

**PROJECT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE INSTITUTIONALISATION  
OF A PAFC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR THE CONGO BASIN**



**Requirements for bodies carrying out PAFC sustainable forest  
management audits and certification**

*NORM-002-2020-1*



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## **Foreword**

PEFC, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes, is an international organisation that promotes sustainable forest management through forest certification and the labelling of timber-based products.

The certifications recognised by the PEFC Council for forest management and chain of custody are based on international certification and accreditation procedures as defined in the documentation provided by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and the European Union's Cooperation for Accreditation (EA) as well as by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

The PEFC Council is not involved in the certification process but defines the requirements for certification bodies and certification processes for the approval of regional and national systems and the recognition of certificates. The PEFC Council requires that the certification of sustainable forest management be carried out by an independent and impartial body.

These procedures ensure that the accredited certification bodies are competent to carry out the work they undertake and that the certification of PAFC bodies is irrefutable.

This PAFC Congo Basin standard has been developed while taking into account, in particular, the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard on requirements for bodies conducting the certification of management systems as well as the PEFC Council's specific requirements.

## Introduction

The PEFC Council requires that certification bodies conducting PAFC sustainable forest management certification meet the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard, PEFC documentation and the relevant provisions of the ISO 19011 standard on management system audits specified in this document.

The ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard is an international standard that defines the criteria for bodies carrying out management system audits and certification. The certification of sustainable forest management is considered to be a system certification. The requirements for the PAFC Congo Basin Sustainable Forest Management System (**SFMS**) are described in the PAFC/NORM-001-2019 standard.

This document does not include the texts of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO 19011 standards. These documents can be obtained from the ISO or from national standards bodies.

## 1. Field of application

This document provides additional requirements specific to this standard for certification bodies conducting sustainable forest management certification in accordance with the PAFC/NORM-001-2019 document, and it complements the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard and IAF documents related to the application of this standard.

Compliance with these requirements is intended to ensure that these bodies issue sustainable forest management certification competently, and in a consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of these bodies and the acceptance of their certifications both nationally and internationally.

## 2. Normative references

ISO / IEC 17021-1 : 2015, Requirements for bodies providing audits and certification of management systems

ISO / IEC 17011 : 2017, Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

PAFC/NORM-001-2019 – Sustainable forest management - Requirements (*Gestion durable des forêts – Exigences*)

PAFC/PROC-003-2020-1 – Notification of Certification Bodies for sustainable forest management systems (*Notification des organismes de certification du système de gestion durable des forêts*)

PEFC ST 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules - Requirements

### 3. Terms and definitions

In the context of this standard, the relevant definitions mentioned in the ISO / IEC 17021-1 and PAFC/NORM-001-2019 standards apply as well as the definitions in the following table.

<p><b>Certification audit</b></p>	<p>Audit carried out by an auditing body that is independent of the client and the parties relying on the certification, for the purpose of certifying a client's management system.</p> <p>Note 1: In this document the term "audit" is used for the purpose of third-party simplification.</p> <p>Note 2: Certification audits include initial, surveillance, renewal and special or supplementary audits.</p> <p>(based on ISO 17021-1)</p>
<p><b>Auditor</b></p>	<p>Person who performs an audit (based on ISO/IEC 17021-1)</p>
<p><b>Certification committee</b></p>	<p>A group of people who have not been involved in the audit process and are selected by the certification body to examine all of the information and conclusions related to the audit and make a certification decision.</p>
<p><b>Secondary education</b></p>	<p>The cycle in the national education system that follows primary or elementary education, and which must be completed before integration into a higher education institution, such as a university or a similar educational institute.</p>
<p><b>Outsourcing</b></p>	<p>The subcontracting of part of the certification body's certification activities to another body.</p> <p>(based on ISO/IEC 17021-1)</p>
<p><b>Impartiality</b></p>	<p>The existence of objectivity.</p> <p>Note 1 of the article: Objectivity implies either the absence of a conflict of interest or the identification of a solution to the conflicts that does not prejudice the certification body's subsequent activities.</p> <p>Note 2 of the article: Other useful terms used to convey the notion of impartiality include "independence", "absence of conflict of interest", "probity", "non-discrimination", "neutrality", "justice", "openness", "fairness", "disinterestedness" and "balance".</p> <p>(based on ISO/IEC 17021-1)</p>
<p><b>Non-conformity</b></p>	<p>Non-compliance with one of the standard's requirements. The non-conformity may be linked to the failure to meet an indicator or the deliberate failure to achieve one of the objectives of the standard described in the scope of the PAFC/NORM-001-2019 document.</p> <p>The company's handling of a non-conformity presupposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that it has assessed the root causes of the deviation from the requirements,</li> <li>- that it has defined a precise action plan (responsibilities, steps, means, etc.),</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that it has implemented the action plan (training, new procedures, new tools, new studies, etc.) and that it has assessed the effects of the corrective actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Minor non-conformity</b>	The qualification of a non-conformity that does not undermine the general objective of the criterion (paragraph of level 2 of the sustainable forest management standard) and that in any case allows for compliance with the principle (paragraph of level 1 of the sustainable forest management standard). The non-conformity is limited in space and time, is non-systematic and has a low impact.
<b>Major non-conformity</b>	The qualification of a non-conformity that undermines the general objective of the criterion and does not allow compliance with the principle. A non-conformity is major when it is repetitive or recurrent, and when it affects the system and/or has a significant environmental or social impact over a large area.
<b>Observation</b>	An observation made by an auditor regarding prospects for improvement or a potential risk for an item that otherwise meets the requirements of the standard, or that is not covered by the standard.
<b>National PAFC organisations</b>	The national PAFC organisations are national and independent organisations established for the purpose of developing and implementing a PEFC system in the Congo Basin. The list of national PAFC organisations and their contact details are available on the PEFC website. National PAFC organisations are generally also <b>PEFC-approved bodies</b> .
<b>Client organisation</b>	An organisation that has applied for SFMS certification or whose SFMS has been certified.
<b>PEFC-approved body</b>	The PEFC-approved body is an entity authorised by the PEFC Council to license the use of the PEFC trademark and to notify certifying bodies on behalf of the PEFC Council. The approved-bodies are generally <b>the national PAFC organisations</b> .
<b>Certifying body</b>	A body that is independent of the client organisation, and which carries out the certification audit to certify the client organisation's SFMS. May be referred to as <b>CB</b> .
<b>Scope of certification</b>	<p>The scope of certification is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The geographical perimeter: which area will be certified (surface areas and boundaries of Forest Management Units (<b>FMU</b>), forest types, etc.).</li> <li>- The product perimeter: which products will be certified?</li> <li>- The activity perimeter: the activity for which the company is fully responsible and which will be included in the certificate.</li> </ul> <p>Industrial sites, mechanical workshops, offices, timber storage areas (factory yards, breaking yards, railway station yards, etc.) and any other infrastructures located within the boundaries of FMUs are part of the certification perimeter. When these various sites and infrastructures are located outside the boundaries of the FMU, they must be included in the</p>



	<p>certification perimeter when they contribute to the achievement of the development plan's objectives.</p> <p>Permanent or temporary forest camps located inside or outside the FMU are also part of the certification perimeter, as are nurseries and afforestation/reforestation areas.</p> <p>The certification perimeter refers to the field of application of the PAFC/NORM-001-2019 PAFC Congo Basin sustainable forest management standard (<i>norme de gestion durable des forêts PAFC Bassin du Congo</i>).</p>
<b>Technical reviewer</b>	<p>A qualified person, internal or external to the CB, who assesses the quality and compliance of the reports and documents linked to the audit and certification process, according to an established procedure, and who gives an advisory opinion to the certification committee.</p>
<b>Forestry and/or timber sector and related sectors</b>	<p>These activity sectors encompass activities related to forest harvesting and/or management, research in relevant fields, training, standards development, forest industry/forest product associations, regulations and forestry laws.</p>
<b>Forest management unit</b>	<p>Area covered by a sustainable management system in accordance with the PAFC sustainable forest management standard (PAFC/NORM-001-2019). The FMU has a defined area covered by a management plan.</p> <p>Within the framework of this standard, a FMU may be certified or a candidate for certification.</p>

## 4. General requirements

The criteria according to which the client organisation's SFMS is assessed are those outlined in the latest version of the PAFC/NORM-001-2019 document entitled Sustainable forest management, requirements and the ST PEFC 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules - Requirements.

### 4.1. General skills

4.1.1. The certification body must comply with ISO / IEC 17021-1 : 2015 standard and the documents of the IAF (International Accreditation Forum) relating to the application of the ISO 17021-1 : 2015 standard.

The following paragraphs supplement or illustrate the general requirements of the ISO 17021 standard.

4.1.2. The certification body must be familiar with and understand the PAFC Congo Basin regional sustainable forest certification scheme.

### 4.2. Legal and contractual issues

All of the requirements mentioned in clause 5.1 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.

4.2.1 The certification body issuing sustainable forest management certification according to the PAFC Congo Basin forest certification scheme, or accredited certification, must have valid accreditation as described in Annex 1 of this document.

4.2.2 When a certification body uses the PEFC logo on a certification document, or for any other purpose related to the PAFC Congo Basin certification scheme, such use must only be made on the basis of a valid licence issued by a national PAFC organisation or other entity accredited by the PEFC Council and in accordance with the standard relating to the use of the PEFC trademark.

4.2.3 The certification body must make it clear to the client organisation that the PEFC logo on the issued certificate only signifies that the client organisation complies with the PEFC certification scheme and does not grant the client organisation the right to use the PEFC trademarks.

**Note:** The client organisation holding a valid sustainable forest management certificate can only use the PEFC trademarks with a PEFC trademark license number, valid for off-product use on the basis of a PEFC trademark license agreement, issued by an entity approved by the PEFC Council (see PAFC/PROC-003-2020 - Notification of Certification Bodies for sustainable forest management systems) and in accordance with the PEFC trademark use requirements.

### 4.3. Ensuring impartiality

All of the requirements mentioned in clause 5.2 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.

4.3.1. The certification body must be independent of the client organisation and be impartial in terms of its assessments. It may not be involved in the standardisation process as a management or decision-making body, or in forest management.

### 4.4. Responsibility and funding

All of the requirements mentioned in clause 5.3 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.



## 4.5. Confidentiality

4.5.1. The certification body must not divulge any confidential information relating to the client organisation or its activities.

4.5.2. The certification body must inform the client organisation of its obligation to provide information to the PEFC Council and/or a national PAFC organisation and of the range of information it must provide and how it will be used. The information to be provided to the PEFC Council covers in particular the data recorded in the PEFC Information and Registration System<sup>1</sup>.

4.5.3. The certification body must obtain written consent from the client organisation to disclose information to the PEFC Council and/or the national PEFC organisation. This written agreement must comply with all data protection legislation applicable in the countries where the client organisation and the certification body are based.

## 4.6. Transparency

All of the principles mentioned in clause 4.5 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply. In particular, the certification body shall ensure the accessibility to the public of

- The description of the audit and certification process
- The list of certified companies and their certification status

## 5. Structural requirements

All of the requirements mentioned in clause 6 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.

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<sup>1</sup> See the technical guide: PEFC GD 1008:2019 - PEFC Information and Registration System - Data Requirements

## 6. Human resource requirements

### 6.1. General considerations

6.1.1 The certification body must ensure that all personnel in charge of conducting primary activities, such as contract reviews, audits, technical reviews of reports, certification decisions or auditor surveillance, among other things, have the relevant and appropriate knowledge and skills related to these activities. At a minimum, this knowledge and these skills relate to sustainable forest management systems and the Congo Basin's geographical area.

6.1.2 Gender equality should be promoted.

### 6.2. Auditors

The requirements of clauses 7.2.4, 7.2.6 and 7.2.11 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.

#### **Auditor selection**

6.2.1 The certification body must ensure that the auditors have, at a minimum, a degree equivalent to a Master's degree with a specialisation in natural resource management and/or a field related to sustainable forest management.

**Note:** the level of education may be equivalent to a bachelor's degree if the auditor can attest to at least 5 years of professional experience in the forestry and/or timber sector and associated sectors, e.g. forest exploitation and/or forest management, research in the sector, training, standards development, forest governance.

6.2.2. In its auditor recruitment process, the certification body must verify knowledge on the issues at stake in the Congo Basin's forest-based and timber-based sectors, in particular with regard to forest governance and regulations, the different types of forest concessions and forest management, issues related to the presence of local communities and indigenous peoples in the FMUs, environmental issues and applicable conventions and regulations on workers' rights.

#### **Qualification of auditors**

6.2.3. The certification body must ensure that the auditors can attest that they have undergone qualifying training in auditing techniques based on the ISO 19011 standard.

6.2.4. The certification body must ensure that the auditors have received initial training on the current PAFC sustainable forest management standard (PAFC/NORM-001-2019) recognised by the relevant national PAFC organisations, including :

- a) The terminology, terms and definitions relating to sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin and the PAFC Congo Basin forest certification scheme;
- b) The PAFC Congo Basin forest certification scheme, and in particular the requirements for sustainable forest management (PAFC/NORM-001-2019);

6.2.5. For the initial qualification of an auditor, the certification body must ensure that the auditor can attest to a minimum period of two years of full-time professional experience in the forestry and/or timber sector and related sectors.

**Note:** If the auditor has an education level equivalent to a Bachelor's degree, he/she must attest to a minimum period of 5 years of full-time professional experience in the forestry and/or related sectors in order to be eligible for the qualification.

6.2.6. For the initial qualification of an auditor, the certification body must ensure that the auditor has carried out, within the last three years and as part of his auditor training, three legality or SFMS audits for the standards used in the sub-region under the supervision of a qualified auditor, including at least one initial or renewal audit.

**Note 1:** an audit includes a document review, an on-site audit and drafting of an audit report.

**Note 2:** SFMS audits may cover other internationally recognised sustainable forest certification systems implemented in the Congo Basin.

### **Auditor monitoring and evaluations**

6.2.7 The certification body must ensure that its auditors are kept up to date annually on developments in the PAFC Congo Basin scheme's standard and procedures and on issues in terms of the interpretation of the standard during audits.

6.2.8. In order to maintain an auditor's qualification, the certification body must ensure that the auditor has carried out at least two audits relating to legality or sustainable forest management systems per year, the sum of which must total at least eight working days of audits. At least one of these audits must be a sustainable forest management system audit recognised by the PEFC Council.

**Note:** an audit includes a document review, an on-site audit and drafting of an audit report.

6.2.9. In exceptional circumstances, such as a statutory leave or a long term illness, auditors who cannot comply with clause 6.2.8 must carry out at least one sustainable forest management system audit under the supervision of a qualified auditor.

6.2.10. The certification body must have a procedure to monitor and evaluate the performance of its auditors based on the frequency of their use and the level of risk associated with their activities and according to the following requirements:

- regular monitoring using methods such as the review of audit reports or feedback from client organisations;
- the conducting of audits under the supervision of a qualified audit manager at least once every 3 years.

6.2.11. The certification body must keep proof of the annual supervision of the SFMS auditors.

### **6.3. Team in charge of the audit**

6.3.1. The certification body must use an audit team consisting of auditors (and technical experts where appropriate) who are also competent in the conducting of assessments.

6.3.2. The auditors in the audit team must meet the requirements set out in clauses 6.2.1 to 6.2.9.

6.3.3. The certification body must define the requirements regarding the skills of the auditors covering the specific aspects of the PAFC Congo Basin forest certification scheme. The audit team must have knowledge and skills in the following areas in particular:

- a) forest management;
- b) reduced-impact logging;
- c) water and soil protection, in particular the impact of forestry operations on water resources and soils;

- d) ecosystem services provided by forests and forest ecosystem biodiversity, in particular the protection of outstanding species and ecosystems;
- e) hunting management;
- f) forestry operations and technical knowledge, in particular on occupational safety and health, accident prevention and labour laws;
- g) the socio-economic functions of forests, in particular for local communities and indigenous peoples;
- h) relevant national legislation and other relevant regulations.

6.3.4. In some cases, technical experts may be required to support the required skill of an auditor in a particular technical field by providing appropriate expertise. Technical experts should be independent of the audited organisations, demonstrate competence in the subject matters at hand, and their names and affiliations must be included in the audit report.

6.3.5. Where individual external auditors or technical experts are called on to form the audit team, clause 7.3 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard shall apply.

6.3.6. The certification body shall comply with clause 7.5 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard if it resorts to the outsourcing of part of its certification activities.

#### 6.4. Technical reviewer and certification committee

6.4.1. Clause 7.2.8 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard applies.

6.4.2. The certification body must ensure that the technical reviewer and the members of the certification committee have the level of education required in clause 6.2.1.

6.4.3. The certification body must ensure that the technical reviewer and the members of the certification committee have validated their training in auditing techniques based on the ISO 19011 standard.

6.4.4. The certification body must ensure that the technical reviewer and the members of the certification committee have received initial training on the current PAFC sustainable forest management standard (PAFC/NORM-001-2019) recognised by the relevant national PAFC organisations.

6.4.5. The certification body must ensure that the technical reviewer and the members of the certification committee have knowledge of the issues faced in the Congo Basin's forest-timber sector, as mentioned in clause 6.2.2.

6.4.6. The certification body must ensure that the technical reviewer and the members of the certification committee have at least three years of full-time professional experience in the field of conformity assessment.

**Note:** The total number of years of professional experience may be reduced by one year if the technical reviewer and the members of the certification committee can attest to an appropriate postgraduate degree related to the forest sector or related sectors.

6.4.7. For the first qualification of a technical reviewer and the members of the certification committee, the certification body must ensure that they have observed at least one legality or SFMS audit in the Congo Basin within the last three years.



## 6.5. Skill management for staff involved in the certification process

6.5.1. The certification body must have documented processes pertaining to initial assessments and the regular monitoring of skills to ensure that all persons involved in organising and conducting audits have the necessary qualities to carry them out. Particular attention must be paid to the assessment of knowledge relating to the PAFC certification scheme.

6.5.2. The certification body must review and track the skills of its staff according to their performance in order to identify training needs.

6.5.3. The certification body must ensure that the technical reviewer, the members of the certification committee and the qualified auditors participate, once every five years, in a continuing education course in the field of sustainable forest management that is recognised by the relevant national PAFC organisations.

6.5.4. When a new version of the Congo Basin PAFC sustainable forest management standard is published, the certification body must ensure that the technical reviewer, the certification committee members and the qualified auditors have participated in refresher training recognised by the relevant national PAFC organisations. This training must incorporate this new version before certifications relative to this standard may begin.

## 7. Information requirements

### 7.1. Public information

All requirements of clause 8.1 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.

7.1.1 The certification body must draw up a summary of the certification report, send it to the client organisation and make it publicly available.

7.1.2. The public summary of the certification report must include the following:

- a) the identification of the client and the scope of certification;
- b) the identification of the certification body and the audit team;
- c) a brief description of the compliance with the PAFC Congo Basin certification requirements;
- d) a brief description of the non-conformities that were identified;
- e) recommendations for the certification decision.

### 7.2. Certification documents

7.2.1. The certification body must provide the certification documents to the certified client by any means chosen by the client.

7.2.2. The certification document must include, at a minimum, the following information:

- a) the identification of the certification body;
- b) the name and address of the client organisation and, where applicable, the sites/legal entities where the certification is recognised;

**Note:** The name and address of the client organisation may be the name and address of a legal entity where no sustainable forest management activities take place (e.g. only a postal address). The name and address of the logging site whose forest management is subject to certification must also be included in the certification document.

- c) A unique identification number;
- d) a reference to the PAFC Congo Basin sustainable forest management standard used for the certification audit with an indication of the version;
- e) the field of application (within the framework of PAFC/NORM-001-2019 standard) of the issued certification in relation to the scope of certification;
- f) the PEFC logo with the certification body's PEFC trademark licence number;
- g) the accreditation body's accreditation mark (including the accreditation number, where applicable), which must be used in accordance with the accreditation body's currently observed rules;
- h) the certification's date of issuance, its extension, its renewal or its change of scope and its date of expiry or the date on which it must be renewed. The effective date indicated in a certification document may not be earlier than the date of the certification decision.

7.2.3. When the certification's field of application is included in an appendix to the certificate, the certificate must include a reference to the annex and the annex must be considered as part of the certificate and be provided as soon as the certificate is requested.

7.2.4. The certificate number must consist of, in this order: the abbreviation of the certification body's name (the same abbreviation must be used for all PAFC certificates issued), followed by a



dash (-), the abbreviation of the sustainable forest management standard: PAFC-SFM, followed by another dash (-) and the corresponding number assigned by the certification body to the certificate.

**Note:** Two certification bodies cannot have the same abbreviation.

7.2.5. The certification body must issue the certification document in both English and French and in any other appropriate working language that is agreed to in the contract with the client.

### 7.3. References to certification and use of trademarks

All requirements of clause 8.3 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.

7.3.1. Use of the PEFC trademark by the certification body must comply with the requirements of the 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules - Requirements.

### 7.4. Confidentiality

All requirements of clause 8.4 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.

### 7.5. Information exchanges between the certification body and its clients

7.5.1. The certification body must provide its clients with the following up-to-date information:

- a) a recap of the ongoing certification process;
- b) the applicable fees according to the certification stages;
- c) its requirements for clients to make the necessary arrangements for the completion of audits: providing of documented information, and field visits in particular;
- d) the certification body's processes for handling complaints and appeals.

7.5.2. The certification body must provide publicly accessible documents such as guidance notes, clarifications and interpretations issued by the PEFC Council or a national PAFC organisation.

7.5.3. The certification body must take the necessary steps to ensure that the certified client informs it of changes that could call the certification into question, such as the field of application, the organisation's legal status, or significant operational changes that could alter the organisation's system or processes.

## 8. Process requirements

### 8.1. Certification framework

8.1.1. The certification body must have internal procedures that are specific to forest management certification and compatible with the requirements of the ISO 17021-1 standard. These procedures must cover, at a minimum, the following steps:

- a) Establishment of an audit plan
- b) Setting up of an audit team
- c) Determination of audit time requirements
- d) Sampling
- e) Audit processes

8.1.2. The audit programme for a full certification cycle is established over five years and must include surveillance audits at least once every twelve months. After five years, a new cycle starts with a renewal audit.

**Note:** the first surveillance audit must take place within twelve months of the issue of the first certificate.

### 8.2. Pre-certification activities

All requirements of clauses 9.1.1 and 9.1.2 of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 standard apply.

8.2.1. At a minimum, the certification body must obtain the following documentation and information from the client organisation in order to assess the certification application:

- a) the name, address and legal status of the legal entity;
- b) the client organisation's documented procedures;
- c) the scope of the certification.

8.2.2. For each audit, the audit plan must identify the activities necessary to determine the client organisation's compliance with respect to:

- a) its forest management system, which must comply with the requirements of the PAFC Congo Basin sustainable management standard;
- b) its use of PEFC trademarks in accordance with 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules - Requirements and the use of a valid trademark licence agreement. The latter must be signed between the client organisation and a national PAFC organisation in order for the client organisation to be authorised to use the PEFC trademark.

8.2.3. Depending on the type of audit to be carried out, the certification body must adapt its scope by applying sampling rules in relation to the geographical perimeter.

- a) The initial audit must cover all of the FMUs.
- b) The surveillance audits must cover a minimum sample of FMUs calculated according to the following formula:  $X = 0.8 * \sqrt{y}$  ( $y$  = the total number of FMUs operated by the applicant entity), and include both documentary analyses and field visits.

### 8.3. Audit scheduling

Clause 9.2 of the ISO 17021-1 standard provides a detailed framework and guidance for the scheduling of audits.

8.3.1. The certification body's auditing procedures must be in accordance with the ISO 19011 standard.

8.3.2. The certification body must communicate its audit plan to the client organisation and the audit dates shall be determined in advance with it. This audit plan provides the client organisation with information about how the audit will proceed and the data that it has to communicate, covering in particular:

- a) The complaint list;
- b) The accident list;
- c) The training list;
- d) Logging data (species, volumes, etc.) and products sold under certificate;
- e) The use of chemical products (quantity, surface area, etc.);
- f) Changes in the perimeter;
- g) The handling of non-conformities.

8.3.3. In addition to the preparation phase and the presentation report, the audit includes the following:

- a) a document evaluation phase with the client organisation;
- b) a phase to assess the compliance of the forest management with the PAFC Congo Basin standard;
- c) a consultation phase with the parties interested in the management of the forest management unit to be certified.

8.3.4. In the audit plan, the certification body must evaluate the audit time requirements according to its documented procedures, taking into account the following aspects:

- a) the requirements of the forest management standard;
- b) the size and production of the relevant forest management unit;
- c) the extent of activities using the PEFC trademark;
- d) the potential outsourcing of activities included in the scope of the organisation's forest management standard;
- e) the results of all previous audits, including those of the client organisation's management systems;
- f) site visits.

### 8.4. Conducting of audits

Clause 9.4 of the ISO 17021-1 standard provides a framework for the conducting of audits.

8.4.1. The audit process must include an opening and closing meeting of the audit.

8.4.2. During the audit, the certification body must review all relevant information received from third parties, such as government bodies, NGOs, etc., and use it as evidence to assess compliance with the certification requirements.

8.4.3. The certification body must produce an audit report in accordance with annex 2.

8.4.4. During the initial and renewal audits, all the requirements of the PAFC Congo Basin forest management standard must be assessed by the certification body.

8.4.5. During the surveillance audits, the certification body must assess a minimum number of requirements to ensure that the main principles of the PAFC Congo Basin sustainable forest management standard (PAFC/NORM-001-2019) are respected by the client organisation. These requirements are as follows: 4.1.8; 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.3; all the requirements of paragraph 5.2; 6.2.3; 6.2.4; 6.3.1; 7.1.2; 7.2.3; 7.2.7; 7.2.10; 9.1.8; 9.2.7; 9.2.8; 9.3.6; 9.3.8.

8.4.6. The certification body must assess at least 25% of the requirements in each of the 4 years of monitoring, so that they are all reassessed between the initial audit and the renewal audit or between two renewal audits.

## 8.5. Certification decision

All of the requirements mentioned in clause 9.5 of the ISO 17021-1 standard apply.

8.5.1. Audit findings must be classified into the following three categories: major non-conformities, minor non-conformities and observations.

### Handling of non-conformities

8.5.2. The major and minor non-conformities identified during audits must result in corrective actions implemented by the client organisation in order to resolve the non-conformities. The corrective action plan(s), including a timetable, must be reviewed and accepted by the certification body.

8.5.3. Major non-conformities must be closed via an additional audit within a maximum period of 3 months.

8.5.4. Minor non-conformities must be closed via a surveillance audit within a maximum period of 12 months. Minor non-conformities that are not closed within 12 months must be re-qualified by the certification body as major non-conformities.

8.5.5. As a rule, the certification body will conduct supplementary audits on-site. In justified and documented cases they may be carried out on the basis of documents and communication with the certified entity.

### Issuance of the certificate

8.5.6. Prior to the issuance of initial certification or the issuance of a renewal, the certification body must ensure that major non-conformities have been corrected.

8.5.7. The certification body must immediately suspend the certificate if it observes the following:

- a) 5 or more major non-conformities during a surveillance audit,
- b) 1 or more major non-conformities identified during an audit have not been closed during a further audit.

8.5.8. The certificate is granted for a maximum period of five years before the end of which a renewal audit must be carried out, in time to address any major non-conformities.

8.5.9. The certification body must immediately inform the appropriate national PAFC organisation when certification is granted, suspended, withdrawn or when it has expired, or when its scope has changed or when any other changes are made to the certification or to the information which the certification body must provide to the national PAFC organisation.

## 8.6. Maintaining certification

All of the requirements mentioned in clauses 9.6.1 to 9.6.4 of the ISO 17021-1 standard apply.

8.6.1. Monitoring audits must be carried out every 12 months.

## 8.7. Modification of certification

All of the requirements mentioned in clause 9.6.5 of the ISO 17021-1 standard apply.

8.7.1. If certification has expired, been suspended or withdrawn, the certification body must inform the client organisation that any further use of the PEFC and PAFC Congo Basin trademark and claims is prohibited. In the event of a suspension, the certification body must verify that the client organisation complies with this measure.

8.7.2. If modifications to the PAFC Congo Basin certification scheme affect the forest management standard, the certification body shall ensure that the client organisation has taken these modifications into account in its management system within 18 months, by implementing the same procedures as it would for a certification renewal.

8.7.3. The observation of a major non-conformity due to deliberate action by the client organisation may, depending on the seriousness of the situation, be sanctioned by a temporary suspension or definitive withdrawal of the certificate by the certification body.

8.7.4. After the suspension of certification, the certification body must decide whether or not to maintain the client organisation's certification on the basis of a new supplementary audit within a maximum period of 1 year. If the client organisation has not addressed the non-conformities within this period, the certificate will be withdrawn.

## 8.8. Complaints and appeals

All of the requirements mentioned in clauses 9.7 and 9.8 of the ISO 17021-1 standard apply.

8.8.1. The certification body must notify the relevant national PAFC organization within 30 days of any substantiated claims of client organisations' non-compliance with certification requirements or of complaints against client organisations that it receives or becomes aware of.

8.8.2. The certification body must provide the relevant national PAFC organisation with summary reports of resolved complaints and appeals against PAFC-certified client organisations that it has received, including, at a minimum:

- a) The appellant/plaintiff's identification (subject to disclosure);
- b) the client organisation's identification;
- c) the subject of the complaint;
- d) a summary of the complaint management process;
- e) the outcome/resolution of the complaint.

## 8.9. Records relating to the client

All of the requirements mentioned in clause 9.9 of the ISO 17021-1 standard apply.



## Annex 1 (normative): Requirements for the accreditation of PAFC certification bodies

A1.1. Certification bodies carrying out audits and certification of sustainable forest management on the basis of the PAFC Congo Basin forest certification scheme must have valid accreditation issued by a body that is a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) or that is a member of an IAF-recognised regional network, and comply with the latest version of the ISO 17011 standard and other documents recognised by the above-mentioned organisations.

A1.2. The scope of the accreditation's implementation must explicitly cover the documents of the following PAFC Congo Basin forest certification scheme: Sustainable Forest Management - Requirements (PAFC/NORM-001-2019) and PEFC ST 2001:2020 PEFC Trademarks Rules - Requirements.

A1.3. The scope of the accreditation's implementation must also explicitly refer to the ISO/IEC17021-1:2015 standard, to this document, and to other requirements for which the certification body has been assessed.

A1.4. The accreditation certificate must be available in both English and French and in any other necessary language, and must bear the symbol of the accrediting body that issued it to the certification body.

A1.5. The accreditation body must have procedures for the handling of complaints and appeals relating to an activity or a decision of the certifying bodies that it has accredited.

## Annex 2 (normative): Minimum contents of audit reports

Audit reports must include, at a minimum, the following contents:

1. a cover page;
2. a description of the client organisation;
3. a description of the forest management unit:
  - a) its perimeter;
  - b) the processes affected by the certification;
4. the audit plan, which includes the audit schedule and the audit team;
5. the audit findings:
  - a) a presentation of findings demonstrating compliance or non-compliance with all of the applicable clauses of the certification requirements;
  - b) the request for corrective actions and the establishment of a timetable for their implementation, the reporting of these actions and their closure;
  - c) the evaluation of corrective actions that were previously implemented;
  - d) the recommended decision in terms of certification.
6. A public summary of the audit report.