

PEFC Lithuania Forest Certification System Development report

Introduction

Lithuanian Forest and land Owners Association (SB) as initiator of Lithuanian PEFC process started development of Forest Certification System for Lithuania (LFCS) in 2022. This System includes national standard for sustainable forest management (SFM) according to PEFC. The purpose of the standard is to promote the sustainable development and management of Lithuanian forests using forest certification, focusing the owners' attention on the economic, ecological, social and cultural aspects of forest management.

Scope of the standard

The LFCS will be applicable at the territory of Lithuanian Republic. All documentation of the system complies with the Benchmark standard of PEFC 1003:2018, as well as the existing legal framework related to forest management in the country.

The process

Lithuanian Forest and land Owners Association (FOAL) announced the beginning of the process for the development of criteria and indicators for SFM according to PEFC requirements. Text of announcement was issued on FOAL website on 06.01.2023.

Proposal for standard development

At beginning of the process, the first document that was developed was Proposal for standard development.

This document was approved by FOAL Board on 24.03.2023.

Standard setting and revision procedures

For the purpose of developing PEFC LFCS the Standard setting and revision procedures was one of the basic documents to be developed. This document was announced on the web pages of the NGB prior to beginning of the process and it was defining all formal steps and procedure for the process, not only for CBs, but for all interested stakeholders as well. This document includes also Complain and appeal procedures.

This document was approved by FOAL Board on 24.03.2023.

Stakeholders mapping

One of the basic steps in drafting the national standard is stakeholders mapping. The purpose of that step is to provide opportunity for all interested stakeholders to participate in the standard development, including key, affected and disadvantaged stakeholders. The mapping of the stakeholders was implemented according to requirements of the PEFC LT 1003:2023, Standard setting and revision procedures.

The stakeholders mapping in Lithuania has identified at total 53 stakeholders. The mapping process has included division of stakeholders in the major groups: forest owners, business and industry, NGOs, scientific community, workers and labor union, institutions and managers of protected areas and other.

Announcement of the process and invitation to stakeholders

After preparation of stakeholders mapping document and its approval the announcement of the process and invitation to stakeholders was executed according to requirements of the PEFC LT 1001:2023, Standard setting and revision procedures.

All identified stakeholders were invited to join the process by direct email communication on 12.06.2023 and phone calls. In addition to that, on the same day there was announcement in public (web page of FOAL; www.forest.lt). After this, 15 stakeholders have nominated their representatives in the process. The Standardizing Body has accepted all proposed nominations for participation in the WG on 22.07.2023.

Stakeholders	Representatives	Amount
Owners/Manages	State Forest enterprise (3); Forest and land owners association (2)	5
Business and investors	STORA ENSO LT; Association of Contractors; HD Forest; Association of Western Lithuanian Wood Processors and Exporters	4
Science and Technologies	Vytautas Magnus University, College of Forest and environmental engineering	2
NGO	Institute of Green policy, Asociation of Independent Forest measurers	2
Trade Unions	Lithuanian Forest workers federation	1
State Organizations	State Service of protected areas	1

The process in the work group – drafting the content of the National SFM standard

The process of drafting the standard has officially started on 03.08.2023 when the first work session organized in Kaunas was held. In total, within the process there were organized 6 sessions. It takes time from 03.08.2023- 22.09.2023. The process of consensus was received according to PEFC LT 12:2023 Standard Setting and revision procedures.

Public consultation

The process of public consultation on the content of the draft National SFM standard was launched on 28.09.2023. FAOL has sent email invitations together with draft version of Standard to all identified stakeholders in the stakeholders mapping. The invitation was also announced on the web page of the FOAL and on webpages of Ministry of Environment

and State Service of protected Areas. The public consultation was lasting until 27.11.2023 and no objections or any other comments or complaints were received.

Second public consultation

The second public consultation was announced on 19.12.2023 on the website of the FOAL and information was sent to all participants via email the same day. The public consultation was lasting until 18.01.2024. One letter was received from Forest research center with some editorial suggestions. WG during their meeting accepted these suggestions and made correction in the draft version of SFM Standard.

Pilot testing

The pilot testing was arranged by Skype on 16.04.2024 on the Skype platform after receiving comments from Forest Certification experts. WG group accepted recommendations and made corrections in the draft version of the SMF Standard.

Acceptance of the SFM standard by the NGB

The Working Group for the development of the PEFC standard proposed the adoption of the standard. Acceptance was officially confirmed by the decision of the Sustainable Forest Management Centre (NGB) 23.04.2024.