

**The Council for Sustainable Forest Management
in the Republic of Macedonia**

PEFC BS 02:2020

Institute for forest certification in Slovenia

Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma”

Croatian Union of Private Forest Owners Association

STANDARD SETTING AND REVISION PROCEDURES

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Approved by:

1. The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republic of Macedonia on 24.04.2020
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Introduction

The countries in the Balkan region have a common forestry history of sustainable forest management that takes into consideration fulfillment of ecological, social and economic criteria.

This document is describing the development of the PEFC Balkan sustainable forest management standard that is based on wide participation of all stakeholders and ensuring the principle of openness and transparency of the process by reaching decisions based on consensus.

The Council for Sustainable Forest Management in the Republic of Macedonia, Institute for forest certification in Slovenia, Association of private forest owners “Naša Šuma” and Croatian Union of Private Forest Owners Association are PEFC National Government Bodies (NGB’s) in North Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosna and Herzegovina and Croatia.

These NGB’s are standardizing bodies responsible for development and maintenance of Balkan Forest Certification System in accordance with the PEFC requirements.

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1. Scope

This document describes requirements for development and revision of the standard for sustainable forest management (SFM) as a part of the system for forest certification according to PEFC requirements. This document currently applies to three countries from the Balkan Region: Slovenia, North Macedonia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This document may serve also to PEFC members from the countries that belongs or are neighboring to the Balkan Region willing to join the Balkan Forest Certification System, if they decide to accept the principles of the PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System, and to adopt the scheme documentation outside of the FM standard.

The PEFC Balkan Forest Certification System is facilitating the efforts of new countries willing to join the Balkan FC System and to support the PEFC global efforts for sustainable forest management.

This document was prepared in accordance with the PEFC requirements.

2. Normative references

The documents listed below are essential for the application of this document. The latest versions of referenced documents which are in force are applied in this document.

-PEFC ST 1001:2017 Standard Setting - Requirements

-ISO/IEC Guide 59 (recent version), Code of good practice and standardization

-ISO/IEC Guide 2 (recent version), Standardization and related activities - General vocabulary

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

3. Concepts and definitions

For the purpose of this document, the concepts and definitions described in ISO/IEC Guide 2 are used for the definitions listed in this section.

3.1 Consensus

General agreement characterized by absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests or by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and the need to reconcile any conflicting arguments.

Note: The need to reach a consensus needs not imply unanimity (ISO/IEC Guide 2)

3.2 Enquiry draft

Proposed document open to public consultation.

3.3 Final draft

Proposed document ready for formal approval.

3.4 Normative document

Document which describes rules, guidelines and characteristics of certain activities or the results of those activities.

Note 1: The concept normative document includes standards, specifications of technical nature, regulative documents.

Note 2: The word document refers to any kind of medium which contains information.

3.5 Publicly available

Access of the content is easy for any interested stakeholder in a form that does not need submission of request.

3.6 Revision

Process of presenting all necessary changes to their essence and presentation of the normative document.

Note: the results of the revision are presented by issuing a new edition of a certain normative document (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.7 Review

Activity which refers to the check of a normative document to determine if it needs to be reaffirmed, changed or withdrawn from use.

3.8 Stakeholder

Person, group or organization concerned by the subject of standardization.

Note: the nine major groups defined by Agenda 21 at the UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro 1992 is an example of stakeholders who are part of or are concerned by sustainable forest management (SFM): (a) business and industry, (b) children and youths, (c) forest owners, (d) indigenous communities, (e) local government, (f) NGO, (g) scientific and technological community, (h) women and (i) workers and unions.

3.8.1 Affected stakeholder

A stakeholder who might experience a direct change in living and/or working conditions caused by implementation of the standard or a stakeholder who might be a user of the standard and therefore is subject to the requirements of the standard.

3.8.2 Disadvantaged stakeholder

A stakeholder who might be financially or otherwise disadvantaged by participating in the standard setting process.

3.8.3 Key stakeholder

A stakeholder whose participation is critical to the outcome of the standard setting process.

3.9 Standard

Document brought by consensus and approved by an authorized body which provides rules, guidelines and characteristics of activities or their results for everyday use in order to achieve optimal level or consistency in a given context.

Note: Standards should be based on the most recent results in science, technology and practice and should aim at promoting optimal benefit (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.10 Standardization body

Body which is authorized for activities in standardization (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

3.11 Working draft

Proposed document generally available for comments or voting in the working group.

4. Responsibilities in the process of establishing and approval of the standard for SFM

4.1 National Governing Bodies - NGB's

The NGB's of the Balkan Region are PEFC standardization bodies responsible for formal acceptance (approval) of documents. The composition and decisions brought by the Balkan Region NGB's are in compliance with their Statute. The NGB's shall be organized as legal entities, registered under the legal framework requirements in their countries.

4.2. Responsibilities of the NGB's

The responsibilities of every single NGB in the process of creating and revising SFM standards are:

- a) to revise documents;
- b) to vote for the acceptance of the certification scheme in accordance with the PEFC procedures, prior to the submission of the certification scheme for approval to PEFC;
- c) to nominate members for the commission for development and analysis of sustainable forest management measures and indicators (working group, WG) in their country;
- d) to nominate members for the disputes resolution body in their country;
- e) to nominate members for other temporary commissions and working bodies in their country;
- f) to authentically interpret the contents of the certification scheme in their country;

4.3 Implementing the procedures for development and revision of SFM standards

Every single NGB is also responsible for implementing the procedures described in the document or other rules that refer to standard development. To this aim, the NGB arranges the relationships with the working group for creating the draft document. The NGB is particularly responsible for:

- a) preparing the proposal for development or revision of standard;
- b) identifying relevant stakeholders including affected, disadvantaged and key stakeholders;
- c) publicly announcing the start of a process for document development and an invitation to the stakeholders;
- d) ensuring public access to the standard development procedures;
- e) keeping records for the nominated members of the WG;
- f) publishing the decisions of the NGB for the accepted members of the WG and publishing their contact details;
- g) administering the WG activities, except in cases when they organize it themselves;
- h) administering public consultations;
- i) organizing pilot testing;
- j) publishing approved documentation;
- k) providing contact details for questions, complaints and appeals referring to the activities related to setting standards and administering complaints and appeals;
- l) keeping records related to the process of standards setting.

4.4 Commission for development and analysis of SFM criteria and indicators (Working group, WG)

Prior to public announcement, every single NGB from the Balkan Region will exercise identification of relevant stakeholders.

That will be executed through stakeholder mapping and will be approved by the NGB. Identification of relevant stakeholders will include affected, disadvantaged and key stakeholders, including description of their interests for participation in the process. At least following interest groups shall be included:

- forest owners (including state and private)
- business and industry (forest managers, traders and forest industry)
- indigenous people (if relevant)
- NGO's (environment, nature, tourism, recreation, sports etc)
- scientific and technological community
- workers and trade unions

The NGB's from the Balkan Region shall set targets for participation of key stakeholders and take proactive approach to ensure their input in the work group.

The stakeholders mapping exercise will also include:

- a) description and interests of relevant sectors,
- b) key issues for each relevant sector,
- c) key stakeholders for each sector,
- d) disadvantaged stakeholders and the threats to their participation
- e) means of communications to reach identified stakeholders.

The working group is approved by the NGB's from the Balkan Region based on received nominations. The composition of the WG shall be balanced in order to reflect the categories of stakeholders with reference to the contents and scope of the standard, with no individual interest dominating in the process.

The working group shall include representatives nominated by:

- a) The NGB's from the Balkan Region ,
- b) Other stakeholders.

Representation of the interests of all interests of all parties in the WG is based on the principles of equity and nobody's individual interest can prevail in the process. Procedures to secure the principle of equity are as follow:

- a) For stakeholders from every interest group identified above there are at least three seats guaranteed for participation in the working group.
- b) During consensus building process every voice is equal.

Key stakeholders shall constitute a significant part of all participants. All other identified stakeholders are relevant for the process including disadvantaged stakeholders. Disadvantaged stakeholders are those who might be financially or otherwise disadvantaged in participating in the standard-setting work.

The NGB's from the Balkan Region shall analyze constraints about participation of the key and disadvantaged stakeholders and shall develop actions to minimize the risk of non-participation.

The WG members are available to the materially and directly concerned parties through publically announced contact on the web sites of the NGB's from the Balkan Region.

The WG members elect their chairperson who leads the discussions and approves of the corrections and wholeness of the accepted decisions in the documents. The WG is administered by the NGB or other person authorized by the NGB.

A WG is formed for a limited period of time when a standard is being developed or revised.

4.5 Appeal resolution body

The appeal resolution body is established by the NGB's from the Balkan Region on a country level. It deals with each individual and procedural complaint and appeal which refers to the standardization activities and employs the procedures for complaints and appeals.

The NGB's from the Balkan region are seeking for proper candidates and they will be nominated for approval at the NGB's structures. The candidates shall accept in written their nomination in the Appeal Resolution Body. Every NGB is organizing Appeal Resolution Body on the country level.

The Appeal Resolution Body is comprised of three members. This body is to be independent and impartial and **shall** strive to represent the interests of the three major groups which determine sustainability: economic, environmental and social. The Body members elect a Chairperson among themselves.

5. Procedures for standards setting

The process of documents development and revision is organized in stages in which the responsibilities and the versions of the standard to which they refer are listed.

The NGB's from the Balkan Region shall provide a contact where questions, complaints and appeals regarding the standard setting activities can be sent. The contact will be available on their websites.

5.1 Proposals stage

The NGB's from the Balkan Region shall review the standards and decide if they are to be reaffirmed, changed or withdrawn.

The proposals stage includes formulation and approval of a proposed standard or its revision. The proposal is prepared by the Working group upon initiative from the Assembly or President of the NGB's from the Balkan Region.

The proposal shall offer information on the following issues:

- a) the scope and clear identification of the reason (new standard development, existing standard revision, etc.),
- b) identification of intended outcomes,
- c) risk assessment about potential negative impacts from implementation of the standard,
- d) identification of relevant stakeholders, including marginalized and key stakeholders and identification of the threats to their participation,
- e) members and interested stakeholders' request for participation in the WG and their balanced representation,
- g) proposal for an authorized person,
- g) description of development stages and timeframe,
- h) resources needed for completion of activities and their sources.

The identification of relevant stakeholders will be executed through stakeholder mapping and will be approved by the NGB. Identification of relevant stakeholders will include affected, disadvantaged and key stakeholders, including description of their interests for participation in the process. The stakeholders mapping will also include description of:

- a) relevant sectors,
- b) key issues for each relevant sector,
- c) key stakeholders for each sector,
- d) disadvantaged stakeholders and the threats to their participation.

5.2 Preparatory stage

5.2.1 Public announcement

The initiation of the documentation development process or its revision shall be announced on the website of the NGB's from the Balkan Region and other appropriate media at least four weeks before the first standard-setting activity is scheduled to occur in order to enable the stakeholders to actively contribute to the process. The announcement shall contain:

- a) information on the goals, scope and steps in the standards setting process and framework,
- b) information on the opportunity for participation of the stakeholders in the process,
- c) invitation to the stakeholders to nominate their representative in the WG,
- d) invitation for submitting comments on the scope and process of setting standards and
- e) link to the publicly available procedures for the standards setting process on the NGB's website,
- f) link to publicly available proposal for the standard.

The WG shall ensure that the format of the invitation to the marginalized and key stakeholders is understandable and delivered in a way which guarantees they have received it, for instance, registered post, a confirmation for received electronic mail, etc.

The NGB's shall publish the standards setting process on the website as well and the standard setting procedures document and shall review them regularly based on experiences during their implementation. Additionally, the review on procedures shall be conducted according to the comments received.

The NGB's shall provide clear instructions to interested stakeholders on the ways how feedback may be submitted to the NGB.

5.2.2 Establishing the Commission for development and analysis of sustainable forest management measures and indicators – Working Group

The invitation to the stakeholders to nominate their representative in the WG ends with the publication of the initiation of the process. The period for receiving nominations for participation in the work group last for period of 4 weeks after the public announcement. The nominations are gathered by the NGB's and they are responsible for accepting or refusing the nominations of members in the WG. The acceptance or refusal of a nomination shall be justified and match the balanced representation in the WG in relation to the relevance of organization, individual competences of nominated persons, their experience and gender balance, as well in relation to available resources for the standards setting process. Every NGB shall inform their country WG members for their acceptance, as well informing stakeholders if their nomination was not accepted.

5.2.3 Elaboration on the documents working draft version

The NGB or the group of experts nominated by the Assembly shall prepare a working draft version of the document which will serve as a basis for further development and discussion within the Working Group.

5.3 Development stage

5.3.1 Submitting comments and their review

All WG members shall have an opportunity to actively contribute to the development or revision of a standard and to submit comments and proposals for the working draft version. Working drafts during development or revision of a standard shall be available to all WG members. All views and comments by the WG members sent in written shall be submitted using the template presented in Annex 1.

The comments and views of any member of the WG along with the initial proposal shall be reviewed in an open and transparent manner. All proposals for changes which refer to the working draft version shall be kept.

5.3.2 Building consensus

The WG decision to suggest publishing the working draft version for public consultation or publishing the final version for formal approval shall be brought with a consensus.

In order to reach consensus, the WG can employ the following:

- a) face to face meetings with voting by stating yes or no, raising hand;
- b) formal secret voting, etc.,
- c) voting by e-mail when the members are asked to vote for or against in writing.

In case of a negative vote which represents permanent and sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests and to substantial issues, at least one of the following mechanisms shall be used:

- a) discussions and talks for the issue for which there is no agreement in the WG in order to reach a compromise,
- b) direct negotiations between concerned parties which objected and those who hold an opposing view in order to reach a compromise,
- c) additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary)
- d) process of disagreement resolution by mediation
- e) use of complaints and appeals procedures as foreseen in the chapter 8 of this Standard.

If the process of resolution of disputes is not executed within 4 weeks from beginning, then the threshold for consensus building will be at least that there shall be simple majority of votes (50+1%) positive within every single stakeholders interest group identified during the process of stakeholders mapping.

5.4 Research stage

5.4.1 Public consultation

Every NGB shall conduct the public consultation of the enquiry draft version. The initiation and end of the public consultation shall be published in an appropriate time period on the website and in other suitable medium if possible. The invitation shall be sent directly to each of identified stakeholders in the stakeholders mapping exercise. To disadvantaged and key stakeholders the invitation shall be prepared in an understandable format and it shall be ensured that it is delivered to them, for instance, registered post or a confirmation for received e-mail. The public consultation shall last for at least 60 days, and the enquiry draft version shall

be publicly accessible on the NGB's website. All comments shall be submitted in the template presented in Annex 1.

The public consultation can be also organized in a form of seminars, public presentations or organization of workshops with aim to encourage submission of comments on the enquiry draft version.

The received comments along with the initial proposals shall be reviewed in an open and transparent manner as described in part 5.3.2. All proposed changes that refer to the enquiry draft version need to be kept. The records of received comments and proposals that are material in nature, along with the results of their resolution, shall be publicly available on the NGB's website. The outcome from received comments and proposals will be also sent to stakeholders that reacted.

After finalization of the first period of public consultations and proper management with received comments and proposals, the NGB is organizing the process of second public consultation that will last for at least 30 days, under the same conditions as the first public consultation. The second public consultation is organized only for the new standard, while for revision processes is not obligatory.

5.4.2 Pilot testing

Every NGB shall organize pilot testing of the new standards application and the results of it shall be reviewed by the WG.

In case the standard is reviewed, the experiences from its application are a replacement of the pilot testing.

5.5 Approval stage

5.5.1 Development report

The final version shall be presented for formal approval, along with the report for standards development which provides evidence for compliance of the process with documented procedures:

- a) the scope and clear identification of the needs,
- b) development process timeframe,
- c) information for identification of marginalized and key stakeholders and the threats to their participation in the process,
- d) information for announcing the initiation of the process and an invitation to the stakeholders with a list of all invited stakeholders,
- e) establishing a WG with a list of nominated stakeholders,
- f) information for the received comments on the standards establishment scope and process,
- g) proof for reached consensus, including a list of received and reviewed comments and their resolution,
- h) information for the results of the public consultation and consultation in the NGB's as well as a list of received and reviewed comments and their resolution,
- i) pilot testing results
- j) link to publicly accessible documents and procedures,
- k) proposal for a transitional period.

The development report shall be publicly accessible on the NGB's website.

5.5.2 Formal approval

The final draft version shall be submitted for approval to the NGB. The approval shall be conducted only on the basis of evidence for reached consensus at the WG, according to the normative documents of the country NGB's.

In case the final draft version does not receive enough votes for formal approval, the NGB may decide to:

- a) return the documents in preparatory or development stage or
- b) cancel the procedure

5.6. Publication stage

After the formal approval of a developed standard, the WG shall correct possible mistakes and deliver corrected document to the NGB who will be responsible to ensure that standard is publicly accessible on their website after 2 weeks.

The NGB's will also provide free access to their development reports on their web pages.

Standard(s) will also include information on:

- (a) identification and contact information for the NGB,
- (b) official language of the standard,
- (c) a note that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference.
- (d) The approval date and the date of next periodic review

5.7. Information to stakeholders

The NGB's will provide printed copies to interested stakeholders upon request at a price that covers administrative costs.

6. Periodic review of standards

6.1 General

The standard(s)/normative document(s) shall be reviewed at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period. The review shall be based on consideration of feedback received during the standard's implementation and a gap analysis. If necessary, a stakeholder consultation shall be organised to obtain further feedback and input.

6.2 Feedback mechanism

Every NGB shall establish and maintain a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. This mechanism shall be accessible on the NGB's website with clear directions for providing feedback.

NOTE Feedback can be sent in various formats: comments, requests for clarification and/or interpretation, complaints, etc.

All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.

6.3 Gap analysis

At the start of a review, the NGB shall evaluate the content of the standard against appropriate PEFC International standards, national laws and regulations, and other relevant standards to identify potential gaps in the standard.

The NGB shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research and relevant emerging issues.

6.4 Stakeholder consultation

Where the feedback and the gap analysis do not identify a need to revise the standard, the NGB shall organise stakeholder consultation to determine whether stakeholders see a need for revising the standard, including the gap analysis in the stakeholder consultation.

At the start of a review, the NGB shall update the stakeholder identification mapping.

The NGB shall organise:

- (a) a public consultation period of at least 30 days (following the requirements of clause 5.4.1) and/or,
- (b) stakeholder meetings.

The review shall be announced at least 4 weeks prior to beginning.

6.5 Decision-making

Based on the feedback received during the period of a standard's implementation, the outcome of the gap analysis and the consultations, the NGB decides whether to reaffirm the standard or whether a revision of the standard is necessary, including the decision about the type of the revision of the standard (normal or editorial).

If the decision is to reaffirm a standard, the NGB provides a justification for the decision and make the justification publicly available.

7. Standards Revision

Standards shall be revised in time periods not longer than 5 years. The standards revision procedures shall conform to those explained in section 5.

Standards revision shall define application date and transition date for revised standards. This is required for accepting the revised standards, presenting changes, information exchange and training. The application and transition date shall not exceed a period of one year except under certain exceptional circumstances when a longer period is needed for conducting the revision.

7.1 Normal revision

A normal revision can occur at the periodic review, or between periodic reviews, but does not include editorial revisions and time-critical revisions.

7.2 Editorial revision

Editorial revisions can be made without triggering the normal revision process. The NGB approves editorial changes formally and publish an amendment or a new edition of the standard.

7.3 Time-critical revision

A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process. A time-critical revision can be conducted only in the following situations:

- (a) Change in national laws and regulations affecting compliance with PEFC International requirements

(b) Instruction by PEFC International to comply with specific or new PEFC requirements within a timescale that is too short for a normal revision.

The time-critical revision shall follow these steps:

- (a) Produce draft version of the revised standard,
- (b) Stakeholders consultation (not mandatory),
- (c) Formal approval of revised standard by the NGB,
- (d) Justification for the urgent change(s) and its public availability.

7.4 Application and transition of revised standards

A revision defines the application date and transition period of the revised standard /normative document(s).

An application date shall not be more than one year after the publication of the standard. This allows time for endorsement of the revised standard(s)/normative document(s), introduction of change(s), information dissemination and training.

The transition period shall not exceed one year. The NGB may determine a longer period when justified by exceptional circumstances.

8. Complaints and appeals procedures

Every significant or procedural appeal or complaint shall be resolved by following complaints and appeals procedures.

8.1. Scope

These procedures are valid for any kind of dispute that may appear during the period of validity of the scheme.

Complaints and appeals procedures are valid for the standard setting process and for the standard setting procedures as well.

8.2. Procedures for complaints and appeals

Any stakeholder is encouraged to submit appeal/complaint to the NGB's. Appeal or complaint shall be in written format and may be sent to email address announced on the web page of the NGB's or by letter.

Complaint that is related to the content of Criteria and Indicators for SFM shall be submitted using the form that is available on the web page of the NGB's.

The official contact point on communication for appeals/complaints is the official email address of the NGB's:

- For Council for SFM: pefcmk@gmail.com
- For Institute for forest certification in Slovenia: info@pefc.si
- For Association of private forest owners "Naša Šuma": info@nasasuma.com
- For Croatian Union of Private Forest Owners Association: info@hsups.hr

After receiving of appeal/complaint, the contact person from the NGB's informs the Appeal Resolution Body about receipt in period of one week. During this period the Appeal Resolution Body acknowledge receive of appeal/complaint to complainant in letter or through the email communication.

After receive of appeal/complaint, the Appeal Resolution Body starts with procedure of gathering and verification of all necessary information that are relevant to the content of appeal/complaint. Based on the information gathered, the members of Appeal Resolution Body shall execute the process of evaluation and to decide if appeal/complaint is accepted or rejected. Evaluation process shall be executed on the principal of impartiality. The decision shall be brought in voting by majority of votes at the members of Appeal Resolution Body. The Appeal Resolution Body shall prepare written report for the process and voting that will be kept at the archive of the NGB's. This stage of dealing with appeal/complaint shall not be longer than 4 weeks.

The decision of the members of Appeal Resolution Body is final and sent to the contact person of the NGB. After receiving of decision, the NGB formally communicate the way how handling process was executed and results from the process to the complainant, responsible structures in the NGB and other potentially concerned parties. This communication shall be done in a period of 7 days after receiving of decision from the Appeal Resolution Body.

If appeal/complaint is accepted by the Appeal Resolution Body, the NGB shall recommend appropriate corrective and preventive actions.

If appeal/complaint is not accepted by the Appeal Resolution Body, the complainant may ask for a meeting with the members of the Appeal Resolution Body for clarification of the process for handling with appeal/complaint and their decision.

9. Records for the standards setting process and their keeping

The following records (data) form the standards setting process shall be kept:

- a) Proposal for standards setting, identifying stakeholders, list of invited stakeholders,
- b) Written documentation for establishing a WG,
- c) Notes from the NGB's meetings,
- d) Notes from WG meetings, including list of participants in each working group meeting, notes and proposals from WG members and public consultations as well as the changes made in the documentation,
- e) Results from reaching consensus and resolving disputes,
- f) Notes from meetings with stakeholders,
- g) Comments received from public consultation,
- h) Pilot testing results,
- i) Received appeals and complaints,
- j) Decision brought by the Disputes resolution body,
- k) Results from the NGB's voting,
- l) Development report,
- m) All versions of the standard along with the changes made to it elaborated in each of the development stages.
- n) Evidences of implemented stages in the review process.

The records shall be kept until completion of the next review or revision of the standard to which they refer. Otherwise the documented information must be kept for a minimum of five years after publication of the standard.

Annex 1: Views, comments, proposals

Date: _____

Document: _____

Name / organization / technical committee member	Heading / subheading	Original text	View / comment /proposal for change	Justification for the proposed activity / change