

# PCSN II

PEFC Group Certification – Requirements

[pefc.nl](http://pefc.nl) [info@pefc.nl](mailto:info@pefc.nl)



**Document name:** PEFC Standaard Nederland II, PEFC Group Certification – Requirements

**Document title:** PCSN II

**Issue date:** 16-02-2021

**Application date:** 05-11-2021

**Transition date:** 05-11-2022

# Content

- 1. Scope ..... 3
- 2. References ..... 3
- 3. Definitions ..... 4
- 4. Context of the group organisation ..... 5
  - 4.1 What is group certification? ..... 5
  - 4.2 Stakeholders involved ..... 5
  - 4.3 The scope of the group management system ..... 5
  - 4.4 The group management system ..... 5
- 5. Leadership ..... 6
  - 5.1 Role and responsibility ..... 6
    - 5.1.1 General ..... 6
    - 5.1.2 Documented procedures ..... 6
    - 5.1.3 Administration ..... 6
    - 5.1.4 Internal audit ..... 7
  - 5.2 Statement and policy ..... 8
- 6. Planning ..... 8
- 7. Support ..... 8
- 8. Implementation ..... 9
- 9. Evaluation ..... 10
  - 9.1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation ..... 10
  - 9.2 The internal audit ..... 10
  - 9.3 Selection of participants in the internal audit programme ..... 11
  - 9.4 The management review ..... 12
- 10. Improvement ..... 12
  - 10.1 Deviations and solutions ..... 12
  - 10.2 Ongoing improvement ..... 12

## FOREWORD

PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) is a globally recognised system for the certification of sustainable forest management. PEFC thus makes a substantial contribution to the realisation of sustainable forest management.

This is the third version of the PEFC Standard for Group Certification of Forest Management. This standard has been prepared with the stakeholders in this form of certification.<sup>1</sup>

The new standard has been restructured to make it more readable and additional criteria have been added so that it is again in line with the international standard for group certification (PEFC ST 1002:2018) and the new PCSN I standard.

## INTRODUCTION

PEFC was founded in 1999 by representatives of small forest owners. They devised a system in which several forest owners could unite under a single certificate: the group certificate.

The idea behind a group certificate is that the validity of this certificate depends on the performance of each participant. In addition, the group makes one entity ultimately responsible for the collective's performance, the group manager. This creates a high degree of interdependency and allows an auditor to take a sample of the participating owners. This makes group certification not only a very reliable, but also an affordable method of certification.

There is a relatively large number of small landowners in the Netherlands. PEFC group certification therefore aligns perfectly with the Dutch situation. Moreover, it is now also possible for owners of trees outside the forest to become certified. Public authorities or private owners of areas that do not fall within the definition of forest, but which do feature trees, can now also join a group certification.

## 1. SCOPE

This document titled "PEFC Group Certification - Requirements" has been adopted by the board of PEFC Netherlands on 16-02-2021 and contains the requirements for the implementation of certification of tree and forest management at a group level in the Netherlands. It contains the requirements which a group manager must fulfil to become certified.

Group certification requires a specific management structure in which a group manager represents individual landowners in PEFC certification to ensure that the requirements of PCSN I are properly implemented.

## 2. REFERENCES

PCSN I:2020 - PEFC Standard Netherlands

PEFC ST 1002:2018PEFC

GD 1008: 2019

---

<sup>1</sup> This document is part of the PEFC Netherlands Certification Scheme for sustainable forest management (PCSN I-IX) The scheme is approved by the board of PEFC Netherlands.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

### 3.1 Involved stakeholder

A stakeholder who directly experiences changes through the activities of the **group organisation**.

### 3.2 Participant

An owner/manager who falls within the **group certificate** and meets the requirements of PCSN I.

### 3.3 Certified area

A forest<sup>1</sup> and/or trees outside the forest<sup>1</sup> area whose management is certified according to the Dutch PEFC standard.

In the context of group certification, the certified area is the sum of the forest/tree areas of all **participants** that are part of the **group certificate for forest/tree management**.

### 3.4 Group management plan

A document that contains the objectives, actions and measures implemented at a group level. These objectives, actions and measures fall within the **group management system**.

### 3.5 Group certificate for forest and tree management

A document confirming that the **group organisation** meets the requirements of PCSN I.

### 3.6 Group management system

A set of criteria by the **group manager** to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the PCSN I standard.

### 3.7 Group Organisation

A group of **participants** represented by the **group manager** for the implementation PCSN I. A legally binding document has been established between the **participant** and the **group manager**

### 3.8 Group Manager

A legal entity that represents the **participants** and has ultimate responsibility for the correct implementation and execution in the **certified area** according to PCSN I. To achieve this, the **group manager** uses a **group management system**.

### 3.9 Internal audit

A systematic review performed by the **group manager** with the aim of determining whether the activities and related results meet the PCSN I standard and are appropriate for achieving certain objectives.

### 3.10 Monitoring

Determine the status of a system, process or activity.

## 4. CONTEXT OF THE GROUP ORGANISATION

### 4.1 What is group certification?

Group certification is the certification of multiple owners and/or managers under a single group certificate. The group certificate is applied for and managed by a **group manager**. The group is not bound to a region within the Netherlands.

### 4.2 Stakeholders involved

4.2.1 The **group organisation** shall identify:

- a) Who the relevant **stakeholders** are for the **group management system**
- b) What the relevant expectations are of the **stakeholders involved**

### 4.3 The scope of the group management system

4.3.1 The **group organisation** has no minimum or maximum number of **participants**.

4.3.2 There is no minimum or maximum surface area applicable to participate in the **group organisation**.

4.3.3 The **group organisation** shall comply with all the requirements of PCSN I.

4.3.4 The **group organisation** defines a scope.

### 4.4 The group management system

4.4.1 All **participants** are part of the internal **monitoring** and **internal audit**.

4.4.2 If a **group manager** also acts as a trader of forest and/or tree products, he/she shall also have a PEFC Chain of Custody certificate.

## 5. LEADERSHIP

### 5.1 Role and responsibility

#### 5.1.1 General

The **group manager** is responsible for:

- a) Managing a **group management system** for all **participants**
- b) The application for certification at an accredited certification body recognized by PEFC Netherlands.
- c) Preparation and management of documentation on the structure and responsibilities within the organisation acting as **group manager**.
- d) Providing information and assistance in implementing the PCSN I standard.
- e) Providing full cooperation and assistance in responding effectively to enquiries/requirements of the certification body, accreditation body, PEFC Netherlands or PEFC International, or providing relevant data, information or other information, granting access to the (forest) area covered by the **group organisation** and other facilities either in relation to formal **audits** or assessments or otherwise related to, or with implications for, the **group management system**.
- f) Address nonconformities that were communicated by the group member(s) that were identified under other PEFC certifications and ensure implementation with all group members.

#### 5.1.2 Documented procedures

5.1.2.1 The **group manager** is responsible for:

- a) Establishing and managing documented procedures for accepting new **participants** from the **group organisation** and managing individual **participant** data and documents. The data required for acceptance includes at least: general contact information, a clear description of the (forest) area and the size of the (forest) area.
- b) Establish and manage **documented procedures** for the handling of deviations and corrective actions by the **participants**.
- c) Establish and maintain documented procedures for internal **monitoring programmes** that assess **participants'** compliance with PCSN I.

5.1.2.2 The group participant is required to:

- a) Provide the **group manager** with information regarding previous participations in PEFC certifications.
- b) Provide the **group manager** with information regarding nonconformities that have been raised in other PEFC certifications than the particular group certification.

#### 5.1.3 Administration

5.1.3.1 The **group manager** shall keep records of all **participants** and the total **certified area**. The data and changes shall be provided to the certification

body and to PEFC Netherlands according to the Internal Registration Rules of the PEFC Council (PEFC GD 1008:2019).

5.1.3.2 The **group manager** shall enter into an agreement with each owner/manager applying for the group certificate which obligates the owner/manager to comply with the *Dutch PCSN I - PEFC Standard*. The following must be taken into account:

- i. The agreement must be signed by the owner.
- ii. The owner has (sufficient) knowledge of *PCSN I - PEFC Standard Netherlands*.
- iii. The owner has the duty to act according to the Dutch legislation, specifically in the field of forest and tree management and the *PCSN I - PEFC Standard Netherlands*.
- iv. If deviations are found during the internal/external audit, the owner shall implement the necessary corrective and preventive actions, following the instructions of the **group manager**.
- v. The validity of the agreement shall not exceed five years, where after it must be renewed.
- vi. The **group manager** has the possibility to exclude **participants** from the group certificate if serious deviations from the *PCSN I - PEFC Standard Netherlands* are found.
- vii. The owner grants permission to the **group manager** and certifying body to conduct **internal audits** or inspection audits.
- viii. The owner has the duty to immediately report changes in ownership, name and address details, forested area, **certified area** to the **group manager**.

5.1.3.3 The **group manager** shall provide proof of participation to each individual owner/manager who has signed the agreement. The proof of participation shall include at least the following elements:

- name of the owner
- area and location of the (forest) area(s) under certified management
- a participation number in the group certificate
- name, address and signature of the **group manager**
- the PEFC logo of the **group manager**
- reference to the group certificate with the name of the certifying body
- the period of validity of the group certificate
- a list of all **participants**

#### 5.1.4 Internal audit

The **group manager** is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that all **participants** act in accordance with the certification requirements. This includes the results of **internal audits** and the assessments and controls by the certification body; corrective and preventive action where necessary and the effectiveness of measures taken.
- b) The **group manager** carries out a programme of **internal audits**. All relevant (forest) areas and the own organisation are included in this programme.
- c) Establishing and maintaining documented procedures for **internal audits**, including requirements for internal auditors and the sampling method.



- d) Establish and maintain an annual central assessment of the effectiveness of the **group management system** to comply with PCSN I and II. The input for an annual central assessment will include the following information:
- results of internal and external audits;
  - feedback from participating (forest) owners and interested parties;
  - The status and effectiveness of corrective actions;
  - changes that may affect the management system, this includes changes in PCSN I-X, changes in legislation and regulations as far as relevant for PCSN I and changes in the organisation of the **group manager**.
  - complaints from interested parties.

## 5.2 Statement and policy

5.2.1 The **Group Manager** shall prepare a statement to the effect that:

- a) PCSN I is complied with
- b) Group certification requirements are integrated into the **group management system**
- c) the **group management system** is continuously improved
- d) The improvement of sustainable (forest) management is continuously supported.

5.2.2 The **group manager's** statement may be part of a group management policy and shall be made publicly available upon request.

5.2.3 **Participants** shall provide a statement to the effect that:

- a) The rules of the **group management system** are complied with
- b) The requirements of this standard are implemented in the day-to-day operation in their area.

## 6. PLANNING

6.1 The **group organisation** draws up a **group management plan**

6.2 If a **group organisation** plans changes in the **group management system**, these changes will be included in the **group management plan**.

6.3 If a **group organisation** decides to implement certain requirements of PCSN I at group level, these requirements will be included in a **group management plan**.

## 7. SUPPORT

7.1 Funds will be made available for establishing, managing and improving the **group management system**.

7.2 The individual holding final responsibility within the **group management** has, at least, completed a specialised education programme in forest and nature

management and has at least five years of working experience in the forest and nature sector.

- 7.3 The **group manager** will have described communication processes to make the **participants** aware of:
- a) The group management policy
  - b) The requirements of PCSN I
  - c) Their contribution to the **group management system** and to improving group performance.
  - d) The implications of not meeting the requirements of PCSN I
- 7.4 Both internal and external communication processes, relevant to the **group management system, shall** be in place, stating:
- a) What is communicated;
  - b) When communication will take place;
  - c) With whom there is communication;
  - d) How communication takes place.
- 7.5 There shall be documented procedures for handling complaints related to forest management or trees outside the forest.
- 7.6 The data relevant to demonstrate that **group management** meets the requirements of PCSN I shall:
- a) Be up to date
  - b) Be available and suitable for use, when and where required
  - c) Be properly protected against loss of confidentiality, unreasonable use and loss of integrity.

## 8. IMPLEMENTATION

- 8.1 The **group organisation** will plan, implement and monitor the necessary processes:
- a) To fulfil the requirements of PCSN I and PCSN II
  - b) To implement the actions under point 6
- 8.2 Planning, implementation and monitoring will be done by:
- a) Defining the necessary processes and using criteria to do so
  - b) Implementing the inspection of these processes according to the criteria
  - c) Maintaining records of these checks that may assist in demonstrating that the processes were carried out as planned.

## 9. EVALUATION

### 9.1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation

- 9.1.1 The following elements shall be implemented within the annual internal **monitoring** programme:
- a) Verification that the owner has provided documentation confirming that the forest or trees outside the forest area are owned by the applicant.
  - b) Verification that the management plan complies with PCSN I. If it does not comply, the **group manager** shall not request the certification body to add the owner to the group certificate.
  - c) Verification that the copy of the owner's felling report with the authorities if the owner will handle the felling.
  - d) Verification in clear-cut areas larger than 2 hectares of whether the usefulness and necessity of this is substantiated in the forest management plan and justified by an expert opinion.
  - e) Verification of which owners are obliged to review and update their management plan due to PCSN I, Annex 1 element 6. Then the **group manager** collects those management plans and checks whether they comply with PCSN I.
  - f) Verification of the annual management accounts described in PCSN I, criterion 6.2.2 for significant deviations from the management planning and identify the owner's reason for any such significant deviation.
  - g) Verification of whether planting material has been used that is from the Dutch List of Varieties of Trees, if planting material is planted (see criteria 7.4.3 b).
  - h) Verification of whether contractors hired by the owners comply with PCSN I, criterion 7.6.4.
- 9.1.2 The **group manager** shall evaluate the execution of the group management and the effectiveness regarding the implementation of the **group management system** for PCSN I.

### 9.2 The internal audit

#### 9.2.1 Objectives

- 9.2.1.1 The annual **internal audit** shall provide information confirming that the **group management system**:
- a) Complies with:
    - i. The requirements of the own **group management system**
    - ii. The requirements of PCSN II

- b) Ensures that the requirements of PCSN I are implemented at **participant level of participants**
- c) Is effectively implemented and maintained
- 9.2.1.2 If deficiencies are found with any **participant**, then the **group manager shall determine** whether or not these deficiencies are a general system deficiency that applies to other sites. If it is determined that it is, then the **group manager** shall increase their sample frequency and/or sample size until they are satisfied that control of the group has been restored.
- 9.2.2 Organisation
 

The **internal audit** programme shall include, at least:

  - a) The planning, establishment, implementation and maintenance of the audit programme. This includes the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting, taking into account the importance of processes and results of previous audits.
  - b) Definitions of the audit criteria for each **audit**. The competence of an internal auditor.
  - c) The competence of an internal auditor.
  - d) The selection of auditors who will perform the **audits** to ensure that the audit process is carried out independently.
  - e) Assurance that the results of **audits** are recorded and passed on to the relevant **group manager**.
  - f) Maintenance of **documented information** as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and internal audits.

### 9.3 Selection of participants in the internal audit programme

- 9.3.1 The sample size for the internal field audit is based on a stratified sample:
  - i.  $\sqrt{x}$  of **participants** with no more than 75 ha, rounded up to the nearest whole number. If all **participants** in this category annually provide the **group manager** with additional management information via an annual evaluation with audit forms from second or third parties (see PCSN X, clause 4), then the sample size may be reduced by a factor of 0.6. That is, the sample size is rounded up to  $0.6\sqrt{x}$ . And;
  - ii.  $\sqrt{x}$  of **participants** with more than 75 ha, rounding up.
- 9.3.2 At least 25% of the sample for field audits shall be randomly determined.
- 9.3.3 The selection criteria of sites for the non-randomly selected **participants** **should consider** the following aspects:
  - i. Results of **internal audits**, including results of annual internal desk audits and past certification audits;
  - ii. Records of complaints and other relevant aspects of corrective and preventive action;
  - iii. Significant variations in production processes of the sites;
  - iv. Intensity of forest management activities in the given locations (more intensive management requires higher audit frequency).

## 9.4 The management review

- 9.4.1 The **group manager** shall assess, at least, the following elements:
- a) The status of the actions of previous management reviews
  - b) Internal and external issues relevant to the **group management system**
  - c) The compliance status with PCSN I, including the results of the internal **monitoring**, the **internal audit**, and the evaluations of the certification body;
  - d) Information on the collective's performance, including trends in:
    - i) Deviations and corrections
    - ii) **Monitoring** and measurement results
    - iii) Audit results
    - iv) Opportunities for continuous improvement
- 9.4.2 The results of the management review shall contribute to the continual improvement and change of the **group management system**
- 9.4.3 The **group organisation** shall retain **documented information** as evidence of the results of the management review.

## 10. IMPROVEMENT

### 10.1 Deviations and solutions

- 10.1.1 If a deviation is found, the **group organisation** shall:
- a) Resolve the deviation and, where applicable:
    - i. Take action to improve the deviation
    - ii. Handle the consequences
  - b) Assess whether any actions are required to resolve particular causes of the deviation so that it does not happen again
  - c) Assess the effectiveness of any corrective action taken
  - d) Make changes to the **group management system** when required.
- 10.1.2 The **group organisation** shall retain **documented information** as evidence of:
- a) The nature of the deviation and the actions taken as a result
  - b) The results of the solution
- 10.1.3 After removal from the collective, a **participant** shall first undergo an **internal audit** by the **group manager** before being readmitted. The **internal audit** shall not take place earlier than 12 months after the removal.

### 10.2 Ongoing improvement

The applicability, adequacy and effectiveness of the **group management system** and the sustainable management of the forest and/or trees will be continuously improved.