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v1

Forest Management Certification Bodies

Important note

This document is part of the Hungarian forest certification scheme. A list of all the documents of the scheme can be found in *MER 11:2024 Introduction to the Hungarian Forest Certification*. The official language of the documents is English, and the latest versions are publicly available at www.pefc.org. The Hungarian versions of the documents are published at www.pefc.hu. In case of doubt about the content, the English language versions published on www.pefc.org shall be decisive.

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1 Certification body

- 1.1 Certification shall be carried out by impartial, independent third parties that
 - a) cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision-making body
 - b) cannot be involved in forest management
 - c) shall be independent of the certified entity
- 1.2 Certification body shall fulfil the requirements defined in ISO 17021.
- 1.3 Certification body shall have the technical competence in and good understanding of
 - a) forest management and its economic, social and environmental impacts
 - b) forest certification criteria
 - c) HFC scheme
 - d) PEFC scheme
- 1.4 Certification body shall use competent auditors who meet the requirements described in Chapter 2.

2 Auditor team, reviewer and certification decision maker

- 2.1 Auditor team shall include auditors or technical expert(s), who
 - a) is competent in forest management and holds a relevant university degree at MSc level
 - b) understands legal regulation of forest management, wild game management and nature protection in Hungary (Note: does not require relevant university degree)
 - c) has at least 5 years of experience in certification processes
 - d) successfully completed a HFC recognized training course on Forest Management Certification
- 2.2 The auditor team shall include auditor(s), who fulfil the general criteria for quality and environmental management systems auditors as defined in ISO 19 011.
- 2.3 The reviewer and certification decision maker shall fulfil the general criteria for quality and environmental management systems auditors as defined in ISO 19 011.

3 Certification process

- 3.1 Certification shall be based on the written procedures developed by the certification body.
- 3.2 Certification procedure shall comply with ISO 17021 and ISO 19 011.
- 3.3 Scope of certification shall cover:
 - a) MER 1001:2024 Sustainable Forest Management
 - b) MER 1002:2024 Group Forest Certification
 - c) PEFC ST 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements, if relevant.
- 3.4 Evidences of conformity with requirements shall be assessed through assessment audit and surveillance audit specified in Chapter 4.
- 3.5 Certification body shall inform HFC about
 - a) all issued certification with a list of group participants updated annually
 - b) any changes concerning validity and scope of certificates
- 3.6 Compliance of the certification body's procedures with the requirements shall be verified by accreditation in accordance with the requirements of MER 103:2024 Registration and notification procedures.
- 3.7 Certification process shall be carried out as accredited certification.

4 Audit

- 4.1 Representative of HFC is allowed to be present during the audits without the right of influencing the audit by any means.

- 4.2 Assessment and re-assessment audit(s) shall be carried out in every five years.
- 4.3 Surveillance audit shall be conducted within a maximum period of 12 months.
- 4.4 Audits shall be based on evaluating the group entity and a sample of group participants as follows:
 - a) The size of the sample of group participants at periodical assessment and re-assessment audits it is the square root of the number of participants rounded to the upper whole number (reference sample size).
 - b) The size of the sample of group participants at annual surveillance audits it is the reference sample size multiplied by 0.5.
 - c) In case of non-conformities in the previous audit, the size of the sample of group participants is the reference sample size multiplied by 1.2.
 - d) In any case the size of the sample of group participants shall cover at least 10% of the participants.
 - e) The sample of group participants shall be selected randomly.
- 4.5 Audit evidence to determine the conformity with relevant standards shall include information from external parties as appropriate.
- 4.6 Methods of auditing the compliance with specific requirement is determined by the certification body with due considerations to:
 - a) recommendations of relevant HFC documents if there are any
 - b) level of scrutiny demonstrated by the applicant in the review of conformity
 - c) degree of compliance with the specific requirements in the previous audits
- 4.7 Audits shall determine minor non-conformity with a specific requirement by the group entity or by a group participant if
 - a) the requirement is not met for a short period of time, or non-systematically, or the reasons are beyond control of the respective organization,
 - b) the responsible organization was in any way prevented to make corrective actions in a timely manner
 - c) full conformity can be reached by corrective actions within a reasonable period of time
 - d) effects of non-conformity are reversible, and the impact is on an insignificant area, if relevant
- 4.8 Audits shall determine major non-conformity with a specific requirement by the group entity or by a group participant if
 - a) the requirement is not met on purpose, and was motivated by or resulted in unfair benefits for the respective organization
 - b) the responsible organization had knowledge of the non-conformity, but omitted to make corrective actions in a timely manner
 - c) the action behind the non-conformity is clearly violating the principle of sustainability
 - d) effects of non-conformity are irreversible, and the impact is on a significant area, if relevant

5 Audit report

- 5.1 Results of the audit shall be evaluated in an audit report.
- 5.2 Audit report shall contain:
 - a) decision on the result of the audit according to 5.3
 - b) summary to be made publicly available by the auditee with due considerations to confidential information
 - c) a list of group participants with non-conformities
 - d) recommendation for the group entity regarding the requirements to be included in the monitoring programme.
- 5.3 Decision of the audit can be:
 - a) statement of full conformity
 - b) statement of conformity with corrective actions needed

c) withdrawal of certificate

5.4 Conformity with corrective actions needed can include:

- a) specification of corrective actions with deadline regarding minor non-conformities of the group entity or specific group participants
- b) immediate exclusion of group participant in case of major non-conformity that has an individual nature and does not affect the conformity of the group organization as a whole

5.5 Certification body shall submit the draft audit report to the applicant (group entity).

5.6 Applicant can comment the draft audit report which shall be considered by the certification body.

5.7 Certification body shall submit the audit report to HFC.

6 Certificate

6.1 The issued certificate shall

- a) be written in English and Hungarian
- b) bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body
- c) clearly indicate the scope of certification according to 3.3
- d) indicate PEFC recognition
- e) indicate validity

6.2 Validity of certificate shall not exceed 5 years.