

## **APPENDIX 5: PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard: Rules for Standard Setting**

Version 3: Ratified by the Standard Setting Forum on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and revised by the PEFC Ireland Interpretation Panel January 2014

### **Rules for Standard Setting**

#### **1. Objectives and Scope**

This document defines the procedures and process for the development, maintenance and revision of the forest management certification standard for Irish forestry, in conformance with the requirements of the PEFC technical documents in force.

### **2. Standard Setting Process for Forest Certification**

#### **2.1 Framework for Forest Certification**

Forest certification shall be carried out against an Irish Forest Certification Standard endorsed by the PEFC Council.

#### **2.2 Independence**

The development, maintenance and revision of the Standard shall be independent from the certification or accreditation process.

#### **2.3 Level for Standard Setting**

A single national Standard shall be developed by a national standard setting Forum.

#### **2.4 Standard Setting Forum**

**2.4.1** The Standard Setting Forum shall be co-ordinated by PEFC (Ireland) Ltd, the National Governing Body for the PEFC Council in Ireland.

**2.4.2** The Forum shall represent the different aspects of sustainable forest management in Ireland. Relevant interested parties will be invited to participate in the standard setting process, including forest owners, forest industry, environmental and social non-governmental organisations, trade unions and retailers. The overall aim is that the Forum should provide a balanced representation of the various interest groups and organisations.

**2.4.3** The Forum shall be organised into 3 chambers – social, environmental and economic – and the aim will be to have 5 nominees for each chamber. The social chamber shall be made up of representatives of forest user and wider countryside organisations and trade union representatives. The environmental chamber shall be made up of representatives of environmental non-governmental organisations and other organisations and bodies whose primary interest is environmental. The economic chamber shall be made up of representatives of Coillte Teoranta, private forest owners, forest management companies and processors and retailers of Irish forest products.

Note: in this clause “representative” denotes an organisation, not an individual.

**2.4.4** If and when vacancies arise in any of the chambers through the withdrawal of an organisation, the Forum shall discuss and agree which organisations should be invited to fill the vacancies. Where a choice has to be made between 2 or more organisations or groups to fill a vacancy, all of which have an appropriate interest, preference shall be given to the organisation or group with the largest membership.

**2.4.5** The Forum may agree to invite other individuals to attend Forum meetings as non-voting members.

**2.4.6** The Forum shall elect an independent chairman and approve the appointment of a secretary.

**2.4.7** The aim shall be to make decisions by consensus, defined as a lack of sustained objection. Where there is sustained objection the chairman shall ensure that there is full discussion of the issue before putting the matter to a vote. If a consensus cannot be reached, then a decision will be taken by votes cast by the chambers with each chamber having one vote. Within each chamber decisions will be taken by a simple majority vote: if a majority is not obtained the chamber will abstain. When a decision is required to be put to a vote, the vote shall be deferred until the next meeting of the Forum.

**2.4.8** The decision of the Forum to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of a consensus. In order to reach a consensus the Forum can utilise the following alternative processes to establish whether there is opposition:

(a) a face-to face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, show of hands for a yes/no vote; a statement on consensus from the Chair where there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal balloting process, etc.,

(b) a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote,

(c) an e-mail meeting where a request for agreement or objection is provided to members with the members providing a written response (a proxy for a vote), or

(d) combinations thereof.

**2.4.9** Comments and views submitted by any member of the Forum shall be considered in an open and transparent way and their resolution and proposed changes shall be recorded.

**2.4.10** When a nominated representative of the Forum is unable to attend a Forum meeting he/she shall seek an alternate from his/her organisation. An alternate shall have the right to vote.

**2.4.11** A meeting of the Forum shall be considered quorate when a minimum of 2 chambers are represented by at least one representative from each.

## **2.5 Conduct of Forum Meetings**

**2.5.1** Forum members will be notified of meeting dates at least 30 days in advance of meetings, and the agenda will be circulated at least 10 days before the meetings. Where possible papers for the meeting will be circulated with the agenda.

**2.5.2** The secretary will produce a draft minute of the meetings and circulate this to members within 10 working days of the meeting. Any comments by the members regarding errors of fact must be communicated to the secretary within 10 working days of receipt of the draft minute. The minutes will be approved at the subsequent Forum meeting. Forum decisions will be recorded in the minutes. Decisions on substantial issues raised under AOB shall not be made until the subsequent meeting.

**2.5.3** Members of the Forum shall act in a manner that is respectful of other members, refrain from unproductive argument and generally support the purpose of the Forum.

**2.5.4** All records of Forum meetings shall be kept for a minimum of 5 years and shall be made available to interested parties upon request.

## **2.6 Technical Working Group**

A Technical Working Group (TWG) will be appointed by the Forum, under an independent chairman. The TWG will consist of 2 representatives from each of the chambers, those representatives to be appointed by their respective chambers. The purpose of the TWG will be to discuss and agree a draft forest certification standard to be put to the Forum for their approval. Members of the TWG shall seek to ascertain the views of other Forum members within their chamber and represent these views at TWG meetings.

## **2.7 Transparency and Consultation**

**2.7.1** The start of the standard setting process shall be communicated to the public. Information on the standard development process and the minutes of the Forum meetings shall be made available to all interested parties on request. The draft certification standard, when agreed by the Forum, shall be posted on a website and information on the consultative process for the draft standard shall be communicated to the public. PEFC Ireland shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation for participation in a timely manner on its website and in suitable media as appropriate to afford stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions. The announcement and invitation shall include:

- (a) information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable,
- (b) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,
- (c) an invitation to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) to the working group/committee. The invitation 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 understandable,
- (d) an invitation to comment on the scope and the standard-setting process, and
- (e) reference to publicly available standard-setting procedures.

**2.7.2** There shall be a formal consultation process on the draft certification standard, with a minimum consultation period of 60 days. Consultation with disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made by means that ensure that the information reaches the stakeholder and is understandable. A report, providing an analysis of the responses to the consultation, shall be prepared and made available to the Forum. The views of all relevant interested parties will be

documented, discussed and considered in an open and transparent way following which the Forum will agree changes to be made to the draft standard. General information on the changes made as a result of the consultation process will be made publicly available.

**2.7.3** PEFC Ireland shall review its standard setting procedures in advance of each revision of the Standard. The review process will be made available for public comment and will be based on comments received resulting from the public announcement.

**2.7.4** In advance of any revision of the Standard, PEFC Ireland will conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work. This will include defining which interest sectors are relevant and why, and for each sector what are likely to be the key issues, who are the key stakeholders, and what means of communication will best reach them.

**2.7.5** Interested groups who are not members of the Standard Setting Forum will be facilitated by PEFC Ireland should they wish to contribute in a non-voting capacity. Any such contributions will be directed to the relevant chamber.

## **2.8 Complaints, Appeals and Disputes**

Any party who wishes to lodge a complaint regarding any aspect of the conduct of the Standard Setting Forum must do so in writing to the Secretary of the Standard Setting Forum. If the nature of the complaint is unclear the Secretary may seek further information from the complainant. The Secretary will maintain a documented record of all appeals, complaints and disputes raised against the Forum and the resultant actions.

The Forum will consider any complaint at its next full meeting and decide at that meeting how best to address the issues raised by the complainant. The complainant will be notified of the decision of the Forum in writing within 10 days of that decision.

In the event of the complainant not being satisfied with the decision of the Forum, the Board of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd will function as the final arbiter of appeal. An appellant should contact in writing the National Secretary of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd within 28 days of receiving notice of the Forum's decision informing PEFC (Ireland) Ltd of the background and details of the appeal.

The Board of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd may establish an Appeals Board to consider an appeal, the members of which must not be members of the Forum. The Appeals Board will report to the board of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd with its recommendations. The recommendations will be taken into consideration by the Board of PEFC (Ireland) Ltd in formulating its decision which it will issue within a period not exceeding three months from the date of receipt of the appeal. According to this decision, PEFC (Ireland) Ltd will take the recommended actions and communicate these to the appellant and other affected parties.

## **3. Pilot Testing**

**3.1** The final draft of the forest certification standard shall be assessed by means of a pilot study prior to submission to PEFC Ireland. This pilot study will be conducted on at least one private and one Coillte owned property.

**3.2** Recommendations for improving the draft standard, resulting from the pilot testing, shall be discussed at a Forum meeting prior to final submission.

#### **4. Review of the Forest Certification Standard**

The certification standard and implementation arrangements shall be reviewed in the light of new scientific information and practical experience at least every 5 years. PEFC Ireland shall initiate the review process, making the timetable and arrangements for the review publicly available. The revision shall define the application date and transition date of the revised Standard and Scheme documents and will take into account revisions required by PEFC Council. The application date shall not exceed a period of one year from the publication of the Standard, and the transition date shall not exceed a period of one year except in justified exceptional circumstances where the implementation of the revised Standard requires a longer period.