

PCSN V

Standard setting procedures

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Inhoud

1. Scope.....	3
2. Normative references	3
3. Definitions	3
3.1 Stakeholder.....	3
3.2 Key stakeholder	3
3.3 Consensus.....	3
4. Standard setting principles	4
5. PEFC Netherlands.....	4
5.1 Documented information	4
5.2 Handling of complaints and appeals.....	5
6. Standard Development Process.....	5
6.1 Proposal for the creation of a standard	5
6.2 Identification of stakeholders	5
6.3 Public disclosure of the process	6
6.4 Forum requirements	7
6.5 Public consultation	8
6.6 Pilot	9
7. Approval and Publication	9
8. Periodic Review of Standards	9
8.1 General	9
8.2 Feedback mechanism	10
8.3 GAP Analysis.....	10
8.4 Stakeholder Consultation	10
8.5 Decisions	11
9. Revision of Standards	11
9.1 Normal revision.....	11
9.2 Administrative Review	11
9.3 Time-critical revision.....	11
9.4 Application and transition of the revised standards.....	12

1. SCOPE

This document entitled "Standard setting procedures" is part of the PEFC Netherlands certification scheme (PCSN I-X). This document was established by the board of PEFC Netherlands.

This document contains the procedures for the preparation, administration, revision and formal approval of the Dutch Standard for Sustainable Forest and Tree Management.

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

The following documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For both dated and undated references, the latest version is leading.

PCSN I - PEFC Standard Netherlands

PEFC GD 1007, Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of Certification Systems and their Revision

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Stakeholder

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

3.2 Key stakeholder

A stakeholder whose contribution is considered essential in the standard setting process.

3.3 Consensus

General agreement characterized by the absence of sustained opposition on substantive issues by any important constituent of the interests concerned and a process designed to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to find agreement on conflicting arguments. Consensus does not mean unanimity.

4. STANDARD SETTING PRINCIPLES

The process of standard setting builds on the following principles:

- Stakeholder engagement- PEFC Netherlands attaches great importance to an open and transparent process in which any stakeholder can participate in the PEFC Forum and/or public consultations.
- Balanced representation- no single stakeholder group will be dominant nor dominated in the PEFC Forum. Although each organization is free to choose whether or not to participate, PEFC Netherlands will do its utmost to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are part of the PEFC Forum, with special attention to a proper gender balance.
- Consensus - the standards are adopted by consensus. Grounded opposition on specific issues is solved by entering into dialogue as much as possible.
- Improvement - to ensure that a standard continues to meet all stakeholder expectations there are periodic reviews of the standard to keep it improving.
- Transparency - relevant documents are publicly available so that interested parties can follow developments during and after the process.

5. PEFC NETHERLANDS

5.1 Documented information

- 5.1.1 PEFC Netherlands shall keep relevant documents on the assessment process of PEFC International. These relevant documents consist of:
- a) The standard development procedures
 - b) Stakeholder identification mapping
 - c) A list of stakeholders contacted
 - d) Stakeholders involved in standard development activities, including stakeholders present in meetings of the PEFC Forum.
 - (e) Feedback received and how it has been incorporated
 - (f) All draft versions of the standard
 - (g) Outcomes of the PEFC Forum
 - h) Evidence of consensus for the final version of the standard
 - i) Evidence related to the review process; and
 - j) Final approval of the General Assembly of PEFC Netherlands.
- 5.1.2 PEFC Netherlands shall keep all relevant documents and information, such as minutes and communications about the progress of the draft versions of the

standard or of its revision for at least five years and make them publicly available through its website, or otherwise on request.

- 5.1.3 Documented information will be made available upon request.
- 5.1.4 PCSN V shall be reviewed during every periodic review taking the feedback from stakeholders into consideration.

5.2 Handling of complaints and appeals

- 5.2.1 All complaints related to the standard setting process may be lodged with the national secretary of PEFC Netherlands and will be dealt with according to the PEFC Netherlands Complaints Procedure (PCSN VIII). The contact details can be found on the website of PEFC Netherlands.

6. STANDARD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

6.1 Proposal for the creation of a standard

- 6.1.1 For the creation of a new standard, PEFC Netherlands shall develop a proposal containing the following information:
 - a) The scope of the standard,
 - b) Reasoning why the standard is needed,
 - c) A clear description of the expected outcomes,
 - d) A risk analysis of potential negative outcomes arising from implementation of the standard such as;
 - 1. Factors that may adversely affect the achievement of the objectives,
 - 2. Unintended consequences of implementation,
 - 3. Actions that address the identified risks, and
 - e) A description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable
- 6.1.2 For revisions to a standard, the proposal shall include, at a minimum, parts (a) and (e) of Criterion 6.1.1.

6.2 Identification of stakeholders

- 6.2.1 PEFC Netherlands shall identify stakeholders relevant to the purpose and scope of the standard development process. In addition, PEFC Netherlands shall define which spheres of interest are relevant to the subject matter under discussion and why that sphere of interest is relevant. For each sphere of interest PEFC Netherlands shall identify the main issues at stake and the best way to reach those stakeholders within the sphere of interest.

6.2.2 The spheres of interest of stakeholders are based on the nine spheres of interest of the Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference of Environment and Development (UNCED). In addition, two spheres of interest specific to the Dutch situation have been added. The spheres of interest within the National Forum are:

- Forest owners and forest managers;
- Chain of custody from harvest to consumer;
- Non-timber users of the forest;
- NGOs
- Employer and employee organizations;
- Science (research institutes and universities)
- Certification bodies
- Trees outside forest

6.2.3 PEFC Netherlands shall identify important stakeholders and address the constraints that prevent their participation in the standard development process.

6.3 Public disclosure of the process

6.3.1 The Board of PEFC Netherlands shall announce via the PEFC Netherlands website, digital newsletter and email that it has convened the National PEFC Forum for the start of the drafting or revision of the Dutch PEFC standard. This will be announced at least four weeks before the first official meeting. The announcement shall include the following:

- a) An overview of the standard development process,
- b) Access to the draft proposal (see 6.1),
- c) Information on opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,
- d) Request to stakeholders to nominate their representatives or themselves (see 5.4). Specific attention is given to reaching out to important stakeholders in a way that they received the information in a way that is understandable.
- e) Explicit invitation and clear instructions on how to provide feedback on the scope and the standard development process, and
- f) Access to the standard development procedures.

6.3.2 PEFC Netherlands will assess the standard development process based on the feedback given from the public announcement.

6.4 Forum requirements

- 6.4.1 The Board of PEFC Netherlands shall establish a National PEFC Forum in accordance with articles 18.1 and 18.2 of its constitution. The National PEFC Forum shall be convened for the preparation of the PEFC Standard Netherlands and for the periodic revision of this standard. Acceptance or rejection of nominations shall be justified on the basis of the requirements for balance of the Forum, consideration of appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organization, competencies, relevant experience and resources available for the standard development process. For the purpose of periodic revision of the standard, the Board shall convene the PEFC Forum no more than five years after the entry into force of the last revision.
- 6.4.2 The National Forum shall:
- a) have a balanced representation of the different spheres of interest and be constituted in such a way that none of the spheres of interest dominates the decision making
 - b) include stakeholders with relevant expertise in relation to the subject matter of the standard. Enough relevant stakeholders will participate.
- 6.4.3 In order to achieve balance PEFC Netherlands shall strive to have all identified spheres of interest participate in the Forum. PEFC Netherlands will proactively seek their participation for example through in person meetings or personal emails.
- Note: When a sphere of interest does not participate and important stakeholders cannot be convinced to participate PEFC Netherlands will assess whether the Forum can still go ahead.
- 6.4.4 Activities of the Forum will be organized in an open and transparent manner whereby:
- a) draft documents will be made accessible to all members of the Forum
 - b) all Forum members are given sufficient opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and to provide feedback on draft documents; and
 - c) feedback and insights provided by any member of the Forum are discussed in an open and transparent manner, with the outcome of this discussion being recorded.
- 6.4.5 Decision making in the Forum shall be based on achieving consensus as referred to in PEFC ST 1001:2017, article 6.4.5. The Forum may use the following methods for this purpose:

- face-to-face meetings where there is a verbal yes/no vote; the hand is raised for a yes/no vote; a statement that there is consensus where the Chair sees no dissenting voices or hands; a formal paper vote, etc.,
 - telephone or digital conferences where there is a verbal yes/no vote,
 - e-mail request to the Forum for consent or objection where participants provide a formal (written) response (vote), or
 - combinations of these methods
- 6.4.6 When voting is used as a decision-making mechanism, four of the eight votes from the spheres of interest are sufficient provided there is no well-founded opposition.
- 6.4.7 When there is well-founded opposition on an important issue, the following methods will be used to try to resolve the issue:
- a) find a compromise through discussion and negotiation within the Forum
 - b) finding a compromise through direct negotiation among participants with differing views
 - c) additional rounds of public consultation (where necessary) more input from stakeholders which can help to reach consensus. The standardizing organization determines the scope and duration of the additional public consultation.
- 6.4.8 If consensus cannot be reached on a particular proposal, the issue will be brought to the college of appeal of PEFC Netherlands. The outcome presented by the college of appeal is a binding solution.

6.5 Public consultation

- 6.5.1 PEFC Netherlands shall organise a public consultation on the final draft version of the standard ensuring that:
- a) The start and end date of the public consultation will be communicated at least one day before the start of the public consultation via the newsletter and website of PEFC Netherlands,
 - b) The stakeholders identified in 6.2 will be individually approached to comment on the final draft version of the standard
 - c) Important stakeholders will be taken into account
 - d) The final draft version will be made publicly available
 - e) The public consultation lasts at least 60 days
 - f) All comments will be dealt with objectively by the Forum
 - g) The Forum publishes the responses and changes to the standard and sends them to the submitters.
- 6.5.2 For a new standard, the PEFC Netherlands will hold a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.

6.6 Pilot

Before submitting a new standard to the PEFC Council for approval, a pilot test will be conducted. The results will be documented and if necessary used to improve the standard. This is not required for a revision of a standard.

7. APPROVAL AND PUBLICATION

7.1 Formal approval of standards

The final draft standard shall be submitted for endorsement to the general assembly of PEFC Netherlands if there is consensus.

7.2 Public and availability of standards

7.2.1 The formally approved standard(s) shall be published and made publicly available free of charge within 14 days of its formal approval.

7.2.2 The standard(s) will include the following:

- a) Identification and contact information of PEFC Netherlands
- b) Official language of the standard
- c) A note that where inconsistencies exist between different versions, the English of the standard shall always be the authoritative version because it has been approved by the PEFC Council
- d) The date of approval and the date of the next periodic review

Note: The date of the next periodic review may be earlier than five years, based on e.g. stakeholder expectations or other unforeseen developments.

7.2.3 Printed versions will be made available upon request. The price of the printed versions will not exceed the cost of printing.

7.2.4 PEFC Netherlands shall make a development report and publish it on its website.

8. PERIODIC REVIEW OF STANDARDS

8.1 General

The standard(s) will be assessed at least once every five years. The assessment will be based on feedback obtained during the implementation of the standard and the gap analysis. If necessary, a stakeholder consultation can be organized to obtain more feedback and input.

8.2 Feedback mechanism

8.2.1 PEFC Netherlands shall develop and maintain a permanent mechanism for recording feedback on a standard. This mechanism shall be made accessible on the website of PEFC Netherlands with clear instructions on how to provide feedback.

Note: Feedback can be submitted in various forms: comments, request for clarification and/or interpretation etc.

8.2.2 All feedback received through all channels including meetings, trainings etc. will be noted.

8.3 GAP Analysis

8.3.1 At the beginning of the assessment PEFC Netherlands shall evaluate the standard against the then valid standard of PEFC International, national laws and regulations and other relevant information that identifies potential gaps.

8.3.2 PEFC Netherlands shall include the latest scientific knowledge, research and emerging issues in the gap analysis.

8.4 Stakeholder Consultation

8.4.1 If the feedback and the gap analysis indicate that there is no need to revise the standard, PEFC Netherlands will organize a stakeholder consultation to determine whether stakeholders see a need to revise. PEFC Netherlands will add the gap analysis in the stakeholder consultation.

8.4.2 At the beginning of the review PEFC Netherlands shall update its data of identified stakeholders.

8.4.3 PEFC Netherlands will organize the following:

- A public consultation period of at least 30 days (according to the requirements of clause 6.5.1) and/or
- Stakeholder meetings.

8.4.4 PEFC Netherlands shall announce the assessment four weeks before the first information meeting.

8.5 Decisions

- 8.5.1 PEFC Netherlands shall, based on the feedback data during the implementation of the standard, the outcome of the gap analysis and the consultations, decide whether to reaffirm the standard or whether the standard should be revised.
- 8.5.2 This decision will be taken by the board of PEFC Netherlands.
- 8.5.3 If the decision is taken to reaffirm the standard, PEFC Netherlands shall explain the decision and make the explanation publicly available.
- 8.5.4 When it is decided to revise the standard, PEFC Netherlands shall clarify what kind of revision will take place (normal or administrative).

9. REVISION OF STANDARDS

Three types of revision are distinguished: normal revision, administrative revision and time-critical revision.

9.1 Normal revision

After a periodic review it may be decided to initiate a normal review. During normal review, the procedures according to chapter six are followed.

9.2 Administrative Review

Administrative reviews can be carried out without starting the normal review process. PEFC Netherlands will formally approve the administrative changes and publish an amendment or new edition of the standard.

9.3 Time-critical revision

- 9.3.1 A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews in which a timely decision is required.
- 9.3.2 A time-critical revision can only be initiated in the following cases:
- There is a change in national laws and regulations that affect compliance with the requirements of PEFC International
 - PEFC Netherlands receives instructions from PEFC International to comply with a specific or new PEFC requirement within a specified time which is too short for a normal review.
- 9.3.3 The time-critical revision shall consist of the following steps:
- PEFC Netherlands shall draft the revised standard,
 - PEFC Netherlands may consult stakeholders, but this is not mandatory,

- c) The revised standard will be formally approved by the board of PEFC Netherlands,
- d) PEFC Netherlands shall explain the justification for the urgent change and make this explanation publicly available.

9.4 Application and transition of the revised standards

- 9.4.1 PEFC Netherlands shall determine the application date for the international endorsement of PEFC International and the transition period of the revised standard.
- 9.4.2 The application date shall be no later than 1 year after publication of the standard.
- 9.4.3 The transition period shall not exceed one year. PEFC Netherlands may extend that period should unexpected situations arise.