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# M E R

Magyar Erdőtanúsítási Rendszer

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## Standard Setting

#### 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 00~~MER 11:2024 *Introduction to the Hungarian Forest Certification Scheme*. The official language of the documents is English, and the latest versions are publicly available at [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org). The Hungarian versions of the documents are published at [www.pefc.hu](http://www.pefc.hu). In case of doubt about the content, the English language versions published on [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org) shall be decisive.

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## **1 Scope and standard-setting principles**

### **1.1 This standard describes the requirements that shall be met in standard setting processes**

#### **1.2 The standard-setting process is governed by the key principles of:**

- a) Stakeholder engagement – an opportunity for meaningful participation in the process that is open to all stakeholders through participation in working groups and public consultations.
- b) Balanced representation – no single stakeholder group should dominate or be dominated in the process. While each party is free to decide on its participation, the standardizing body makes an effort to ensure that all relevant stakeholder groups are represented and considers an appropriate gender balance.
- c) Consensus – standards are approved by consensus. Any sustained opposition to specific issues is resolved by means of dialogue whenever possible.
- d) Improvement – periodic review of a standard seeks continual improvement and to ensure the standard continues to meet expectations of stakeholders.
- e) Transparency – relevant documents are publicly available so interested parties can follow developments during and after the process.

## **2 Standardising body**

### **2.1 Standard-setting procedures**

2.1.1 The standardising body shall have written procedures for standard-setting activities describing:

- a) its legal status and organizational structure, including a body responsible for consensus-building (see 2.3.1) and procedures for formal adoption of the standard (see 4.1)),
- b) the record-keeping procedures,
- c) the procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,
- d) the standard-setting process,
- e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and
- f) revision of standards/normative documents.

2.1.2 The standardising body shall make its standard-setting, dispute resolution, complaint and appeal resolution procedures publicly available and shall regularly review its standard-setting procedures including consideration of comments from stakeholders.

### **2.2 Documented information**

2.2.1 The standardising body shall keep documented information relating to the standard-setting and review process. Evidence of compliance with the requirements of this document and the standardising body's own procedures includes:

- a) Standard-setting procedures,
- b) Stakeholder identification mapping,
- c) Contacted and/or invited stakeholders,
- d) Stakeholders involved in standard-setting activities including participants in each working group meeting,
- e) Feedback received and synopsis of how feedback was addressed,
- f) All drafts and final versions of the standard,
- g) Outcomes from working group considerations,

- h) Evidence of consensus on the final of the standard(s),
  - i) Evidence relating to the review process, and
  - j) Final approval by the standardizing body.
- 2.2.2 Documented information 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.
- 2.2.3 Documented information shall be available to interested parties upon request.

### **2.3 Handling of complaints and appeals**

- 2.3.1 The standardising body shall follow the rules of dealing with complaints and appeals as specified in MER 03:~~2023~~:2024 Decision-making and complaint resolution.
- 2.3.2 The standardising body shall establish at least one contact point for enquiries and complaints relating to its standard-setting activities. The contact point shall be easy to access and readily available.

## **3 Standard-setting process**

### **3.1 Standard proposal**

- 3.1.1 For the creation of a new standard, the standardizing body shall develop a proposal including:
  - k) the scope of the standard,
  - l) justification of the need for the standard,
  - m) a clear description of the intended outcomes,
  - n) 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
  - o) a description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable.
- 3.1.2 For the revision of a standard the proposal shall cover at least (a) and (e) of clause 3.1

### **3.2 Stakeholder identification**

- 3.2.1 The standardising body shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting-activities by means of stakeholder identification mapping exercise. It shall define which stakeholder groups are relevant to the subject matter and why. For each stakeholder group the standardizing body shall identify the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them.
- 3.2.2 Identification of stakeholder groups shall be based on nine major stakeholder groups as defined by Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At least the following groups shall be included in the stakeholder mapping:
  - a) forest owners,
  - b) business and industry,
  - c) indigenous people,
  - d) non-government organizations,
  - e) scientific and technological community,
  - f) workers and trade unions.

Other groups shall be added if relevant to the scope of standard-setting activities.

- 3.2.3 The standardising body shall identify disadvantaged and key stakeholders. The standardising body shall address the constraints of their participation and proactively seek their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities.

### **3.3 Public announcement of the process**

- 3.3.1 The standardising body shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation for participation four weeks prior to the start on its website to give stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions. The announcement and invitation shall include:
- a) overview of the standard-setting process,
  - b) access to the proposal for the standard
  - c) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,
  - d) requests to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) or themselves to the working group/committee. The request to disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is easy to understand,
  - e) explicit invitation and clear instruction on how to submit feedback on the scope and the standard-setting process, and
  - f) access to the standard-setting procedures.
- 3.3.2 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on comments received from the public announcement.

### **3.4 Working group requirements**

- 3.4.1 The standardising body shall establish a permanent or temporary working group or adjust the composition of an already existing working group based on received nominations. The acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the working group, considerations of an appropriate gender balance, relevance of the organization, an individual's competence, and individual's relevant experience and resources available for the standard-setting.
- 3.4.2 The working group shall:
- a) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories, relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard, where no single concerned stakeholder group can dominate, nor be dominated in the process, and
  - b) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that affected by the standard, and those that can influence implementation of the standard. The affected stakeholders shall be represented in an appropriate proportion among participants.
- 3.4.3 In order to achieve balanced representation, the standardizing body shall strive to have all identified stakeholder groups (refer to 6.2) represented. The standardizing body shall set targets for the participation of key stakeholders and proactively seek their participation by using outreach such as (but not limited to) personal emails, phone calls, meeting invitations etc.
- 3.4.4 Activities of the working group shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where:
- a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group,
  - b) all members of the working group shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and provide feedback on working drafts, and

- c) feedbacks and views given by any member of the working group/committee shall be considered in an open and transparent way where the outcome of these considerations is recorded.
- 3.4.5 The decision of the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of consensus. (Refer to MER 03:~~2023~~:2024 section 2)
- 3.4.6 Where a vote is used in decision-making, the rules of decision-making specified in MER 03:~~2023~~:2024 section 1 shall be used. However, a majority vote cannot override sustained opposition in order to achieve consensus.
- 3.4.7 When there is sustained opposition to a substantial issue, the issue shall be resolved in accordance with MER 03:~~2023~~:2024 Decision-making and Resolution of Complaints.

### 3.5 Public consultation

- 3.5.1 The standardising body shall organise a public consultation on the enquiry draft and shall ensure that:
  - a) the start and the end of the public consultation is announced 1 day prior to the start in the major forest related internet news sites and printed magazines,
  - b) invitations are sent to disadvantaged and key stakeholders by methods that ensure they reach recipients and are easy to understand,
  - c) the enquiry draft is publicly available and accessible,
  - d) the public consultation is for at least 60 days,
  - e) all feedback is considered by the working group in an objective manner, and
  - f) a synopsis of feedback is compiled for each material issue, including the outcome of considering the issue. The synopsis is made publicly available (e.g. on a website) and is sent to each stakeholder/party that gave feedback.
- 3.5.2 For new standards the standardizing body shall organize a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days.

### 3.6 Pilot testing

The standardising body shall organise pilot testing of the new standards and the results of the pilot testing shall be considered by the working group/committee.

Note: Pilot testing is not required in case of revision of a standard where experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.

## 4 Approval and publication

### 4.1 Formal approval of standards

The standardizing body shall approve the standard(s)/normative document(s) formally when there is evidence of consensus among the working group.



## **4.2 Publication and availability of standards**

4.2.1 The formally approved standard(s)/normative document(s) shall be published and made publicly available at no cost within 14 days of approval, or as otherwise defined by the standardizing body.

4.2.2 Standard(s) shall include:

- a) identification and contact information for the standardizing body,
- b) official language of the standard,
- c) 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

Note: The date of next periodic review may be within a shorter period than five years based on (for example) stakeholder expectations or other foreseen developments.

4.2.3 Printed copies shall be made available upon request at a price that covers no more than administrative costs (if any).

4.2.4 The standardizing body shall make the development report (refer to PEFC GD 1007) publicly available.

## **5 Periodic review of standards**

### **5.1 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 organized to obtain further feedback and input.

### **5.2 Feedback mechanism**

5.2.1 The standardizing body shall establish and maintain a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on a standard. This mechanism shall be accessible on the website of the standardizing body and/or PEFC National Governing Body with clear directions for providing feedback.

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

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

### **5.3 Gap analysis**

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

5.3.2 The standardizing body shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research and relevant emerging issues.

### **5.4 Stakeholder consultation**

- 5.4.1 Where the feedback and the gap analysis do not identify a need to revise the standard, the standardizing body shall organize stakeholder consultation to determine whether stakeholders see a need for revising the standard. The standardizing body shall include the gap analysis in the stakeholder consultation.
- 5.4.2 At the start of a review, the standardizing body shall update the stakeholder identification mapping (refer to clause 3.2).
- 5.4.3 The standardizing body shall organize:
  - a) a public consultation period of at least 30 days (following the requirements of clause 3.5.1) and/or,
  - b) stakeholder meetings.
  - c) The standardizing body shall announce the review in a timely manner (refer to 3.3).

## **5.5 Decision-making**

- 5.5.1 Based on the feedback received during the period of a standard's implementation, the outcome of the gap analysis and the consultations, the standardizing body shall decide whether to reaffirm the standard or whether a revision of the standard is necessary.
- 5.5.2 The decision shall be made at the highest decision-making level of the standardizing body.
- 5.5.3 Where the decision is to reaffirm a standard, the standardizing body shall provide a justification for the decision and make the justification publicly available.
- 5.5.4 Where the decision is to revise the standard, the standardizing body shall specify the type of revision (normal or editorial revision).

## **6 Revision of standards**

### **6.1 Normal revision**

Procedures for revision of standard(s)/normative document(s) shall conform to those stated in section 3.

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

### **6.2 Editorial revision**

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

### **6.3 Time-critical revision**

- 6.3.1 A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process.
- 6.3.2 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.
- 6.3.3 The time-critical revision shall follow these steps:
  - a) The standardizing body shall draft the revised standard,
  - b) The standardizing body may consult stakeholders, but it is not mandatory,

- c) The revised standard shall be approved formally at the highest appropriate decision-making level of the standardizing body,
- d) The standardizing body shall explain the justification for the urgent change(s) and make the justification publicly available.

#### 6.4 Application and transition of revised standards

- 6.4.1 A revision shall define the application date and transition period of the revised standard(s)/ normative document(s).
- 6.4.2 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.
- 6.4.3 The transition period shall not exceed one year. The standardizing body may determine a longer period when justified by exceptional circumstances.

### 7 Flowchart of standard setting process

