

PCSN IV

Procedures of Certification

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1. SCOPE

This document entitled "Procedures for Certification" was adopted by the PEFC Nederland board on 16 02 2021.

This document is a component of the Dutch PEFC Certification Scheme.

This document describes the obligations, responsibilities, qualifications and tasks of auditors and certifying bodies involved in forest management certification and the procedures of certification and accreditation.

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

The following documents are indispensable for the application of this document. The most recent version applies for both dated and undated references.

ISO 17011:2004, Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

ISO/IEC 17021-1-1, Conformity assessment – requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements

PCSN I: Netherlands PEFC Standard

PCSN II: PEFC Group Certification - Requirements

PCSN VI: PEFC Trademark Rules – Requirements

3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 Accreditation

Third-party attestation indicating related to a certification body, conveying formal demonstration of its competence, impartiality and consistent operation in performing specific conformity assessment activities (STN EN ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 7.7)

3.2 Accreditation Body

Authoritative body that perform accreditation (STN EN ISO/IEC 17000:2020, 4.7).

3.3 Attestation

Issue of a statement, based on a decision, that fulfilment of the requirements in the respective PCSN documents have been demonstrated.

3.4 Audit

Systemic, independent and documented process for obtaining objective evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled (EN ISO 9000:2015, 3.13.1)

3.5 Auditor

A person who conducts an audit (STN EN ISO 9000, 3.13.1).

3.6 Audit plan

The description of the activities and arrangements for an audit (EN ISO 9000:, 3.13.6).

3.7 Audit report

A report containing the results of activities performed in accordance with the requirements of the criteria. The report focuses mainly on identifying nonconformities between the actual state of affairs and the requirements of the criteria.

3.8 Stakeholder

An individual or group of individuals with a common interest concerned about or affected by the operation of an organisation.

3.9 Certification body

Independent third party that assesses and certifies organisations against a forest management or Chain of Custody standard or other documentation required by the system.

3.10 Group certification

Forest Management or Chain of Custody certification of a group of organisations that are issued a group certificate.

3.11 Group Manager

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

3.12 Impartiality

Objectivity with regard to the outcome of a conformity assessment activity

3.13 Major nonconformity

A nonconformity affecting the management system's ability to comply with PCSN I, II, or VI or an observed noncompliance with laws and regulations.

Note 1: Nonconformities can be classified as major in the following circumstances:

- If there is significant doubt that there is effective process control or that the forest or tree management complies with PCSN I, II or VI;
- Several **minor nonconformities** associated with the same requirement or issue may demonstrate a systematic defect and thus constitute a **major nonconformity**.

3.14 Client organisation

An organisation applying for, or being certified for, PEFC forest management certification.

3.15 Minor nonconformity

A nonconformity that does not affect the management system's ability to comply with PCSN I, II, or VI.

3.16 Observations

An audit finding that has been identified by the audit team as a possible improvement but is not a nonconformity.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 General

4.1.1 All the principles given in clause 4.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

4.1.2 The requirements in PCSN I and PCSN II are used to evaluate the **client organisation**. The requirements of PCSN VI are only used for the evaluation if the **client organisation** has a valid trademark license contract with PEFC Netherlands.

NOTE: The most recent version of PCSN I, PCSN II and PCSN VI can be found on the PEFC Netherlands website: www.pefc.nl

4.2 Impartiality

All the principles given in clause 4.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

4.3 Competences

All the principles given in clause 4.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

4.4 Responsibility

All the principles given in clause 4.4 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

4.5 Openness

All the principles given in clause 4.5 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

4.6 Confidentiality

All the principles given in clause 4.6 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

4.7 Response to complaints

All the principles given in clause 4.7 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

4.8 Risk-based approach

All the principles given in clause 4.8 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

5. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 All the principles given in clause 5.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

5.2 The **certification body shall have** a valid accreditation issued by a national **accreditation body**. The accreditation shall be issued by an **accreditation body** that is a member of the European co-operation for Accreditation and/or the International Accreditation Forum and which operates in accordance with the procedures described in ISO 17011:2004. In the Netherlands, this can be the Raad van Accreditatie (Dutch Accreditation Council).

5.3 **Certification bodies** shall have a notification issued by PEFC Nederland.

6. STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

All the principles given in clause 6 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

7. PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Competences

All the principles given in clause 7.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

7.2 Personnel involved in certification activities

All the principles given in clause 7.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

7.2.1 Auditors

7.2.1.1 Education

The **certifying body** shall ensure that the **auditor** carrying out the field audit holds an MSc/BSc degree in the field of forest management. If the **auditor** has an MSc/BSc degree in another subject, he must have taken additional subjects and/or courses in the field of forest or tree management.

7.2.1.2 Forest management training

The **certification body** shall ensure that **auditors** have participated in an education programme recognised by PEFC Netherlands or the PEFC Council within the last two years.

7.2.1.3 Audit training

The **certifying body** shall ensure that all **auditors have** successfully completed an ISO 19011 course.

7.2.1.4 Work experience

The **certifying body** shall ensure that the **auditor** has at least two (2) years of working experience in forest management, or in the forest and wood industry.

7.2.1.5 Audit experience

7.2.1.5.1 For an **auditor's** initial qualification, the **certification body** shall ensure that the **auditor** has conducted forest management audits for at least two (2) individual **client organisations**, or one (1) **group manager** with at least two (2) group members under the direction of a qualified **auditor**, within the past three (3) years.

7.2.1.5.2 To maintain the **auditor's** qualification, the **certification body** shall ensure that the **auditor** annually performs a minimum of five (5) external audits, including a minimum of one (1) forest management audit annually, whereby the sum of the number of audits shall be at least seven (7) working days.

7.2.1.6 Competences

7.2.1.6.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that **auditors** can demonstrate that they:

- a) Are aware of the latest version of the PCSN I standard;
- b) Are familiar with the socio-demographic and cultural aspects of the Dutch forest;
- c) Have knowledge of audit principles, audit practice and audit techniques;
- d) Have knowledge of organisations such as the size of an organisation, its structure, functions and relationships, general business processes and related terminology;
- e) Are familiar with the applicable laws and regulations;
- f) Have knowledge of the Dutch forestry sector as regards terminology, tree species and forest management techniques (also in relation to new technologies)

7.2.1.6.2 The **certification body** shall produce evidence of annual monitoring of forest management **auditors** in order to assess the **auditors'** training needs.

7.3 Use of individual external auditors and external technical experts

All the principles given in clause 7.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

7.4 Data

All the principles given in clause 7.4 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

7.5 Outsourcing

All the principles given in clause 7.5 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

8. INFORMATION

8.1 Public information

8.1.1 All the principles given in clause 8.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

8.1.2 The **certifying body** shall make a summary of the audit report within four weeks. This summary shall be made publicly available by the **client organisation**. While confidential information may be omitted in the summary, it shall at least include:

- a) Information concerning the **client organisation**
- b) The scope of the audit, the objectives and the process
- c) The audit plan (date, locations, audit team)

d) Audit results (main findings, nonconformities)

8.2 Certification documents

8.2.1 All the principles given in clause 8.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

8.2.2 In addition to the requirements of clause 8.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 the certification document shall include the following information:

- a) Name of forest area or TOF area
- b) Size of forest area or TOF in hectares

Note: In case the certified area of the client organisation contains both forest and TOF areas these shall be clearly distinguished in the certification document.

- c) For TOF areas: if the certified area covers agriculture, settlement or both

8.2.3 The **certification body** will add the **accreditation body's** logo to the certificate as well as the date of issue, expiry date or recertification date. The effective date on the certificate is always after the date of the certification decision.

8.3 Reference to certification and the use of labels

All the principles given in clause 8.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

8.4 Confidentiality

8.4.1 All the principles given in clause 8.4 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

8.4.2 The **certification body shall** inform the **client organisation** that it is required to provide information to PEFC Netherlands or the PEFC Council. In order to meet the confidentiality requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1, the **certification body** shall have the written consent of the **client organisation** for relaying information to PEFC Netherlands or the PEFC Council.

8.5 Information exchange between the certification body and its clients

8.5.1 All the principles given in clause 8.5 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

8.5.2 The **certification body** shall ensure that its clients provide information on any **certification body** they work with in the field of forest management or chain of custody certification.

8.5.3 While respecting the independence of the **certification body**, the **certification body** is permitted to advise the client or impart knowledge if this concerns information which can be found in documentation of PEFC Netherlands or the PEFC Council (e.g. information from guideline documents, or Frequently Asked Questions). In the event the **auditor** shares such knowledge, this shall be reflected in the audit report.

8.5.4 The **certification body** shall inform its client of the conditions for an unannounced or short-term audit.

9. PROCESS REQUIREMENTS

9.1 Pre-certification activities

9.1.1 Application

9.1.1.1 All the principles given in clause 9.1.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.1.1.2 The **client organisation** shall provide the following information to the **certification body** when applying for certification:

- a) Name and address of the **client organisation**
- b) Forest area name
- c) Size of forest area
- d) Documented PCSN I procedures

9.1.2 Application assessment

All the principles given in clause 9.1.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.1.3 Audit programme

9.1.3.1 All the principles given in clause 9.1.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.1.3.2 The certificate is valid for a maximum period of five (5) years. The **certification body** may permanently withdraw or temporarily suspend the certificate in the interim. The decision to withdraw or suspend shall be communicated in writing to the **client organisation**, together with the reasons for the decision. A certification audit must take place every five years in order to extend the validity of the certificate.

9.1.3.3 The **certification body** shall establish documented procedures for performing a risk analysis of the **client organisation**. The risk analysis shall identify risks that might prevent the successful implementation of sustainable forest management and the certification of the management system. This risk analysis shall include at least the following indicators:

- a) Structure, operations, processes and products
- b) Deforestation and forest conversion
- c) Biodiversity
- d) Recreation and other socio-economic functions of the forest
- e) Dependence and interaction with the local population
- f) Accessible resources for administration, implementation, training and research
- g) Forest policy and law enforcement in the Netherlands

9.1.3.4 The **certification body** shall assess these risks by applying the "low", "medium" and "high risk" indicators.

9.1.3.5 Based on the risk analysis, it is possible for the **certification body** to adjust the audit frequency and intensity.

9.1.3.6 The **certification body** shall determine the risk for each **client organisation**.

9.1.4 Audit time

9.1.4.1 All the principles given in clause 9.1.4 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.1.4.2 The audit time shall be in line with Table 1.

Table 1: Audit time

Owner area	Initial audit		Surveillance audit	Recertification audit
	Phase 1	Phase 2		
<75ha	2	3	3	3+1
>75ha	2	4/5	4/5*	4/5*+1

*The five hours for large land owners is particularly recommended for management units that are spread over a large area and where different locations are further apart.

9.1.4.3 The **certification body** may deviate a maximum of 30% from the audit times, as shown in table 1, if it can demonstrate its justification based on the risk analysis and:

- a) Size of the forest area or site (larger areas may require more audit time and vice versa)
- b) Outsourcing activities

- c) Intensity of forest management activities at the site (more intensive management may require more audit time and vice versa)
- d) The scope of the audit
- e) Quality/level of confidence in the internal audit programme
- f) The results of prior audits, including those of the **client organisation's** management system.

9.1.4.4 The **certification body** shall include this procedure in its certification programme.

9.1.4.5 The **certification body** shall determine the time required to schedule a complete and effective audit for each **client organisation**.

9.1.5 Sampling a Multi-site

All the principles given in clause 9.1.5 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.1.6 Multiple management systems

All the principles given in clause 9.1.6 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.2 Audit planning

All the principles given in clause 9.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.2.1 Determining audit objectives, scope and criteria

9.2.1.1 All the principles given in clause 9.2.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.2.1.2 The scope of the **certification body's** audit shall in any case include the number of sites visited, the activities and audit processes.

9.2.1.3 The **certification body** shall make clear which tools and technologies are required to collect evidence. The purpose and criteria for which these tools and technologies are used shall be clearly defined.

9.2.1.4 The **certification body** shall consider the following criteria in determining the scope:

- a) Representativeness: the client's implementation and processes shall be considered random but representative.
- b) Protection: Areas with a high impact on the established goals of the management system shall be considered.
- c) Improvement: areas in which nonconformities have been identified during previous audits shall be considered.
- d) Prevention: The **client organisation** will not be able to fully predict what the chosen areas will be.

9.2.2 Selection of the audit team and assignment

9.2.2.1 All the principles given in clause 9.2.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.2.2.2 The certifier shall have documented procedures for appointing the audit team, including the audit leader.

9.2.2.3 If interpreters are used during the audit, the interpreter shall have no legal relationship with the **client organisation**.

9.2.3 Audit plan

9.2.3.1 All the principles given in clause 6 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.2.3.2 The **certification body** shall have documented procedures to assure the **client organisation** that an **audit plan** is prepared for each audit. This **audit plan** shall serve as a basis for an agreement on the implementation and planning of the audit activities. The **audit plan** shall be shared with the **client organisation** prior to the audit and there shall be agreement on the date of the audit.

9.3 Initial certification

All the principles given in clause 9.3.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.3.1 Initial certification audit

9.3.1.1 General

All the principles given in clause 9.3.1.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.3.1.2 Phase 1

9.3.1.2.1 All the principles given in clause 9.3.1.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.3.1.2.2 The phase 1 audit has the function of "readiness assessment". The scope of this audit includes:

- a) Confirmation of the scope and purpose of the certification audit
- b) Audit of the client's forest management documentation
- c) Evaluation of specific conditions of the forest management area
- d) Evaluation of procedures for internal audits and management system integrity and the effectiveness of implementation
- e) Determination of the **client organisation's** conformity with the PEFC quality mark usage rules
- f) Preparation of the **audit plan** for the phase 2 audit.

9.3.1.3 Phase 2

9.3.1.3.1 All the principles given in clause 9.3.1.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.3.1.3.2 The phase 2 audit shall take place at the office and in the area of the **client organisation**. The **audit plan** for the phase 2 audit has been modified based on the findings of the phase 1 audit.

9.3.1.3.3 The Phase 2 audit shall assess the effectiveness of PCSN I implementation on the defined forest area and the use of the PEFC trademarks according to PCSN VI.

9.3.1.3.4 The phase 2 audit shall include sufficient consultation with local stakeholders to ensure that all relevant matters are identified and related to compliance with the requirements of the PCSN I standard.

9.3.1.3.5 The **certification body** shall take into account any remarks or objections received from **stakeholders**.

9.3.1.3.6 The **certification body** shall publicly provide information on the different options available for **stakeholders** to provide input. The **certification body** shall also involve **stakeholders** in other parts of the certification process (e.g. as observers in an on-site audit), but shall make clear what that role is.

9.3.2 Initial certification audit conclusions

The standard requires that all requirements given in clause 9.3.2 of ISO/IEC 17021 apply.

9.4 Conducting audits

9.4.1 General

All the principles given in clause 9.4.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.2 Conducting the opening meeting

All the principles given in clause 9.4.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.3 Communication during the audit

All the principles given in clause 9.4.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.4 Obtaining and verifying information

All the principles given in clause 9.4.4 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.5 Identifying and recording findings

9.4.5.1 All the principles given in clause 9.4.5 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.5.2 Any nonconformity from the certification requirements shall always result in corrective action and possible rejection, suspension or revocation of the certificate. There are three categories of nonconformities: **minor nonconformities**, **major nonconformities** and **observations**.

9.4.6 Preparation of audit conclusions

All the principles given in clause 9.4.6 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.7 The closing meeting

All the principles given in clause 9.4.7 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.8 Audit report

9.4.8.1 All the principles given in clause 9.4.8 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.8.2 The audit report shall be sent from the **certifying body** to the **client organisation** within four weeks.

9.4.9 The cause of nonconformities

All the principles given in clause 9.4.9 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.10 Effectiveness of corrections

9.4.10.1 The requirements of clause 9.4.10 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.4.10.2 **The client organisation** shall prepare a corrective action plan to address **major** and **minor nonconformities** identified during surveillance audits. The corrective action plan, including a timeframe, shall be reviewed by the **certification body**. The corrective action plan and its verification for **major nonconformities** shall be completed within three (3) months. Corrective actions for **minor nonconformities** will be verified no later than the next audit.

9.4.10.3 If there are certain specific natural phenomena that make it impossible to resolve the nonconformities within three (3) months, the **certification body** may grant an exception. The maximum period for which the resolution of the nonconformity may be extended is twelve (12) months and the justification shall be stated.

9.4.10.4 The corrections and corrective actions for all nonconformities shall be verified by the **certification body** through a site visit or other form of verification.

9.4.10.5 The audit evidence to determine compliance with the requirements of the PCSN I shall include, where applicable, relevant information from external parties (e.g. government agencies or conservation organisations).

9.5 Certification decision

All the principles given in clause 9.5 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.6 Maintenance of certification

9.6.1 General

All the principles given in clause 9.6.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.6.2 Surveillance activities

- 9.6.2.1 All the principles given in clause 9.6.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.
- 9.6.2.2 The surveillance audit shall be based on the risk analysis of the **certification body**.

9.6.3 Recertification

All the principles given in clause 9.6.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.6.4 Special audits

- 9.6.4.1 All the principles given in clause 9.6.4 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.
- 9.6.4.2 The **certification body** has the option of conducting audits on short notice and unannounced. The **certification body** shall give a maximum notice of two (2) days for an individual certificate and five (5) days for a group certificate.

9.6.5 Suspension, withdrawal or modification of the scope of the certificate

- 9.6.5.1 All the principles given in clause 9.6.5 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.
- 9.6.5.2 The **certification body** shall inform the **client organisation** and PEFC Netherlands in writing if a certificate is suspended, withdrawn or if the scope is modified. In addition, the reason for this alteration shall be given.

9.7 Objections

All the principles given in clause 9.7.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

9.8 Complaints

- 9.8.1 All the principles given in clause 9.8.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.
- 9.8.2 The **certification body** shall use clear deadlines and communicate them to the complainant.
- 9.8.3 The **certification body** shall provide PEFC Nederland with an overview of the complaints received at least once annually. This overview shall in any case include:

- a) Certificate number
- b) Description
- c) The requirement not met
- d) Evidence
- e) Results

9.8.4 The **certification body** shall provide this overview no later than the end of January for the previous year.

9.9 Client data

All the principles given in clause 9.9.1 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

10. MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

All the principles given in clause 10 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 shall apply.

ANNEX A: GROUP CERTIFICATION FOR FOREST AND TREE MANAGEMENT

Sampling for external on-site audits with group forest management certification

1.1 Methodology

- 1.1.1 All requirements given in Clause 5.1 and 5.2 of MD 1:2007, apply.
- 1.1.2 At least 25% of the sample should be selected at random.
- 1.1.3 The site selection criteria on the non-random selected group members shall consider the following aspects:
 - 1.1.4 Results of internal audits or previous certification audits
 - 1.1.5 Records of complaints and other relevant aspects of corrective and preventive action;
 - 1.1.6 Significant variations in production processes of the sites;
 - 1.1.7 Modifications since the last certification audit;
 - 1.1.8 Intensity of forest management activities at the particular sites (more intensive management requires a higher audit frequency).
- 1.1.9 This selection does not have to be done at the start of the evaluation process. It can also be done once the audit at the central office has been completed. In any case, the central office shall be informed of

the sites to be part of the sample. This can be on relatively short notice, but should allow adequate time for preparation for the audit.

- 1.1.10 The central office of the client organization shall be examined during every initial, surveillance and re-certification audit.
- 1.1.11 The certification body shall implement this procedure for determining the sampling for on-site audits in its certification program.

1.2 Size of sample

1.2.1 Initial audit

1.2.1.1 The number of audits is at least:

- $\sqrt{}$ of group members with not more than 200 ha rounded to the upper whole number; plus
- $\sqrt{}$ of group members with more than 200 ha rounded to the upper whole number.

1.2.1.2 When nonconformities are found at any group member of a group certificate, the certification body should require the group manager/central office to review the nonconformities to determine whether they indicate an overall system deficiency applicable to other sites or not. If they are found to do so, corrective action should be performed and verified both at the group manager/central office and at the individual affected sites. If they are found not to do so, the group manager/central office should be able to demonstrate to the certification body the justification for limiting its follow-up corrective action.

1.2.2 Surveillance audit

1.2.2.1 The number of audits is at least:

- $0.6\sqrt{}$ of group members with not more than 200 ha of forest rounded to the upper whole number plus;
- $0.6\sqrt{}$ of group members with more than 200 ha of forest rounded to the upper whole number.

1.2.2.2 All requirements given in 1.2.1.2 apply

1.2.3 Recertification audit

1.2.3.1 The number of audits is at least:

- $\sqrt{}$ of group members with not more than 200 ha of forest rounded to the upper whole number. Where the management system has proved to be effective over a period of three years, the size of the sample could be reduced by a factor 0.8, i.e.: ($y=0.8\sqrt{x}$), rounded to the upper whole number. And;
- $\sqrt{}$ of group members with more than 200 ha of forest rounded to the upper whole number. Where the management system has proved to

be effective over a period of three years, the size of the sample could be reduced by a factor 0.8, i.e.: $(y=0.8\sqrt{x})$, rounded to the upper whole number.

1.2.3.2 All requirements given in 1.2.1.2 apply