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**Requirements for certification bodies operating PEFC forest  
management certification**



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## Foreword

PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) is an international forest certification system promoting ecologically, socially, economically and culturally sustainable forest management through forest management certification, chain of custody certification and labelling of forest-based products originating in certified forests.

Forest certification verifies the sustainable management and use of forests. PEFC certification supports society's goals for the sustainable use of forests and offers citizens a wide range of opportunities to enjoy forests. For companies and consumers PEFC assures the responsible origin of forest products.

PEFC Estonia - Estonian Forest Certification Council promotes and governs PEFC certification in Estonia and organises the standard setting of sustainable forest management in an open, transparent, consultative and consensus-based stakeholder process.

This standard is part of the series of PEFC EST standards owned by Estonian Forest Certification Council.

After the entry into force and the end of the transition period, this document replaces any previous versions of PEFC EST 2, PEFC EST 3 ja PEFC EST 4 standards.

The certification body shall comply with the requirements of this document when conducting certification / auditing against PEFC EST 1002:2022 and PEFC EST 1003:2022.

## Introduction

Forest certification confirms that management in the defined forest area is in compliance with the requirements for sustainable forest management.

Together with certification of chain of custody of forest-based products the forest certification offers forest owners and other players of the supply chain opportunities to meet the demands of the markets.

This document specifies requirements for certification bodies. Compliance with these requirements is aiming to ensure that certification bodies operate forest management certification in a competent, consistent and impartial manner to enable certificates to be accepted at both national and international level.

Certification bodies' conformity with the requirements of this document is assessed and confirmed by an accreditation body that is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and/or the European Co-operation for Accreditation (EA). Accreditation reduces risks for businesses and their customers by assuring that accredited certification bodies are competent to perform their work.

Accreditation bodies that are members of IAF and/or EA are required to operate to the highest standards and the certification bodies they accredit are required to comply with relevant international ISO standards and IAF documents for the application of those standards.

Forest certification in Estonia is considered as management system certification. Therefore, this document is based on the requirements of the standard ISO/IEC 17021-1 and provides

additional requirements necessary for certification and auditing of forest management according to the Estonian Forest Certification scheme.

This document does not include the requirements of the standard ISO/IEC 17021-1 and other ISO or IAF documents which can be obtained from ISO, national standardisation organisations or the IAF.

## 1. Scope

1.1 In addition to the requirements of the standard ISO/IEC 17021-1 and the related IAF documents, the document provides additional requirements for certification bodies operating forest management certification against the scheme of Estonian Forest Certification.

## 2. Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document:

- ISO/IEC 17000, Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles
- ISO/IEC 17011, Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- ISO/IEC 17021-1, Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements
- ISO/IEC 19011, Guidelines for auditing management systems ISO/IEC 19011:2018
- PEFC EST 1002:2022, Group forest management certification - Requirements
- PEFC EST 1003:2022, PEFC Estonia Sustainable forest management – Requirements
- PEFC ST 2001:2020, PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements

For both dated and undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendment) applies.

## 3. Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 17000, ISO/IEC 17021-1 and the following apply.

### **Accredited certificate**

A certificate issued by a certification body within the scope of its accreditation which bears the accreditation body's symbol.

### **EFCC (also PEFC Estonia)**

Estonian Forest Certification Council

### **Estonian forest certification scheme**

A set of standards of PEFC Estonia. The forest certification scheme includes PEFC Estonia Sustainable Forest Management Standard, Group Certification Standard and PEFC Trademark Standard.

## **4. General requirements**

- 4.1 The certification body shall comply with the requirements of the standard ISO/IEC 17021-1, relevant IAF documents and this document.
- 4.2 The certification body shall have:
- a) a good knowledge of the Estonian Forest Certification scheme;
  - b) technical competence in forest management and its economic, social and environmental impacts. The professional expertise in forest management and its economic, social and environmental impacts shall be demonstrated on the basis of certification experience in the relevant field and relevant vocational or higher education in forestry and two-year work experience in the field of forestry of the staff;
  - c) documented procedures and methods.
- 4.3 The certification body shall be accredited on the basis of ISO/IEC 17021-1 by a national accreditation body that is a member of the European Co-operation for Accreditation and that complies with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 and other documents approved by the IAF. The scope of the accreditation shall include references to the Estonian forest certification scheme (PEFC EST 1002:2022, PEFC 1003:2022 and PEFC 2001:2020).
- 4.4 The certification body shall conduct the forest management certification within the scope of its valid accreditation. Each issued forest management certificate shall have reference to the accreditation (accreditation symbol or text).
- 4.5 The certification body shall have the right to notify EFCC of certification and sign a notification contract with Estonian Forest Certification Council.
- 4.6 The certification body shall provide EFCC with a consent to make the information about the PEFC notification, its contact details and the scope of valid accreditation publicly available and submit the information to EFCC for publishing.
- 4.7 The certification body shall inform its clients about payment practices set by EFCC for the certificate holders and the procedure for concluding a contract for the use of the PEFC trademark requirements.

## **5. Qualification Criteria for Auditors**

- 5.1 Auditors shall fulfil the general criteria for management system auditors defined in ISO 19011.
- 5.2 Auditors shall have good knowledge of the Estonian forest certification scheme.
- 5.3 Auditors shall have general knowledge of forest management and its economic, social and environmental impacts. The professional expertise in forest management and its environmental impacts shall be demonstrated on the basis of relevant vocational or higher education in forestry and two-year work experience in the field of forestry.
- 5.4 Auditors shall have knowledge of the certification process and audit requirements and the skills to perform audits.

## **6. Certification procedures**

### **6.1 Phases of the Certification Process**

6.1.1 The certification process shall consist:

- a) the auditee shall submit an application to the certification body confirming that he/she complies with all the requirements of the scheme;
- b) review of the application and the available material by the certification body;
- d) the first phase of the certification audit (focusing on assessing the documents) and the second phase of the certification audit (in the certification area);
- e) technical review/decision by the certification body,
- f) surveillance audits.

6.1.3 The certification body shall review of the application and documentation submitted by the client, and conduct the audit to ensure that the certification requirements are well understood, adequately taken into account and appropriately applied by the client and its units.

### **6.2 Auditing**

6.2.1 General Principles

6.2.1.1 The applied auditing procedures shall meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 19011.

6.2.1.2 The auditing criteria shall include PEFC EST 1002:2022, PEFC EST 1003:2022 and also PEFC ST 2001:2020 in case the client uses PEFC trademarks.

6.2.1.3 The audit team shall include at least one auditor with qualifications specified in clause 5. Technical experts may complement the competence of the auditors.

6.2.1.4 The audit shall include the following phases:

- a) initial meeting;
- b) collection of audit evidence;
- c) evaluation of audit evidence;
- d) final meeting.

6.2.1.5 The audit team shall collect audit evidence that is adequate to evaluate the conformity of client's operations to the certification requirements. In the final meeting, the audit results of all the audited units are collectively presented to the client. The evaluation results based on the audit evidence (especially those relating to non-conformities) shall be reviewed with the auditee.

6.2.1.6 The audit results shall be documented in the audit report. The results of the audit which are not in conformity with the audit criteria shall also be documented in the audit report.

6.2.1.7 The audit evidence to determine the conformity to the forest management standard shall include relevant information from external parties (e.g government agencies, community groups and other organizations, etc.) as appropriate.

The audit shall, amongst other relevant information, include sufficient consultation with external parties to ensure that all relevant issues related to the compliance with the requirements of the standard are identified.

6.2.1.8 The certification body shall provide EFCC with a summary of the forest certification audit report, including a summary of findings on the conformity with the Estonian forest certification scheme.

*Note 1.* The summary of the audit report is made available to the public by EFCC at the official website of EFCC or upon request within 14 days.

### **6.3 Changes in certification requirements**

In case the content of the certification requirements (PEFC EST 1002, PEFC EST 1003 and PEFC ST 2001) has been revised, the certification body shall conduct audits against the revised certification requirements according to a transition schedule specified by EFCC.