PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Introducing PEFC’s Unique Approach to Forest Certification
ABOUT PEFC

PEFC, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management through independent third-party certification. It works throughout the forest supply chain to promote good practice in the forest and to ensure that timber and non-timber forest products are sourced with respect for the highest ecological, social and ethical standards.

PEFC is an umbrella organization that endorses national forest certification systems developed collaboratively by all interested stakeholders and tailored to local priorities and conditions. Each national forest certification system undergoes vigorous third party assessment against PEFC’s unique Sustainability Benchmarks. These Benchmarks are based on broad consensus by society, expressed in globally respected international and intergovernmental processes and guidelines for the promotion of sustainable forest management.

The Benchmark criteria are regularly revised through multi-stakeholder processes to take account of new scientific knowledge, societal change, evolving expectations and to incorporate the latest best practices.

Today, PEFC has recognized certification systems in over 30 countries. Together these account for over 240 million hectares of certified forest, making PEFC the world’s largest forest certification system.

It is the certification system of choice for hundreds of thousands of small forest owners including family and community-owned forests.

PEFC-certified materials deliver proof of sustainability and are therefore requested in numerous public and private procurement policies worldwide.

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Forests are critical for sustainable development. They provide a wealth of goods and services that are essential for people’s lives, livelihoods and the green economy. Maintaining and enhancing our planet’s forest resources is essential if we are to succeed in the global efforts to alleviate poverty, address water scarcity and mitigate climate change.

Forests are rich in species compared to other ecosystems, providing habitats for more than half of terrestrial species, from African gorillas to Asian tigers, from Scandinavian reindeers to American Bald Eagles. They also provide water for many of our rivers, helping to secure the quality and purity of what we drink and use every day.

An estimated 1.6 billion people rely on forests for their livelihoods to some degree, while more than two billion people – a third of the world’s population – use biomass fuels, mainly firewood, to cook and to heat their homes. In fact, roughly a quarter of the world’s poor and 90 percent of the poorest depend substantially on forests for their livelihoods, including some 60 million indigenous peoples and other forest-dwelling communities. Indeed, forests sustain nearly half of the population in the developing world, providing wood for fuel as well as non-timber products like mushrooms, nuts, rubber and medicines.

Forests are also of significant economic importance to rural development, with the forest sector contributing approximately US$ 468 billion to the global economy. In the Global South, in particular, forests play a major role in the national economies and livelihoods of local people. The forest sector contributes more than eight percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in some of the poorest countries.

Culturally and historically, the intrinsic value of forests, and the spiritual and sacred use of forests, is of great importance to local communities and our cultural identity.

Forest certification arose in response to concerns about the preservation of the world’s forests. It developed as a result of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Brazil, which defined “sustainable development” as a common goal of human development. The preamble of the “Forest Principles”, one of the five outcome documents, stated that “forests are essential to economic development and the maintenance of all forms of life”. But governments were unable to agree on the specifics of sustainable forest management at a UN level, and forest certification arose as a process and a mechanism to bring people together to define it.

Today, forest certification is seen as a tried and tested mechanism to provide evidence for sustainable forest management, and assists producers in bringing product assurances to the market. In fact, with more and more companies specifically in Europe and North America implementing responsible timber procurement policies, certification is a preferred tool for forest owners and managers to maintain or improve access to high value markets.

Certification has been taken up by land managers (both companies and individuals) of all sizes in developed countries, with one-third of the total forest area in North America and half of Western Europe’s forests certified. Yet the slow pace of expansion of forest certification in tropical and sub-tropical areas, where less than two percent of the forests are certified, suggests that tailored approaches and more proactive support is needed for delivering sustainable forest management.

For certification systems, this requires their standards to meet the expectations of stakeholders on the ground, address local conditions, and be consistent with national laws, regulations and traditions. It is important especially in developing countries to carefully balance the economic pillar of sustainability with the environmental and social, while maintaining compliance with internationally accepted requirements for sustainable forest management. Additional investments, improved practices and increased capacity may be required to encourage the uptake of forest certification.

Special attention must be paid to the specific situation of smallholders and locally-controlled forests to avoid forest certification becoming a barrier to market access.

As certification becomes an important tool to verify sustainable forest management practices, but also a pre-requisite for doing business, local forest owners who are unable to obtain certification for reasons unrelated to management practices (costs, resources, capacity) risk being excluded from the marketplace. This may have direct economic and social impacts on the people and communities that depend on these forests for their livelihoods.

PEFC, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, is well placed to expand forest certification to tropical countries through its unique bottom-up approach to certification, developed by and for smallholders.

WHAT IS FOREST CERTIFICATION?
PEFC – CERTIFICATION FROM SMALLHOLDERS FOR SMALLHOLDERS

PEFC is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management through forest certification.

Based in Geneva, Switzerland, PEFC’s membership comprises more than 50 organizations including, national certification systems, NGOs, labour unions, businesses, trade associations and forest owner organizations committed to promoting sustainable forest management through forest certification.

The organization was established in 1999 by small and family forest owner organizations. Since our beginnings, PEFC has paid special attention to their needs, operating structures and unique models of collaborative forest management, while endeavouring to make forest certification accessible to all.

Today, more than 240 million hectares of forests of all sizes – two-thirds of the total global certified forest area – are certified to PEFC’s globally recognized Sustainability Benchmarks, making it the world’s largest forest certification system.

GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Sustainable forest management creates outcomes that are economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just. These three pillars of sustainability cannot be separated, compartmentalized or addressed individually. Without all three, forests will not be protected, forest dependent communities and rural economies cannot thrive, illegal logging will not be abated, and development opportunities will not be captured.

PEFC’s requirements build and expand upon the most widely accepted principles, criteria and guidelines defining sustainable forest management, developed by international and intergovernmental bodies such as Forest Europe, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the African Timber Organization (ATO).

During PEFC standard setting processes, these references have been further evolved, adapted and strengthened to take account of the latest scientific knowledge, experiences on the ground, and changing societal expectations. PEFC’s Sustainability Benchmark requirements include:

• Recognition of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)
• Provisions for consultation with local people and stakeholders
• Respect for property and land tenure rights as well as customary and traditional rights
• Compliance with all fundamental ILO conventions and occupational health and safety requirements
• Prohibition of forest conversions
• Protection of ecologically important forest areas
• Prohibition of the most hazardous chemicals
• Prohibition of genetically modified trees
• Exclusion of certification of plantations established by conversions.

PEFC was the first global forest certification standard to require compliance with all fundamental ILO Conventions and to include references to the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

Independent assessments such as the WWF’s Forest Certification Assessment Guide (FCAG) and the UK government’s Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) have found that PEFC’s requirements meet their respective criteria concerning sustainable forest management, providing external assurances that PEFC-certified forest owners – large and small – meet stakeholder expectations.

More information: tree.es/SFM-req
Indigenous Peoples & Certification

Today, it is estimated that some 60 million indigenous people depend directly upon forest resources for their livelihoods. These indigenous communities that live and work directly in forests and forest landscapes have accumulated a wealth of traditional knowledge and a rich cultural heritage. Maintaining healthy forests also sustains their ways of life, cultural diversity and safeguards their traditional knowledge.

Many indigenous communities, especially in Asia, have limited knowledge of forest certification. It may hold potential to help with recognition of land rights or legitimization of traditional land management systems. To further explore, PEFC has entered into a partnership with the organization KADIDAN on a project to raise awareness within indigenous communities in Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines of the opportunities and benefits offered by forest certification. The project is also exploring the possible recognition of traditional forest management systems into forest certification.

More information: tree.es/ip-certification

GROUP CERTIFICATION – PROVIDING SMALLHOLDERS WITH ACCESS TO CERTIFICATION

Group certification, a concept popularized by PEFC more than 10 years ago, is a mechanism through which groups of small forest landholders can pool their resources and work together to achieve third-party verified sustainable forest management certification. With 25 percent of the global forest area managed by families, communities and indigenous peoples, it is essential that tools like forest certification are made accessible to these important stewards of the world’s forests.

Group certification makes certification affordable for small landholders when individual certification may be too expensive and reduces the burden of administration on small landholders with limited resources.

Internationally, nearly one million small forest owners have achieved PEFC certification through the group certification mechanism. This number is a testimony to the fact that forest certification is possible for small landholders, and that it is a powerful and cost-effective mechanism for promoting forest conservation and sustainable management. Experience also shows that certification can stimulate and significantly contribute to improving rural livelihoods. The knock-on effect in terms of incentives to conserve and sustainably manage forests makes group certification an effective complement to reducing emissions from forest degradation and deforestation (REDD+).

Experiences and lessons learned on the ground from existing PEFC group certification practises in Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Spain and Sweden are important for expanding group certification among smallholders especially in tropical countries. To achieve group certification, it is essential to acknowledge that:

• Secure, long-term tenure rights are a fundamental basis for sustainability and must be defined by a robust legal framework.
• Small landholder organizations may take different forms, but the organizations are key to functional group certification.
• Certification can drive forward sustainable practices; it can also document existing sustainability.
• Successful forest certification systems acknowledge nationally-relevant standards and respect local institutions and organizations.
• Strong partnerships between small landholders and industry or the State can provide essential support.

More information: tree.es/group-certification

Expanding Group Certification Globally

This project is promoting certification in those areas where it is less widespread, but where sustainable forestry has taken on increasing urgency in light of efforts to combat climate change and alleviate poverty. The project establishes networks and partnership between organizations to:

• Transfer technology and knowledge, and
• Help build capacity among small forest owners in all regions of the world.

Project partners include PEFC, the Confederation of Private Forest Owners (CEFP) and the Three Rights Holders Group – G3 Alliance (International Family Forestry Alliance, Global Alliance of Community Forests, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal People of Tropical Forests).

More information: tree.es/group-cert

Supporting Dutch Smallholders

The Netherlands is among the countries with the lowest percentage of certified forests in Western Europe. A specific challenge rests in the certification of private, usually small forest owners who together own about one-third of the total Dutch forest area. PEFC is supporting a project that targets almost 2,000 forest owners with a forest area of more than five hectares, and roughly 10,000 very small forest owners with forest areas smaller than five hectares to:

• Raise awareness of the benefits of certification
• Enable Dutch small forest owners to obtain PEFC forest certification
• Streamline the process and create an effective mechanism to monitor compliance with certification requirements.

More information: tree.es/dutch-smallholder
NATIONAL STANDARDS - BOTTOM-UP APPROACH TO FOREST CERTIFICATION

While the concept of sustainable forest management is global in nature, its implementation is local. It must therefore be tailored to the needs of the specific forest ecosystems present in a particular country, the legal and administrative framework, and the socio-cultural context.

Forests are highly diverse around the globe, from evergreen eucalypt forests in Tasmania to tropical rainforests in South America and the Congo Basin and boreal forests in Canada. Similarly, their management differs greatly, along with management traditions, average property sizes and support structures such as forest owner associations. Added to this, there is a range of stakeholders, different in each situation, that need to be recognized and participate in determining requirements for sustainable forest management at national level. They range from public or private forest owners to local communities or indigenous peoples, forest industry and different groups advocating for the protection of public goods (such as environmental NGOs), or labour rights (such as social NGOs).

PEFC’s bottom-up approach to forest certification is well placed to respond to these challenges, with standards independently developed and owned by local stakeholders. This ownership is key to the success of forest certification as it empowers local people to manage forests in compliance with the standards in whose development they themselves were involved.

Today, PEFC is the only global forest certification system that requires that all standards are set with the open participation of all interested parties at national level in a consensus-driven decision-making process. PEFC’s standard setting requirements include provisions such as:

- The standard setting working group must have balanced representation and decision making, with the nine major groups defined in Chapter 23 of Agenda 21 providing an example of such a balance (business and industry, children and youth, forest owners, indigenous people, local authorities, NGOs, scientific and technological community, women, workers and trade unions).
- Disadvantaged and key stakeholders need to be identified, their proactive participation sought, and constraints to their participation considered.
- The start of the standard-setting process and the invitation to participate must be publicly announced, and the work of the working group performed in an open and transparent manner.
- The standard setting process must be subject to a public consultation of at least 60 days.
- Standards are formally approved based on evidence of consensus.
- There is a complaints procedure for dealing with substantive complaints.

National forest certification systems that want to be recognized by PEFC must comply with these (and other) requirements.

Compliance with the complete suite of requirements that make up PEFC’s Sustainability Benchmarks is verified through an assessment process (see page 12).

Developing National Forest Certification Systems in the Balkans & Hungary

The Balkans are home to vast forest resources and unique forest ecosystems. Yet forest holdings are highly fragmented with large numbers of forest lots and forest owners, and limited forest management. PEFC supports a partnership project of eight local organizations in Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro that seeks to increase interest in developing national PEFC systems as a tool to promote responsible forestry. PEFC, as the certification system of choice for small and family forest owners, is perceived as a suitable solution for the specific challenges in the region.

A similar project in Hungary, in partnership with PEFC Austria, also enjoys support from PEFC International.

More information: treee.es/balkan-system and treee.es/hungary-system
PEFC SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS
Abridged version

All national certification systems that wish to obtain PEFC endorsement must comply with PEFC’s globally recognized Sustainability Benchmarks, including its requirements for sustainable forest management.

The criteria and indicators listed here represent an abridged version of PEFC’s version.

- Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements.

CRITERION 1: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to the global carbon cycle

- Forest management planning shall aim to maintain or increase forests and other wooded areas and enhance the quality of the economic, ecological, cultural and social values of forest resources.
- Forest management shall comprise the cycle of inventory and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and shall include an appropriate assessment of the social, environmental and economic values. Practices shall safeguard the quantity, quality and diversity of resources, and appropriate silvicultural measures shall be employed.
- Inventory and mapping of forest resources shall be established and maintained, adequately to local and national conditions.
- Plans or their equivalents, appropriate to the size and use of the forest area, shall be elaborated, and periodically updated. A summary of the plan is made publicly available.
- Monitoring of forest resources and evaluation of their management shall be periodically performed, and results fed back into the planning process.
- Conversion of forests to other types of land use shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion:
  - is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation;
  - entails a small proportion of forest type; and
  - does not have negative impacts on threatened forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats; and
  - contributes to long-term conservation, economic, and social benefits.

CRITERION 2: Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality

- Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and increase the health and vitality of forest ecosystems and to rehabilitate degraded forest ecosystems.
- Plans shall specify ways to minimise the risk of degradation of and damages to forest ecosystems.
- Practices shall make best use of natural structures and processes and use preventive biological measures wherever possible, encouraging genetic, species and structural diversity.
- Health and vitality of forests shall be periodically monitored.
- Consideration shall be given to the effects of naturally occurring fire, pests and other disturbances.
- Lighting of trees shall be avoided and is only permitted if it is necessary for the achievement of the management goals of the forest management unit.
- Restocking and afforestation should occur with tree species and provenances that are suited to the site conditions and management techniques that minimise tree and/or soil damage shall be applied.
- The use of pesticides shall be minimised and appropriate silvicultural and other biological measures preferred.
- The WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides like those that accumulate in the food chain, shall be prohibited in most cases.
- Where fertilisers are used, they shall be applied in a controlled manner and with due consideration for the environment.

CRITERION 3: Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood)

- Forest management planning and practices shall aim to maintain the capability of forests to produce a range of wood and non-wood forest products and services on a sustainable basis.
- Planning shall aim to achieve sound economic performance exploring new markets for all relevant goods and services.
- Plans shall take into account the different uses or functions of the managed forest area.
- Productive capacity of the site shall be maintained through appropriate regeneration, tending and harvesting operations.
- Harvesting levels of both wood and non-wood forest products shall not exceed a rate that can be sustained in the long term.
- Exploitation of non-timber forest products is regulated, monitored and controlled.
- Infrastructure shall be planned, established and maintained with consideration to minimising negative environmental impact.

CRITERION 4: Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems

- Forest management planning shall aim to maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity on ecosystem, species and genetic levels and, where appropriate, diversity at landscape level.
- Planning, inventory and mapping of forest resources shall identify, protect and/or conserve ecologically important forest areas containing significant concentrations of:
  - protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems;
  - areas containing endemic species and habitats of threatened species;
  - endangered or protected genetic material;
  - globally, regionally and nationally significant large tree areas.

- Protected and endangered plant and animal species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures shall be taken for their protection and, where relevant, to increase their population.
- Management shall ensure successful regeneration through natural regeneration or, where not appropriate, planting.
- For reforestation and afforestation, native species and local provenances shall be preferred. Use of introduced species, provenances or varieties shall be evaluated to ensure negative impacts are avoided. Activities that contribute to the improvement and restoration of ecological connectivity shall be promoted.
- Genetically-modified (GMO) trees shall not be used.
- Practices shall promote a diversity of both horizontal and vertical structures such as uneven-aged stands and aim to maintain and restore landscape diversity. Moreover, standing and fallen dead wood, old groves and special rare tree species shall be left in quantities and distribution necessary to safeguard biological diversity.
- Traditional management systems that have created valuable ecosystems, such as coppice, on appropriate sites shall be supported.
- Balance between the pressure of animal populations and successful forest regeneration, growth and biodiversity shall be sought.
- Tending and harvesting operations shall be conducted in a way that does not cause lasting damage to ecosystems.
- Infrastructure shall be planned and constructed in a way that minimises damage to ecosystems, and that takes threatened or other key species – in particular their migration patterns – into consideration.
- Adequate public access to forests for the purpose of recreation shall be provided where suitable.

CRITERION 5: Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)

- Forest management planning shall aim to maintain and enhance protective functions of forests for society, such as protection of infrastructure, protection from soil erosion, protection of water resources and from adverse impacts of water such as floods or avalanches.
- Areas that fulfil specific and recognised protective functions for society shall be registered and mapped, and forest management plans or their equivalents shall take full account of these areas.
- Special care shall be granted to minimize soil erosion and adverse impacts on water resources during forest management planning and operations.

CRITERION 6: Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions

- Forest management planning shall aim to respect the multiple functions of forests to society, give due regard to the role of forestry in rural development, and especially consider new opportunities for employment in connection with the socio-economic functions of forests.
- Forest management shall promote the long-term health and well-being of communities within or adjacent to the forest management area.
- Property rights and land tenure arrangements shall be clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. Likewise, legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land shall be clarified, recognised and respected.
- Management activities shall be conducted in recognition of the established framework of legal, customary and traditional rights such as outlined in ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which shall not be infringed upon without the free, prior and informed consent of the holders of the rights, including the provision of compensation where applicable.

CRITERION 7: Compliance with legal requirements

- Forest management shall comply with legislation applicable to forest management issues including forest management practices; nature and environmental protection; protected and endangered species; property, tenure and land-use rights for indigenous peoples; health, labour and safety issues; and the payment of royalties and taxes.
- Management shall provide for adequate protection of the forest from unauthorised activities such as illegal logging, illegal land use, illegally initiated fires, and other illegal activities.

More information: treece.eu/PEFC-SFM
ENSURING INTEGRITY
How PEFC implements its vision

EXCEEDING GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED SUSTAINABILITY BENCHMARKS

PEFC is an alliance of nationally developed forest certification systems. To maintain consistency and integrity across all the different systems, each and every national forest certification system must meet or exceed PEFC’s Sustainability Benchmarks globally recognized requirements for sustainable forest management.

Any national certification system seeking to obtain PEFC endorsement must submit to a comprehensive and thorough assessment process, including independent evaluation and public consultation. This process takes on average nine months to complete. It consists of the following steps:

• An independent assessor evaluates compliance of the national system with PEFC requirements through desk studies, field trips and other means as appropriate.
• The assessment includes a global public consultation of a minimum of 60 days.
• A Panel of Experts reviews the assessment report to ensure consistency, quality and robustness.
• The assessment report is evaluated by the Board of Directors, which provides a recommendation to the General Assembly.
• The General Assembly votes on the endorsement of the national system. A two-thirds majority is required for a system to be endorsed.

Complete documentation concerning all endorsed systems, including assessment reports and the Panel of Expert reviews, is publicly available on the PEFC website. Importantly, PEFC limits the duration of endorsements to five years and requires revisions of national forest certification systems before they are eligible to apply for re-endorsement. This allows for continuous improvement of standards through the integration of new scientific research, experience and best practices. Equally important, however, it encourages ongoing dialogue among stakeholders, thereby enhancing understanding, support and continuous development of the concept of sustainable forest management at national level.

The endorsement process ensures that national standards comply with PEFC’s Sustainability Benchmark and that all requirements are rigorously and consistently applied across all national certification systems. Given that a number of countries have already revised their standards more than twice, it is fair to say that there is some variance among PEFC-endorsed national systems; while all meet international requirements, many exceed these requirements on a number of criteria.

More information: treee.es/endorsementPEFC

Supporting National Scheme Development

In response to a rapidly increasing interest from organizations all over the world that are considering or are already in the process of developing national forest certification systems, PEFC is currently enhancing its support service for these stakeholders.

The first phase is focused on developing an illustrative toolkit, which will in the future be complemented by interactive web-based training programs and enhanced provision of training and support for scheme development specifically in developing countries.

VERIFYING COMPLIANCE ON THE GROUND

While PEFC and its endorsed national forest certification systems develop standards, verification of compliance is not carried out by PEFC itself, but by independent, accredited certification bodies. Certificates issued by certification bodies are valid for three to five years, after which operators must become re-certified. Additional checks are done through annual surveillance audits to proactively verify on-going compliance with PEFC requirements.

PEFC also requires certification bodies to be accredited by national accreditation bodies. Accreditation serves as a quality-control mechanism to ensure the credibility of the work of certification bodies. Certification bodies independently evaluate the work of certification bodies and assess their competence, impartiality and performance capability.

Accreditation bodies must have in place complaints and appeals procedures to deal with issues related to their performance and compliance with PEFC’s Sustainability Benchmarks. If issues cannot be solved at national level, stakeholders can call upon PEFC International’s complaints and appeals mechanism.

We encourage stakeholders to forward information on any suspected activities to the respective complaints and appeals mechanism. In addition to correcting any such issues, complaints and appeals also provide an opportunity to implement corrective and preventive measures and to improve PEFC services.

More information: treee.es/complaints-appeals

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

PEFC is aware that, as with any programme or activity, there may be issues of non-conformity or non-compliance from time to time. PEFC has put in place a series of complaints and appeals mechanisms to respond to such situations.

We encourage stakeholders to forward information on any suspected activities to the respective complaints and appeals mechanism. In addition to correcting any such issues, complaints and appeals also provide an opportunity to implement corrective and preventive measures and to improve PEFC services.

More information: treee.es/complaints-appeals

• Complaints against certified entities are dealt by the respective complaints and appeals procedures put in place by certification bodies. Issues that remain unresolved at this level should be raised with the respective complaints and appeals mechanisms of accreditation bodies and thereafter with the IAF. If the certification body is judged to not deal with the complaint appropriately, it risks losing its licence to operate.

• National forest certification systems must have in place complaints and appeals procedures to deal with issues related to their performance and compliance.

• Standards development working groups must have mechanisms in place to deal with complaints and appeals concerning the standards development process.

More information: treee.es/complaints-appeals
For forest certification to deliver maximum benefits for the world’s forests, it requires engagement and active participation from a wide range of stakeholders. This is especially true for PEFC as an alliance of national forest certification systems. For us, partnership and collaboration are key to our success.

There are many opportunities to engage with the PEFC programme, in either a personal or professional capacity. These range from giving preference to products bearing the distinctive “green trees” logo when shopping to contributing your professional expertise during a forest management standard setting process.

GET INVOLVED

BECOME A PEFC MEMBER

• National Members
  National forest certification systems and organizations striving to establish national standards can join PEFC as National Members. More information: treee.es/nationalPEFCmembers

• International Stakeholder Members
  Organizations, companies and associations with operations in two or more countries can become part of PEFC as International Stakeholder Members. More information: treee.es/int-members

• Member of National Organizations
  Institutional stakeholders and/or individuals can become members of national PEFC member organizations. Contact national organizations: treee.es/nationalPEFCmembers

GET INVOLVED IN PEFC PROJECTS

• Partnership
  Engage with PEFC at national and international levels through joint activities, projects and other collaborative actions that contribute to the overall objectives of all project partners. Contact: development@pefc.org

• PEFC Collaboration Fund
  Apply for co-funding from the PEFC Collaboration Fund, which seeks to support efforts to advance sustainable forest management and forest certification around the world. More information: treee.es/collab-fund

• National Standard Setting
  Contribute to processes at local level and national standard setting and revision work. Contact national organizations: treee.es/nationalPEFCmembers

• Scheme Development
  If you are located in a country without a national forest certification system, consider taking the lead in establishing a national organization to facilitate the development of a PEFC-compliant national system. Contact: development@pefc.org

PARTICIPATE IN STANDARD & SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

• Sustainability Benchmarks
  Become involved in standard setting working groups and task forces charged with the maintenance and further development of PEFC requirements. Contact: technical@pefc.org

• National Standard Setting
  Contribute to processes at local level and national standard setting and revision work. Contact national organizations: treee.es/nationalPEFCmembers

• Scheme Development
  If you are located in a country without a national forest certification system, consider taking the lead in establishing a national organization to facilitate the development of a PEFC-compliant national system. Contact: development@pefc.org

BUY AND SELL PEFC-CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

• Certify your Forest
  Align your management practices with the national PEFC-endorsed standard and obtain PEFC certification as an individual forest owner or through group certification. More information: treee.es/certify-forest

• Certify your Company
  Companies along the timber value chain can obtain PEFC Chain of Custody certification to access markets demanding responsibly-sourced products. More information: treee.es/certify-CoC

• Label your Products
  Highlight your commitment to sustainability by using the PEFC label on certified products and in product marketing. More information: treee.es/PEFC-logo

• Procure and Buy Responsibly
  Consumers as well as companies at the end of the supply chain can support PEFC and sustainable forestry by purchasing and procuring PEFC-certified products. More information: treee.es/procure-certified

• Scheme Development
  If you are located in a country without a national forest certification system, consider taking the lead in establishing a national organization to facilitate the development of a PEFC-compliant national system. Contact: development@pefc.org
What Makes PEFC Unique?

As the largest forest certification system globally, PEFC remains the certification system of choice for small, private forests, with hundreds of thousands of family-owned forests certified as in compliance with PEFC’s Sustainability Benchmarks.

To date, over 10,000 companies have achieved PEFC Chain of Custody certification, offering tens of thousands of PEFC-certified products globally.

With alternative Forest and Chain of Custody certification standards available, there are good reasons why so many people opt for PEFC.

Upholds Highest Standards Without Exception

- Requires compliance with all fundamental ILO Conventions in forest management since 2001, setting new benchmarks for social issues.
- Is tailored to the specific needs of family and community-owned forests, with lasting contributions to livelihoods and rural development.
- Offers well-established processes for group certification, thereby offering access to certification and the marketplace for certified products from locally controlled forestry.
- Sets the highest standards for forest certification aligned with the majority of the world’s governments, including:
  - Maintaining or enhancing biodiversity
  - Protecting ecologically important forest area
  - Prohibiting forest conversions and excluding certification of plantations established by conversions
  - Prohibiting use of the most hazardous chemicals and GMOs, and minimizing the use of pesticides
  - Protecting workers’ rights and welfare, and encouraging local employment—recognizing the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights, and ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
  - Respecting property and land tenure rights as well as customary and traditional rights – provisions for consultation with local people and stakeholders
  - Abiding by applicable laws
  - Safeguarding the basic rights of workers
  - Includes social, health and safety requirements in Chain of Custody certification.

Level of Stakeholder Engagement Equally High for All Standards

- Strictly separates standard-setting, certification and accreditation to ensure complete independence and impartiality.
- Requires all national standards to be independently developed with participation open to all interested parties.
- Recognizes the importance of the nine major groups as defined by Agenda 21 (Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) Major Groups) of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) as the stakeholder groups involved in or concerned by forest management.
- Requires that all standards undergo public consultation at national and international levels and third-party assessment.
- Demands and implements regular revisions of national certification systems.

Builds on Intergovernmental Agreements & Globally Recognized Processes

- Builds its understanding of sustainable forest management on broad societal consensus as expressed in international and intergovernmental processes.
- Supports the implementation of governmental agreements through a voluntary, market-based mechanism.
- Follows globally accepted ISO Guidelines for certification and accreditation.

Assessment and Endorsement of National Standards

- Annex 7 - Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their Revision to be replaced by: PEFC Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of National Schemes and their Revision (PEFC GD 1007:201x) in 2012/2013
- Certification Body Requirements – Chain of Custody (PEFC ST 2003:2012)

Complaints and Appeals

- PEFC Requirements for Certification Bodies Operating Forest Management Certification (PEFC ST 1004:201x) in 2012/2013

Chain of Custody

- Chain of Custody (PEFC ST 2002:2010)
- Chain of Custody of Forest-Based Products – Guidance for Use (PEFC GD 2001:2011)
- PEFC Logo Usage Rules (PEFC ST 2001:2008 v2)

References

This is a list of major PEFC Standards and Guidelines. Complete and up-to-date information is available on the PEFC website.

Sustainable Forest Management

- Sustainable Forest Management (PEFC ST 1003:2010)

Group Certification

- Group Forest Management Certification (PEFC ST 1002:2010)

Development of National Standards

- Standard Setting (PEFC ST 1001:2010)