

Estonian Forest Certification Council

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**The qualification criteria for external auditors and
certification bodies, and certification procedures**

1. Aim of the document

This document defines the qualification criteria for external auditors and certification bodies, and certification procedures for forest management and/or chain of the custody certification in Estonia. PEFC Council recognized certifications for forest management and chain of custody rely on international certification and accreditation procedures as defined in the documentation of the International Standardization Body (ISO) and European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) as well as in the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). This standard belongs to the series of standards of the Estonian Forest Certification System (EFCS).

2. Scope and Field of Application

This standard defines the qualification criteria for external auditors and certification bodies, and certification procedures.

This standard is applied in accordance with the Estonian Forest Certification Scheme covering:

- Certification of forest management, and
- Verification of the chain of custody of wood.

3. References

This document is based on the PEFC Council Technical Document Annex 6 “Certification and Accreditation Procedures”, adopted by the General Assembly of the PEFC Council on November 2002, last amendments in 5 October, 2007.

Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements (PEFC ST 2002:2013)

PEFC Council Technical Document Annex 1 “Terms and Definitions”;

PEFC Council Procedure Document Administration of PEFC scheme (PEFC GD 1004:2009).

4. Qualification Criteria for Auditors

4.1 Certification of Forest Management

The qualification criteria for auditors used in certification audits are based on the general auditing guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems, or the general criteria for certification bodies operating product certification, and complemented with sectoral expertise.

The auditors must:

1. Fulfil general criteria for quality and environmental management systems as defined in ISO 19011.
2. Have general criteria for certification bodies operating product certification.
3. Have a good knowledge on the Estonian Forest Certification System with regard to forest management.
4. Have general knowledge on forest management and its environmental impacts.

Professional expertise in forest management and its environmental impacts is proved on the basis of appropriate education and/or professional experience.

4.2 Verification of Chain of Custody of Wood

The qualification criteria for auditors used in certification audits are based on the general auditing guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems, complemented with sectoral expertise.

The auditors must:

1. Fulfil general criteria for quality and environmental management systems as defined in ISO 19011.
2. Have a good knowledge on the Estonian Forest Certification standards with regard to the verification of chain of custody of wood.
3. Have general knowledge on wood procurement and material flows in forest industries.

Professional expertise in wood procurement and material flows in forest industries is proved on the basis of appropriate education and/or professional experience.

5. Qualification Criteria for Certification Bodies

5.1 Accreditation

Certification bodies carrying out forest management certification and/or chain of custody certification shall be accredited by a national or international accreditation body.

The accreditation shall be issued by an accreditation body which is a part of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) and/or the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) umbrella and which implement procedures described in ISO 17011 and other documents recognized by the above mentioned organizations.

Accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body shall accompany any issued forest certificate and chain of custody certificate.

5.2 Certification of Forest Management

The qualification criteria for the certification bodies used in certification audits are based on general criteria for certification bodies operating quality and environmental system certification and/or product certification, complemented with sectoral expertise and applied to forest management.

The certification body must:

1. Fulfil the general criteria, as appropriate, for certification bodies defined in ISO 17021.
2. Use a documented method, according to which forest management may be audited and certified.
3. Undertake forest management certification as “accredited certification” based on ISO 17021 or ISO/IEC 17065:2012 and have the relevant forest management standard(s) covered by the accreditation scope.
4. Have general knowledge on forest management and its environmental impacts.
5. Be impartial, independent third party that cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making body, or in the forest management and is independent of the certified entity.

Professional expertise in forest management and its environmental impacts is proved on the basis of certification experience in the field and/or appropriate education and professional experience of the staff.

5.3 Verification of Chain of Custody of Wood

The qualification criteria for the certification bodies used in certification audits are based on the general criteria for certification bodies operating quality and environmental system certification and/or product certification, complemented with sectorial expertise and applied to wood procurement and material flows in forest industries. The certification body must:

1. Fulfil the general criteria, as appropriate, for certification bodies defined in ISO/IEC 17065:2012.
2. Use a documented method, according to which the chain of custody of wood may be verified and certified, and
3. Have general knowledge on wood procurement and material flows in forest industries.

Professional expertise in wood procurement and material flows in forest industries is proved on the basis of certification experience in the field and/or appropriate education and professional experience of the staff.