



PEFC SWITZERLAND

**Mandatory Guideline
VL 004**

Standard revision procedures

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1. Introduction

The standards of the certification system shall be developed and revised in an open und transparent process. In order to achieve this goal in future revisions, too, procedures are de-fined in this document.

2. Scope

The procedures for the revision process apply for the forest management standards, the criteria and indicators on regional level as well as for the procedural regulations of PEFC Switzerland.

3. References

Status	No.	Title
Normative Documents		
ND	001	Requirements for group certification
ND	002	Requirement for the certification of individual enterprises
ND	003	Standards for forest management
ND	004	Chain of Custody requirements
ND	005	Logo rules
Mandatory Guidelines		
VL	001	Principles of the certification scheme PEFC Switzerland
VL	002-1	Requirements for certification bodies - COC
VL	002-2	Requirements for certification bodies - FM
VL	003	Dispute settlement procedures
VL	004	Standard revision procedures
VL	005	Notification of Certification Bodies Issuance of Logo Usage Licenses
Other Documents		
SD	001	Terms and definitions
SD	002	Scale of fees
SD	003	Statutes

4. Revision process

On principle the standard the revision, especially the revision of forest management standards, shall be geared to national processes in Switzerland irrespective of the certification scheme. For this case the „Procedure in the framework of national processes“ (chapter 4.1) applies.

In case that the developments on national level do not enable PEFC Switzerland to proceed in conformity with the requirements of PEFC International the „Internal procedure PEFC Switzerland“ (chapter 4.2) applies.

4.1. Procedure in the framework of national processes

The steering committee observes the development of national processes referring to standards for forest management and focal point as regards content.

In case that the „Forest Standard for Switzerland“ or the main indicators of the „Forest Programme Switzerland“ are enhanced the steering committee investigates the need to adapt the PEFC regulations.

If the national processes result in need for adaptation, the steering committee will initiate the revision of the system documentation.

~~The steering committee can avail itself of the procedures or elements of these procedures described in chapter 4.2., if the operating expense for adaptation goes beyond the capacity of the steering committee.~~

4.2. Internal procedure PEFC Switzerland

4.2.1. Start

According to the statutes of PEFC Switzerland the steering committee/ certification commission is the decision making body “deciding on certification criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as well as on the description of the system”. It also is responsible for appointing working groups and calling their members as well as determining the chairmen for the working groups. Consequently the steering committee certification commission also decides upon the start of the revision process which has to take part every five years.

The process shall be started two years before this five-year-period ends to allow sufficient time for the standard setting and endorsement process.

The start of the revision process shall be communicated to the public at least 30 days before the start of activities at an appropriate time in an appropriate way (at least through the website and per e-mail). The announcement shall inform about the goals, the scope, the time frame and the possibilities to participate. It points to these standard revision procedures and encourages the public to comment on their scope and contents.

4.2.2 Identification of need for revision

To start the revision process, the existing standards shall be reviewed. This is done through feedback from stakeholders and a gap analysis, which examines the compliance of the Swiss PEFC standards with the latest international PEFC Standards published by the PEFC Council in Geneva, as well as other relevant standards and new scientific findings. Feedback shall be submitted via the PEFC Switzerland website and, like feedback from other channels (meetings, training courses, etc), be collected and taken into consideration by the steering committee/certification commission.

In case the gap analysis does not reveal any need for a standard revision, stakeholders shall be informed and the need for adaptations on their part shall be determined. This can take the form of a public consultation of at least 30 days or working group meetings. If there is no need for revision after the consultation of stakeholders, the steering committee shall determine whether the standard should be left in its existing form or whether a revision is necessary and shall publish the decision.

If the consultation and gap analysis reveal a need for revision of the standards, it shall be communicated whether the revision is a normal or editorial revision. The process of a normal revision follows 4.2.2 to 4.4.

If it is an editorial revision, the steering committee shall formally adopt the required changes and publish the new version of the standard.

If national laws change so that PEFC standards can no longer be met, or if there is a request from PEFC International to adapt national standards in a period shorter than that required for the normal revision, a time-critical revision shall be carried out. The steering committee shall therefore prepare a draft that can be commented by stakeholders (not mandatory). The document shall be formally recognized by the steering committee/the certification committee and published with a justification of the time-critical process.

4.2.3. Appointment of working groups

A working group shall be installed to manage the revision process. This working group shall be concerned with the management requirements on the operational level and shall revise the procedures as defined in the description of the system and its appendices. The working group will be appointed by the steering committee at the start of the revision process.

Associations and organizations, which belong to the following interest groups, shall be identified by PEFC Switzerland through a stakeholder mapping activity, where it is defined, which stakeholder groups are relevant for the standard setting activities and scope, and why. For each stakeholder group the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them, shall be identified. Additionally, disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be identified and constraints to their participation in standard-setting activities shall be addressed. They will be invited timely and publicly in an appropriate way to delegate representatives to the working group and thus participate in the revision process:

- a) Representatives of the private forest
- b) Representatives of the state forest (canton-owned forest)
- c) Representatives of the communal forest
- d) Wood industry, pulp and paper industry including trade
- e) Environmental organisations
- f) Trade unions
- g) Other forest-related organisations (e.g. Swiss Forest Association, Forest Worker Association)
- h) Other interested parties (Consumer Associations, Tourism Associations)
- i) Forest contractors
- j) Scientists

The acceptance and refusal of the delegate representatives shall be justified in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group, considerations of an appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organisation, an individual's competence, an individual's relevant experience and resources available for standard-setting.

Considering all these eight stakeholder groups, a well-balanced line-up of the working group is aimed at. A target for the participation of key stakeholders shall be defined. Persons who hold a key position or who have not participated in the process before are identified and invited personally and their participation is sought proactively.

4.2.4. Decision-making within the working group

The working group has a quorum if at least half of the members are present. Decisions of the working group must be based on a three quarters majority of the present members. Each member has one vote.

Each stakeholder group holds a maximum of four votes. If more than four members of one stakeholder group are present, they choose the ones who shall participate in the voting. None of the stakeholder groups shall dominate the decision-making process.

The decisions of the working group to publish the draft document of the working group and to recommend the final draft to the steering committee/ the certification commission for formal approval shall be based on the principle of consensus.

The chairperson of the working group is responsible for the judgement on whether the final draft is sufficiently supported by the whole working group. The judgement shall be based on the definition of consensus according to ISO/IEC guideline 2:1996.

“Consensus: *general approval, characterised by a non-existence of a sustained opposition of an important part of the affected interests against fundamental (controversial) issues; and characterised by a process that includes the effort to regard the opinions of all affected parties and to resolve any contradicting arguments.*

Note: Consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity.”

According to this definition of consensus, issues are deemed “fundamental” if they have been raised and well established by a stakeholder group at the beginning of the revision process. New issues that are introduced to the working group during the process can be declared “fundamental” at the beginning of the discussion.

In order to reach a consensus, the working group can make use of the following processes to identify any opposition (according to the ISO definition) against the standard (draft):

- a) A conference for a verbal yes/ no voting (either face-to-face, by phone or in a combination of both),
- b) a conference for a yes/ no voting by a show of hands,
- c) a conference for a secret yes/ no voting,
- d) a determination of consensus by the chairperson on a conference where no dissenting vote is detected either verbal or by a show of hands,
- e) an exchange via e-mail to ask the members for their consent and the members reply in writing (one mandate per vote).

In case of one vote of an essential opposition against an important part of the affected interest regarding a fundamental issue, reasons must be given. This controversial issue shall be resolved with the help of the following mechanisms:

- a) Discussion and negotiation about the controversial issue within the working group with the aim of finding a compromise,
- b) direct negotiation between the member(s) who have raised the controversial issue and the members of differing opinion with the aim of finding a compromise,
- c) dispute settlement process

Note: The dispute settlement process shall be deduced from the PEFC procedures VL 003.

The developed drafts are made available to all members. All members are given the chance to comment on the drafts. Any remarks are documented and discussed within the working group.

A first draft which will be elaborated by the working group will be presented in a round table and/or per Website and e-mail. This round table will give everybody, who is not member of the working group, the possibility to comment this first draft. The round table shall be moderated by a third party guaranteeing that all public comments are considered in the further process. In case communication takes place via digital media, feedback shall be explicitly requested.

After this round table the working groups will meet again to develop a new draft based on the comments received and to make it available for the subsequent public consultation. This consultation period shall last 60 days at least. Usually, the documents for the consultation process are provided on the website of PEFC Switzerland. Start and end dates of the consultation period as well as the necessary documents shall be published via adequate media at latest one day before the start of the public consultation. Stakeholders shall be invited to comment on the draft.

The remarks suggested during the consultation period will be documented, verified by the working group and if applicable included in the documents. Critical remarks will be discussed between a representative of the working group and the submitting member and a realisable solution will be developed. Each party who gave feedback shall receive a report on the comments received and the outcome of the working group discussion with regard to that matter.

For new standards the standardizing body shall organize a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.

If the changes in the revised documents are considerable or a new standard was developed, the draft standard shall be tested within the scope of a pilot project. In that case, the working group shall consider the outcome of pilot testing¹.

If there are any substantive and procedural complaints these shall be solved according to the "Procedure for dispute settlement" (VL 003).

4.2.5 Creation of a new standard

For the creation of a new standard, a proposal including the following shall be developed²:

- a) the scope of the standard,
- b) a justification of the need for the standard,
- c) a clear description of the intended outcomes,
- d) a risk assessment of potential negative impacts arising from implementing the standard, such as
 - factors that could affect the achievement of the outcomes negatively,
 - unintended consequences of implementation,
 - actions to address the identified risks, and
 - a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable.

¹ Pilot testing is not required for revision of an existing standard when experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.

² Guidance for development of a proposal and justification is given in ISO Directives, Part 1, Annex C and Annex SL (Appendix 1).

4.3. Documentation

In order to guarantee transparency and public availability, all drafts and the final documents adopted by the steering committee shall be published promptly on the website of PEFC Switzerland.

With respect to the endorsement process by the PEFC Council International the following documents shall be collected and stored for at least five years:

- a) Contacted stakeholders and/or stakeholders invited to participate in the process,
- b) Participation of stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting as well as outside of working group meetings,
- c) Minutes of the steering committee/ certification commission meetings,
- d) Minutes of the working group meetings,
- e) Documentation of the round table,
- f) Documentation of the comments or complaints received,
- g) Relevant publication, e.g. on the start of the revision process, the round table or the consultation period.

A report on the revision process, in particular on the handling of submitted remarks and complaints, will be produced and made available to the public (with an application for approval at PEFC international) within the following four weeks.

4.4 Formalities in the standard revision procedure

- A revision shall define the application date and transition period of the revised standard(s)/ 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 standardizing body may determine a longer period when justified by exceptional circumstances, in case the endorsement of the of the revised standard requires a longer time.
- The standard shall include identification and contact information for the standardizing body, the official language of the standard, the approval date and the date of next periodic review. A note shall clarify that when there is inconsistency between versions, the English version of the standard as endorsed by the PEFC Council is the reference.
- Printed copies shall be made available upon request at a price that covers no more than administrative costs (if any).