

PEFC Estonian Forest Certification Scheme

Introduction to Estonian Forest Certification Scheme

Estonian forest policy

Estonian forest policy highlights the high natural and ecological value of Estonian forests which are protected in compliance with international conventions ratified by Estonia. On the other hand the use of forests economic potential in the way, that preservation of environmental values and wealth could not be jeopardized, is also taken into account in the implementation of forest policy.

In order to apply the above described principles in a more effective way, the several stakeholders of Estonian forestry decided to elaborate the Estonian Forest Certification Scheme, taking the PEFC certification requirements as the basis for the system.

Short overview on elaboration of Estonian certification scheme

On the 29th of October 2001 the Estonian Forest Certification Council (*hereinafter the abbreviation in Estonian EMSN is used*) as not-for-profit association was founded by initiation of Estonian private forest owners and participation of other relevant stakeholders. The aim of the association is to promote the application of principles of sustainable forestry in Estonian forests by developing the forest certification model suitable for Estonian conditions and being in accordance with requirements of PEFC. Also other proper activities can be initiated for achieving the mentioned objective.

In total 12 organizations participate in the work of EMSN:

Estonian Private Forest Union
Estonian Forest and Wood Industries Association
State Forest Management Centre
Estonian University of Life Sciences
Luua Forestry School
The Labour Union of Forestry Workers
The Society of Forest Rangers
Estonian Forest Society
Estonian Forest Students Association
Consistory of Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church
Estonian Nature Protection Society

The EMSN formed two working groups for elaboration of certification model: one for developing the standard for sustainable forest management and for certification procedure requirements, the second one was for the chain of custody standard implementation.

The work of the working groups was public and people from all relevant interest groups took part of the work of elaboration of the documents. The composed materials and documents have been made available in the homepage of EMSN in Internet; so all interested persons have had an opportunity to send their opinions and comments.

The objective

The overall objective of Estonian Forest Certification Scheme is to contribute to the implementation of principles of sustainable forestry in Estonia. The application of the scheme has to guarantee the following of PEFC principles in managing of forests and to ensure to the procurer of the wood, that timber originates from the sustainable managed forests and assure, that the origin of the wood and wooden products with a PEFC label can be verified in each phase of timber chain.

Documentary basis

Estonian Forests Certification Scheme is updated in a full compliance with Estonian law, directed by international conventions ratified by the Republic of Estonia (the Rio convention on conservation of biological diversity and the treaties of International Labour Organization have been taken for the main basis). Besides the following documents have directly formed the documentary basis of this scheme:

- Pan-European Criteria & Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (Lisbon, 1998);
- Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines;
- PEFC Technical Document, including:
 - Annex 1: Terms and Definitions
 - PEFC ST 1001:2010 Standard Setting – Requirements
 - PEFC ST 2002:2013 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products - Requirements
 - PEFC ST 2001:2008 v2 PEFC Logo Usage Rules
 - PEFC ST 1002:2010 Group FM Certification
 - PEFC ST 1003:2010 Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements
 - Annex 6: Certification and Accreditation procedures
 - PEFC GD 1007:2012 Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their Revision

The standard setting process was carried out in accordance with requirements stipulated in the document “Standard settings - Requirements”, PEFC ST 1001:2010 of PEFC Technical Document.

The EMSN is responsible for preparing, accepting and verifying the Scheme documentation (including standards), ensuring its conformity to the PEFC Technical Documentation and certification bodies notification for forest management and/or chain of custody certification. The process of development of certification criteria was initiated by Estonian forest owners and organisations of Estonian forestry sector. All relevant interested parties were invited to participate in the process. Their views were documented and considered in an open and transparent way.

The EMSN arranged first meeting of working groups. The EMSN called in members of the former working groups and as comprehensively as possible other stakeholders of forestry sector. All interested parties were invited to participate in the process. The invited parties represented the different aspects of sustainable forest management and include, e.g. forest owners, forest industry, environmental and social non-governmental organisations, trade unions, retailers and other relevant organisations at national or sub-national level.

The EMSN formed two working groups for elaboration of certification model: one for developing the standard for sustainable forest management and the other one for chain of custody standard. The EMSN approved the working plan for the Scheme revision setting and maintaining.

The EMSN discussed the fundamental principles and timetable for revision and setting of Scheme documents, including setting of PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia and PEFC

Technical Document PEFC ST 2002:2010, currently replaced by PEFC ST 2002:2013 “Chain of Custody of Forest Based products – Requirements”.

Participation in the working groups was organised according to its respective consensus. Each party participating in the working group had equal opportunity to influence on the final result of the work.

Decisions in working groups were made on basis of consensus.

1. Each working group elected a chairman who co-ordinates the work of the working group. The chairman had a solid understanding on the Estonian forestry and forest certification as well as a capacity for organizing and chairing the working group meetings.
2. Meetings of the working group were convoked by the chairman of the working group
3. All members of the working group and board of EMSN were informed about time, place and agenda of the meeting in a reasonable time before meeting.
4. All meetings were documented and minutes of the meetings were sent to all interested bodies.
5. Working groups elaborated the parts of standard through open and transparent discussions.
6. Working group presented to the board of EMSN the parts of the standard after having found consensus on the content of the documents.
7. All documents of Estonian forest certification scheme were approved by the board of EMSN.

All the Estonian PEFC Scheme documentation is available in Estonian Forest Certification Council webpage www.pefc.ee.

SETTING THE STANDARDS

In the 20 November, 2012 Estonian Forest Certification Council took the decision to adopt the PEFC Technical Document PEFC ST 2002:2010, currently replaced by PEFC ST 2002:2013 “Chain of Custody of Forest Based products – Requirements” and PEFC ST 2001:2008 – PEFC Logo Usage Rules – Requirements.

After the discussion open voting decided to whole adopt the PEFC Technical Document PEFC ST 2002:2010, currently replaced by PEFC ST 2002:2013 “Chain of Custody of Forest Based products – Requirements” as the PEFC chain of custody standard for Estonia. The result of voting: for – 7, against – 0, abstaining – 0.

Estonian Forest Certification Council made the decision about PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia setting:

1. The procedures should be consistent with the PEFC requirements, which are described in PEFC Technical Documentation int. al. Technical Document (with annexes) and with relevant ISO regulations.
2. PEFC requirements and procedures are adopted to Estonian conditions, based on forest management sustainability criteria, which are described in Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC reference document - <http://www.pefc.org/images/stories/documents/pefctechnical/MCPFE-PECSFM.pdf>) and Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC reference document - <http://www.pefc.org/images/stories/documents/pefc-technical/MCPFEPEOLG.pdf>).

The work on revising the PEFC Scheme, including the Forest management standard for Estonia started already in March 2009, when the PEFC Scheme revision document was drafted and published on the EMSN webpages. Public announcement of the scheme revision was made on EMSN webpage in March 2009.

The following milestones of the revision process may be outlined:

1. 26.03.2009 PEFC Scheme revision document published on EMSN webpage, first call for public participation in the scheme revision
2. 2009-2010 Internal review and gap analysis of the PEFC Estonian Scheme documents
3. 01.06.2010 EMSN General Assembly – decision to form working group for the Scheme revision and appoint members of the working group.
4. 09.11.2010 PEFC Scheme revision working group meeting
5. 02.12.2010 PEFC Scheme revision working group meeting
6. 05.02.2012 PEFC Scheme revision working group meeting
7. 04.01.2012 Second call for participation in the revision of the PEFC Forest Management Standard for Estonia
8. 20.02.2012 Commencement of public consultation of PEFC Forest Management Standard for Estonia
9. 10-17.04.2012 Three public seminars to disseminate information about the revised PEFC FM and COC standard
10. 14.05.2012 Review of the results of public consultation on the Estonian forest management standard and decision to consider the standard ready for approval by the EMSN
11. 20.09.2012 Approval of the standard by the EMSN

The draft project of the PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia was prepared by Allan Sims, who has a PhD from Estonian University of Life Sciences. The draft project was published on the EMSN webpage – www.eramets.ee, now www.pefc.ee and sent out to all members of Estonian Forest Certification Council.

The working group started to work with the draft standard and revised it as was deemed necessary and appropriate by the members of the working group.

All the proposals for changes (each remark separately) were discussed in detail in working group open meetings and exchanging the information in the internet. Two working drafts of the PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia were created.

On February 5th, 2012 the decision was made at the working group meeting to put the draft forest management standard out for a 60-days public consultation process.

The public consultation process of the draft PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia was held from 20 February to 14 May 2012. During this period, the draft project of the PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia together with suggestions submitting form was posted at the EMSN webpage – www.eramets.ee and an announcement was sent out to the loodusae mailing list about the commencement of the public consultation process

The suggestions and proposals to the draft PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia were submitted from four organizations: *Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonian Forest Society, State Forest Management Centre and Estonian Private Forest Union.*

The working group was carried out an analysis on all received remarks, proposals and suggestions.

EMSN working group assessed proposals with explanations and sent back to these four organizations, which submitted them.

In the 20 September, 2012 at the EMSN board meeting a discussion was held on the draft PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia. After the discussion the members of the EMSN board in

open voting decided to unanimously approve the PEFC Forest management standard for Estonia. The result of voting: for – 6, against – 0, abstaining – 0.

The final version of the Scheme documentation was approved by the EMSN in the 20 September 2012 including:

- * PEFC EST 2 – The procedure requirements for the certification of forest management and chain of custody

- * PEFC EST 3 – The qualification criteria for external auditors and certification bodies, and certification procedures

- * PEFC EST 4 – Guidelines for Certification Bodies and Auditors to conduct FM and CoC Certification

- * PEFC EST FM standard

- * PEFC EST – Notification of Certification Bodies for Chain of Custody and Forest Management Certification in Estonia against the requirements of the Estonian Forest Certification scheme was approved by the EMSN on 10 April, 2014

Terms and Definitions

accounting of material flows: A procedure with which the origins of various raw material types that have been used in making a product can be determined based on accounts concerning wood flows during the procurement and industrial processing.

accreditation: A procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that a body or person is competent to carry out specific tasks. (EN45020)

accreditation body: A body that conducts and administers an accreditation system and grants accreditation. (EN 45020)

amendments to standards induced by the National Governing Bodies: When PEFC endorsed standards are further elaborated at the national level, the amendments made shall be informed to the PEFC Council, who decides on their endorsement.

amendments to standards induced by the PEFC Council: When the PEFC Council amends or elaborates its requirements for standards or standard setting, the National Governing Bodies shall make the respective amendments to the national standards and get them approved according to the national rules on standard setting. The revisions made are submitted to the PEFC Council for approval.

applicant: is a legal entity (individual or organisation) that has the right to submit an application.

Note: the term “applicant” is used throughout the PEFC documentation to indicate a legal entity applying for (i) forest management certification, (ii) chain of custody certification or (iii) endorsement of a national or sub-national scheme.

audit: Systematic and objective activity to find out the extent to which requirements related to an agreed subject matter are fulfilled, performed by one or more persons who are independent of what is audited. (ISO 9000)

auditee: A forest owner, an organisation, or a group of forest owners, organisations and other actors operating in a defined forest area, to be audited. (ISO 9000)

audit evidence: Verifiable observations, information, records or statements of fact that establish the basis for conformance assessment. (ISO 9000)

auditor: A person who has the qualification to perform audits. (ISO 9000)

audit plan: A plan jointly prepared by the applicant and certification body for carrying out an audit. (ISO 9000)

audit report: A report on observations on the compliance of operations with the criteria. The report focuses on information on non-conformities. (ISO 9000)

audit team: A group of auditors, or a single auditor, designated to perform a given audit. The audit team may also include technical experts and auditors-in-training. (ISO 9000)

batch: The quantity of wood raw material or of intermediate or finished product which is quantified as being work in progress between the first day and the last day of the relevant batch period and subsequently delivered as an identified batch or parts of a batch to one or more processors, traders or users.

batch period: The period within which a batch of wood material is processed, or a batch of finished product covered by this standard is manufactured, within a single processing or manufacturing plant, which shall normally be an identified maximum period of 12 months commencing on any day on which the relevant batch enters into processing as work in progress. The batch period relating to a specific phase or activity in the chain of custody may be standardised in national, regional or sectoral chain of custody rules if appropriate.

certificate: A document issued under the rules of a certification system, providing confidence that a duly identified product, process, or service, is in conformity with a specified standard or other normative document. (EN 45020)

certification: A procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements. (EN 45020)

certification body: An independent third party that assesses and certifies organizations with respect to forest management or chain of custody standards and any supplementary documentation required under the system.

certified forest: A forest area to which an independent certification body has granted certification.

chain of custody of wood: All the changes of custodianship of forest products, and products thereof, during the harvesting, transportation, processing and distribution chain from the forest to the end-use.

continual improvement: A process of enhancing the management system and performance to achieve improvements in economic, environmental and social aspects of forest management.

controversial sources: Illegal or unauthorised harvesting such as harvesting in forest areas protected by law as well as in forest areas officially published by government authorities (or body with the legal authority to do so) as planned to become strictly protected by law, without the government authorities (or the body with the legal authority to do so) giving permission to harvest.

criterion: Requirement against which conformity assessment is made.

dispute settlement body: A body charged with handling appeals of decisions, disputes and complaints.

environment: Surroundings in which an organization operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelation (ISO 14004)

environmental impact: Any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organization's activities, products and services (ISO 14004)

environmental management system: That part of the overall management system that includes organizational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining the environmental policy of an organization (ISO 14004)

forest certification: A procedure to assess the quality of forest management in relation to the criteria of a forest management standard.

forest certification scheme: Set of standards, guidelines and rules covering forest management criteria, chain of custody of wood requirements (where applicable), certification arrangements and procedures and requirements for certification bodies.

forest manager: An individual or organisation that is responsible for the management planning and supervision of operations in a forest area.

forest owner: An individual or organisation that has the registered property rights over a forest area. (state, industry or private)

group forest certification: Certification of forest management of a group of small and medium sized forest owners under one certificate

group chain of custody certification: Certification of chain of custody of a group of small and medium size enterprises under one certificate.

indicator: A quantitative or qualitative parameter which can be assessed in relation to a criterion. It describes objectively and unambiguously a relevant element of a criterion.

industrial by-products: Wood based material in the form of sawdust, fibrous wood, printers' off-cuts, solid-wood off-cuts or composite wood off-cuts resulting from any wood transformation or manufacturing process and which may be reclaimed and recycled as raw material for manufacturing process, or burned. Various materials belonging to this category are defined in details in customary definitions of the business in question.

industrial co-products: A class of virgin wood consisting of chips, slabs, sawdust and the like co-produced with the cutting of sawn wood or veneer log from the round wood log and used as materials for industrial processing or other commercial applications. Industrial co-products are comparable to virgin fibre when determining the percentage of certified raw material. Various materials belonging to this category are defined in details in customary definitions of the business in question

label: A claim which indicates certain aspects of a product.

labelling: Usage of labels (on- or off-product labels) in connection of products in order to communicate their properties.

life cycle analysis: An analysis concerning consecutive and interlinked stages of a product system, from raw material acquisition or generation of natural resources to the final disposal ("from the cradle to the grave"). It includes production of raw materials, the production, processing, storage, transport of materials, and use, recycling and disposal.

non-conformity: Situation in which the audit evidences indicate that operations are not carried out in compliance with a certification criterion.

normative document: a document that provides rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results. It covers such documents as standards, technical specifications, codes of practice and regulations.

off-product label: Information conveyed by a supplier by documentary means other than an on-product label, concerning the nature or classification of the material in a batch.

on-product label: A merchandising label attached to a product or a package of products.

organisation: Company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private, that has its own functions and administration (ISO 14004).

origin: The forest from which the wood and wood based raw material of products originate. The origin shows whether the forest management is certified or not. The origin may be verified with systems based on inventory control and accounting of wood flows or physical separation.

periodic review of a standard: Complete revision of the standard within a defined time frame to ensure that the current knowledge is taken into consideration in the standard and that it is well adapted to the local/regional conditions.

production forest: A forest which is available for wood supply and other uses.

physical segregation: A procedure in which various raw material types of different origin are kept separate so that the origin of the raw material used in making a product is known.

recycled wood and wood fibre: Recycled wood/fibre in the form of either reclaimed pre-consumer by-products from processes in manufacture where these are not traceable to virgin wood raw material sources, or reclaimed post-consumer wood/fibre which after reclamation is recycled into the chain of commercial supply and reduced to a raw material form. Normally classified in a list of Standard Grades

regional forest certification: Certification of the forests within delimited geographic boundaries, being applied for by the authorised organisation for the specified region and providing voluntary access for the participation of individual forest owners and other actors.

rolling average: The batch period is calculated as a rolling average in order to avoid remarkable seasonal variation. This means that if a manufacturer has a batch period of six months and the basic monitoring period is one month, the batch period is calculated monthly as an average of previous six months.

single issue-label: A label, which states something only on one property of the product (e.g. management of the forests which are origins of the wood raw material used in the product)

stakeholder, interested party: An individual or group of individuals with a common interest, concerned with or affected by the operation of an organisation (ISO 14004)

standard: A document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines, or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context. (EN 45020)

surveillance audit: An audit carried out to verify that the corrective action requirement has been implemented.

sustainable forest management (SFM): The stewardship and use of forests and forest land in a way and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national and global levels and does not cause damage to other ecosystems. (MCPFE)

technical expert: A person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the audit team, but who does not participate as an auditor.

third party: person or body that is recognized as being independent of the parties involved, as concerns the issue in question (EN 45020)

virgin wood/fibre: Wood/fibre, whether in the form of round wood, chips, sawdust, fibrous wood, not yet subjected to industrial processing.

wood based raw material: Raw material or intermediate product based on wood (e.g. round wood, chips, sawdust, sawn wood, wood based panels, pulp, paper, cork, bark, resin)