis of the appeals committee's recommendation
- Formally notify the appellant of the outcome of the appeal and provide information about the appeal process

Decisions on disputes and appeals made by accreditation bodies, certification bodies and PEFC Denmark's appeals committee must be obeyed by PEFC Denmark and certificate holders. Experience must also be used for future revisions and appropriate corrective and preventive actions of the Danish scheme.

Decisions on disputes and appeals made by PEFC Denmark's appeals committee are published on the PEFC Denmark website.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the procedures shall provide for formal information to the complainant and concerned parties that PEFC Denmark may collect some personal data. The personal data collected includes: full name of the contact person, email address and telephone number. This information is necessary for the management of complaints relating to the governance and administration of the PEFC scheme. They are not made publicly available, but PEFC Denmark may share them with third parties limited to and exclusively for the complaints and disputes resolution purposes.

Personal data of the complainant and concerned parties are stored for a duration of five (5) years after the end of the complaint resolution. Data will then be deleted. Upon request, PEFC Denmark may provide data subjects with information about the personal data it holds. Complainants and concerned parties have the right to access or verify their personal data and to have them modified, transferred, corrected or deleted at any time. If the complainant or concerned parties would like to exercise one of these data protection rights, they can contact PEFC Denmark at info@pefc.dk.

By submitting a complaint, the complainant agrees to this data treatment procedure

11. Implementation of changes – transition period

For existing certificates, the revised standards must be implemented within one year of the amendments being approved by the PEFC Council, unless specified otherwise.

New certificates issued after 1. October 2023 must be issued in accordance with the revised standards.