


PEFC Extraordinary Assessment

Assessment of Slovakia Forest Certification System

Final Assessment Report v2

4 November 2013

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List of abbreviations

CFCS	Chlorofluorocarbons
EU	European Union
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes
PEFC IGD	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes Informative Guides
PEFC ST	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes Standard
SFCA	Slovak Forest Certification Association
SFCS	Slovak Forest Certification System
WHO	World Health Organisation

1 Introduction

1.1 Short description of the system

The Slovak Forest Certification System (SFCS) was first endorsed by PEFC Council in 2005 and the current re-endorsement from 2010 is valid until 28 July 2015. The core elements of SFCS are

The national governing body is PEFC Slovakia Council (i.e. Slovak Forest Certification Association SFCA) (hereon PEFC Slovakia) that represents the key stakeholders in Slovakian forestry. PEFC Slovakia joined PEFC Council in 2002.

PEFC Slovakia is responsible for scheme development and organization of standard setting:

- PEFC Slovakia secretariat is responsible for stakeholder identification, public communication and practical tasks related to SFCS development and implementation.
- The PEFC Slovakia establishes in cooperation with other stakeholders an ad hoc Technical Committee that acts as a stakeholder forum for standard setting. The Committee submits a standard proposal for PEFC Slovakia General Assembly that formally approves SFCS standards.
- PEFC Slovakia authorizes individual experts to contribute to the work of Technical Committee.

Development and revision of SFCS documentation (ND SFCS 002, 24 January 2013) describes the SFCS structure and standard setting and revision procedures:

Requirements for sustainable forest management in all types of forests are described in *Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management* (SFCS 1003:2009, 1 October 2009, Issue 2).

SFCS procedures for dispute resolution and function of special Arbitration Commission are described in *PEFC Slovakia procedures for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals* (ND SFCS 004, 17 December 2012, Issue 2).

SFCS includes options for group and individual certification but so far there has been interest to implement only regional group certification in state owned and private forests. *Rules for certification of forest management* (SFCS 1002:2009, 15 October 2009, Issue 1) describes the rules for regional group certification and responsibilities of applicants and members in certification.

SFCS requirements for certification and accreditation bodies and processes as well as conditions for PEFC notification are defined in *Requirements for certification and accreditation of certification bodies operating certification of forest management* (SFCS 1005:2009, 15 October 2009, Issue 1).

1.2 Timeline of the assessment

The PEFC Council has renewed substantial parts of its Technical Documentation in 2010 and each PEFC endorsed national forest certification scheme shall adhere to these changes by the end of the transition period in 2013. This assessment is to evaluate the up to date compliance of SFCS to these changes. The date of submission of the Assessment Report is 3 November 2013.

1.3 Documentation

The compliance of SFCS documentation against the revised PEFC Council requirements is assessed based on the following documents (Table 1):

Table 1 PEFC and SFCS Documentation

PEFC Document	Slovak Forest Certification System Document
Standard Setting	
PEFC ST 1001:2010 <i>Standard Setting - Requirements</i>	<i>Development and revision of SFCS documentation - ND SFCS 002</i> <i>PEFC Slovakia procedures for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals - ND SFCS 004</i>
Group Forest Certification	
PEFC ST 1002:2010 <i>Group Forest Management Certification - Requirements</i>	<i>Rules for certification of forest management- TD SFCS 1002:2009</i> <i>Slovak forest certification system description - TD SFCS 1001:2009</i>
Sustainable Forest Management	
PEFC ST 1003:2010 <i>Sustainable Forest Management - Requirements</i>	<i>Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management - TD SFCS 1003 2009</i>

1.4 Further Sources

The other documents consulted for this assessment are:

- SFCS PEFC IGD 1007-01:2012 – *PEFC Standard and System Requirement Checklist* (16 November, 2012),
- SFCS Comparison between the requirements of the PEFC ST 1002:2010 and TD SFCS 1002:2009 & TD SFCS 1005:2009, and
- SFCS Comparison between the requirements of the PEFC ST 1003:2010 and TD SFCS 1003:2009.

1.5 Assessors

Hanna Nikinmaa, Senior Consultant – Corporate Responsibility Management, Indufor Oy.

2 Compliance Statement

2.1 General

SCFS forest certification system comply with the revised PEFC Council requirements.

2.2 Standard Setting

SFCS documents *Development and revision of SFCS documentation* (ND SFCS 002, 24 January 2013) define the standard setting procedures in compliance with PEFC ST 1001:2010 and *PEFC Slovakia procedures for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals* (ND SFCS 004, 17 December 2012) specify the grievance procedures applied in standard setting in compliance with PEFC requirements.

2.1.1 Standardising Body

SFCS requirements on standard development bodies and their responsibilities (ND 002, SFCS 1002:2009) comply with the assessed PEFC requirements.

The forest management standard is developed by an ad hoc Technical Committee that consists of different stakeholders proposed by different entities of PEFC Slovakia and other stakeholder organisations. PEFC Slovakia Council has the right to accept or refuse the proposed stakeholders in order to get a balanced representation of different stakeholder categories.

PEFC Slovakia Council General Assembly is the ultimate standardizing body for forest management as it approves the standards of the SFCS.

Standard setting is independent from certification process and it is not dominated by a single party nor strongly influenced by any individual certificate holder.

PEFC Slovakia has clear and concise written procedures for record keeping, standard-setting process, consensus building and revision of standards or normative documents. Furthermore, it posts the standard setting procedure on its website for public viewing and considers any stakeholder comments while reviewing the procedures. Also the contacts of the Technical Committee members are made available on PEFC Slovakia website.

CFCS has also defined appeals procedures where PEFC Slovakia has the responsibility to call upon an Arbitration Commission if substantive or procedural complaint and appeal is presented to activities under the responsibility of PEFC Slovakia.

2.1.2 Standard-Setting Process

SFCS requirements on standard setting are in full compliance with the standard-setting process requirements of PEFC.

More specifically, the PEFC Slovakia:

- Uses a mapping exercise to identify all stakeholders including the disadvantaged and key stakeholders.
- Publicly announces the start of the standard-setting process through its website and other suitable media, and sends invitation for participating the process through e-mail, telephone calls and regular posts. The announcement and invitation include all required information and elements.
- Through its Secretariat, reviews the standard-setting process based on comments received.
- Requires that standard drafting in Technical Committee shall be organized in an open and transparent.
- Intensively uses its website to carry out the public consultation of enquiry draft.

The final draft standard incorporates the results of the pilot testing of new standard and is approved on a consensual basis by PEFC Slovak General Assembly. The consensus is reached through voting organised using the processes as specified in PEFC Slovakia status. Finally, the documentation on the implementation of the standard setting process, and the standards/normative documents, after due approval from the General Assembly of the PEFC Slovakia, are published on its website

2.2 Group Certification

The *Slovakia forest certification system description* (SFCS 1001:2009) and *Rules for certification of forest management* (SFCS 1002:2009, 15 October 2009) set the options and requirements for group certification. Currently the SFCS comply with PEFC requirements on standard setting.

Forest owners participate to group certification on contractual basis either directly or through their associations. Application for participation shall include a voluntary commitment and in case of associations forest owners' permission as expressed in a mandate contract. The group manager issues each forest owner a letter of confirmation that finalize the commitment to follow the rules of group certification.

Despite the fact that SFCS does explicitly require a written contract with each participating forest owner, SFCS procedures for group certification demonstrate that participation to regional group certification is based on written, documented contracts.

SFCS standard requires that third party views presented to the applicant or participants in regional group certification are taken into consideration when planning annual audits. This gives assurance on in the current situation, where FMUs belong to one regional group certification, that non conformities are taken into consideration in internal and future external audits. In case individual certification will be implemented in practice SFCS, shall strengthen the requirement to communicate the potential non-conformities between applicants and certification bodies.

2.3 Forest Management Certification

SFCS *Criteria and indicators for SFM* (1003:2009) complies with the PEFC requirements for forest management standards (PEFC TD1003:2010) when taking into consideration the relevant national legislation referred to in the SFCS standard.

3 Detailed Assessment of Key indicators

3.1 PEFC ST 1001:2010 – Standard Setting - Requirements

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
Standardising Body			
4.1 The standardising body shall have written procedures for standard-setting activities describing:			
a) its status and structure, including a body responsible for consensus building (see 4.4) and for formal adoption of the standard (see 5.11),	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 4.1 4.4 & 5.3.2	Article 5.3.2 clearly mentions the Technical Committee is the consensus building body, PEFC Slovakia General Assembly approves standards <i>Compliant</i>
b) the record-keeping procedures,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Section 8	PEFC Slovakia Secretariat is responsible for appropriate record keeping. <i>Compliant</i>
c) the procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 4.4, 5.1 & 5.2.2	Secretariat carries out a stakeholder mapping (5.1) and asks them to nominate participants to Technical Committee (5.2.2). Committee shall have a balanced representation of different stakeholders (4.4) <i>Compliant</i>
d) the standard-setting process,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Section 5	Section 5 (Table 1) concisely describes the standard-setting process: Secretariat prepares a proposal for PEFC Slovakia, that prepare it to a preparatory draft. Technical Committee develop it further to working draft and after public consultation to final draft submitted for PEFC Slovakia General Assembly for approval <i>Compliant</i>
e) the mechanism for reaching consensus, and	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.3.2	Article 5.3.2 clearly describes the mechanism to reach a consensus <i>Compliant</i>
f) revision of standards/normative documents.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Section 5, 6	Article 5.3.2 clearly describes the revision process <i>Compliant</i>

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
4.2 The standardising body shall make its standard-setting procedures publicly available and shall regularly review its standard-setting procedures including consideration of comments from stakeholders.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.2.1	According to Article 5.2.1, the standard-setting procedures are made publicly available on PEFC Slovakia website. <i>Compliant</i>
4.3 The standardising body shall keep records relating to the standard-setting process providing evidence of compliance with the requirements of this document and the standardising body's own procedures. The records shall be kept for a minimum of five years and shall be available to interested parties upon request.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Section 8	The section is fully consistent with the requirement specified. PEFC Secretariat is ultimately responsible for record keeping. <i>Compliant</i>
4.4 The standardising body shall establish a permanent or temporary working group/committee responsible for standard-setting activities.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 4.4	According to Article 4.4, the PEFC Slovakia Council establishes a Technical Committee based on the nominations from the stakeholders. The committee's validity period coincides with the period of SFCS Standard development or revision. <i>Compliant</i>
4.4 The working group/committee shall:			
a) be accessible to materially and directly affected stakeholders,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 4.4, 5.2.2, 4.2	Stakeholders nominate participants to Technical Committee and PEFC Slovakia approves or rejects the nominations (5.2.2, 4.2) in view of balanced representation. Article 4.4 states that the contacts of the Technical Committee members are available on PEFC Slovakia website. <i>Compliant</i>
b) have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard where single concerned interests shall not dominate nor be	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 4.4 & 5.2.2	Stakeholder mapping, establishment and approval of composition of Technical Committee by PEFC Slovakia provide adequate assurance on balanced representation of stakeholders. Geographic representativeness is not mentioned but it is not very relevant in

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
dominated in the process, and			Slovakia which is a small country. <i>Compliant</i>
c) include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that are materially affected by the standard, and those that can influence the implementation of the standard. The materially affected stakeholders shall represent a meaningful segment of the participants.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 4.4 & 5.2.2	Materially affected stakeholders shall represent a meaningful segment of the participants (4.4) PEFC Slovakia Council shall be responsible for the acceptance and refusal of the nominations. <i>Compliant</i>
4.5 The standardising body shall establish procedures for dealing with any substantive and procedural complaints relating to the standardising activities which are accessible to stakeholders.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 4.4 & 5.3.2, and Section 7 ND SFCS 004	The Arbitral Commission of PEFC Slovakia is mandated for dealing with any substantive and procedural complains related to the standardizing activities. It uses the Complaints and Appeals Resolution Procedures approved by the PEFC Slovakia. Moreover, any dispute or disagreement concerning any substantive issue is resolved through discussion and negotiation within the Technical Committee, direct negotiation between opposing stakeholders, and the dispute resolution process governed by the representative procedure approved by the PEFC Slovakia. <i>Compliant</i>
4.6 Upon receipt of the complaint, the standard-setting body shall:			
a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant,	YES	ND SFCS 004, Articles 6.3 & 8.3, also the diagram on the last page	National Secretary of the PEFC Slovakia informs the complainant about the acceptance or rejeactance of the complaint. The diagram on the last page of ND SFCS 004 illustrates the complaint handling process. <i>Compliant</i>
b) gather and verify all necessary information to validate the complaint, impartially and objectively evaluate the subject matter of the complaint, and make	YES	ND SFCS 004, Sections 7 & 8, also the diagram on the last page	After the National Secretary's acceptance, the PEFC Slovakia Chairman assigns the Arbitral Commission to investigate the complaint. <i>Compliant</i>

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
a decision upon the complaint, and			
c) formally communicate the decision on the complaint and of the complaint handling process to the complainant.	YES	<p><i>ND SFCS 004</i>, Articles 6.3, 7.3 & 8.3, also the diagram on the last page</p> <p><i>ND SFCS 002</i>, Articles 4.6, 5.3.2 & 7.</p>	<p>The National Secretary of PEFC Slovakia is responsible for all formal communication with the compliant. The diagram on the last page of <i>ND SFCS 004</i> also illustrates communication process.</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
4.7 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 made easily available.	YES	<i>ND SFCS 002</i> , Section 5	<p>The PEFC Slovakia Secretariat establishes the contact point in question. The contact point is available on PEFC Slovakia website.</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
Standard-setting process			
5.1 The standardising body shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work.	YES	<i>ND SFCS 002</i> , Article 5.1	<p>According to article, all stakeholders including the key and disadvantaged ones are identified using a mapping exercise (by Secretariat).</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
5.2 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.	YES	<i>ND SFCS 002</i> , Articles 5.1 & 5.2.1	<p>Article 5.1: The disadvantaged and key stakeholders are identified using a mapping exercise.</p> <p>Article 5.2.1: The constraints of former group and the importance of the latter group' participation are addressed. The PEFC Slovakia Secretariat proactively seek the participation of all stakeholders</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
5.3 The standardising body 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.	YES	<i>ND SFCS 002</i> , Articles 5.2.1, 5.3.1 & 5.4.2	<p>Article 5.2.1: Announcement via PEFC Slovakia website & other suitable media.</p> <p>Article 5.2.1: Invitation via e-mail, telephone & postal services.</p> <p>Article 5.4.2: Consensus building via teleconference, face-to-face meeting & e-mail.</p> <p>Article 5.3.1: Providing meaningful</p>

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
			opportunities <i>Compliant</i>
5.4 The announcement and invitation shall include:			
a) information about the objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its timetable,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.2.1 (a)	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
b) information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.2.1 (b)	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
(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,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.2.1 & 5.2.2	The stakeholders are invited to nominate their representative(s) to the Technical Committee through a public announcement. The reaching of information to disadvantaged and key stakeholders is ensured by, for example, registered post & e-mail receipt confirmation. <i>Compliant</i>
d) an invitation to comment on the scope and the standard-setting process, and	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.2.1 (d)	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
e) reference to publicly available standard-setting procedures.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.2.1 (e)	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
5.4 The standardising body shall review the standard-setting process based on comments received from the public announcement and establish a working group/committee or adjust the composition of an already existing working group/committee 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/committee and resources available for the standard-setting.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.2.1 & 5.2.2	Article 5.2.1: The PEFC Slovakia Secretariat does the reviews in question. Article 5.2.2: the PEFC Slovakia Council establishes or adjust the Technical Committee based on nominations received from the stakeholders. <i>Compliant</i>

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
5.5 The work of the working group/committee shall be organised in an open and transparent manner where:			
a) working drafts shall be available to all members of the working group/committee,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.2.3	Article 5.2.3: Working drafts supplied to all members of the Technical Committee <i>Compliant</i>
b) all members of the working group shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of the standard and submit comments to the working drafts, and	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.3.1	Article fully consistent with the specified requirement. <i>Compliant</i>
c) comments and views submitted by any member of the working group/committee shall be considered in an open and transparent way and their resolution and proposed changes shall be recorded.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.3.1	Article fully consistent with the specified requirement. <i>Compliant</i>
5.6 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 in a timely manner in suitable media,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.4.2	Article 5.4.2: The start and end of the public consultation is announced on PEFC Slovakia website and other suitable media. <i>Compliant</i>
b) the invitation of disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made by means that ensure that the information reaches its recipient and is understandable,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.4.2	Article 5.4.2: The reaching of the invitation to disadvantaged and key stakeholders is ensured by, for example, registered post & e-mail receipt confirmation. <i>Compliant</i>
c) the enquiry draft is publicly available and accessible,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.4.2	Article 5.4.2: The draft in question is made publicly available and accessible on PEFC Slovakia website and on request. <i>Compliant</i>
d) the public consultation is for at least 60 days,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.4.2	Article 5.4.2: Public consultation period is at least 60 days <i>Compliant</i>

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
e) all comments received are considered by the working group/committee in an objective manner,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.4.2	Article 5.4.2: All comments received are considered in an open and transparent way. <i>Compliant</i>
(f) a synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration, is publicly available, for example on a website.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.4.2	Article 5.4.3: The synopsis in question is available on PEFC Slovakia website. <i>Compliant</i>
5.7 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.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.4.3	Article 5.4.3: The PEFC Slovakia Secretariat organizes the pilot testing and the Technical Committee considers the pilot testing results. <i>Compliant</i>
5.8 The decision of the working group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of a consensus.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.3.2 & 5.5.1 (g)	Fully consistent with the requirement specified. <i>Compliant</i>
5.8 In order to reach a consensus the working group/committee 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.,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.3.2	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
b) a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.3.2	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
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	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.3.2	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
d) combinations thereof.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.3.2	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
5.9 In the case of a negative vote which represents sustained opposition to any important part of the concerned interests surrounding a substantive issue, the issue shall be resolved using the following mechanism(s):			
a) discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the working group/committee in order to find a compromise,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.3.2	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
b) direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different views on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise,	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.3.2	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
c) dispute resolution process.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.3.2 ND SFCS 004	The diagram on the last page of ND SFCS 004 illustrates the dispute resolution process: Secretariat approves complaint and/or appeal, if approved ad hoc Arbitral Commission is established to deal with the issue. <i>Compliant</i>
5.10 Documentation on the implementation of the standard-setting process shall be made publicly available.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.2.1, 5.4, 5.5.1 & 5.6	According to these articles, the relevant documentation is made available on PEFC Slovakia website. <i>Compliant</i>
5.11 The standardising body shall formally approve the standards/normative documents based on evidence of consensus reached by the working group/committee.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Articles 5.5.1 & 5.5.2	The General Assembly of the PEFC Slovakia makes the formal approval. <i>Compliant</i>
5.12 The formally approved standards/normative documents shall be published in a timely manner and made publicly available.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Article 5.6	Article 5.6: The PEFC Slovakia Secretariat makes the documents publicly available on its website. <i>Compliant</i>

Requirement	YES /NO*	Reference to application documents	Comments
Revisions of standards/normative documents			
6.1 The standards/normative documents shall be reviewed and revised at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period. The procedures for the revision of the standards/normative documents shall follow those set out in chapter 5.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Section 6	Standards shall be reviewed and revised at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period <i>Compliant</i>
6.2 The revision shall define the application date and transition date of the revised standards/normative documents.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Section 6	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
6.3 The application date shall not exceed a period of one year from the publication of the standard. This is needed for the endorsement of the revised standards/normative documents, introducing the changes, information dissemination and training.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Section 6	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>
6.4 The transition date shall not exceed a period of one year except in justified exceptional circumstances where the implementation of the revised standards /normative documents requires a longer period.	YES	ND SFCS 002, Section 6	Fully consistent with the requirement <i>Compliant</i>

3.2 PEFC ST 1002:2010 – Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation	Comments
General			
4.1.2 In cases where a forest certification scheme allows an individual forest owner to <u>be covered by additional group or individual forest management certifications</u> , the scheme shall ensure that <u>non-conformity</u> by the forest owner identified under <u>one forest management certification is addressed in any other forest management certification that covers the forest owner.</u>	YES	<i>TD SFCS 1001:2009 8, 8.1</i>	SFCS includes the options be implemented in regional, group and individual forest management unit levels. However, only regional certification is implemented due to the lack of interest to the other certification levels. Thus the requirement is not relevant, because FMUs belong to one regional level certification. <i>Compliant</i>
4.1.4 The forest certification scheme shall define requirements for an annual internal monitoring programme that provides sufficient confidence in the conformity of the whole group organisation with the sustainable forest management standard.	YES	<i>TD SFCS 1002:2009, Articles 5.7.1 & 5.7.2</i>	Annual internal audits consist of self-assessments (5.7.2), verification of information from third parties (5.7.1) Article 5.7.2: on-site assessment on a statistically representative sample containing 10% of certification participants with the focus on owners with over 50 hectare of forests. The management system requirements for applicant require regular reviews of the compliance of forest certification (Article 6.2) <i>Compliant</i>
Functions and responsibilities of the group entity			
4.2.1 The forest certification scheme shall define the following requirements for the function and responsibility of the group entity:			
c) To establish written procedures for the management of the group organisation;	YES	<i>TD SFCS 1002:2009, Section 6</i>	The section outlines the minimal requirements and procedures for the management system of the group organization. <i>Compliant</i>
d) To keep records of: - the group entity and participants' conformity with the requirements of the sustainable	YES	<i>TD SFCS 1002:2009, Article 6.5, 6.5.1 & 6.5.2</i>	Article 6.6: The Slovak Forest Certification Scheme requires the group entity and participants to establish, maintain and provide evidence of records and

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation	Comments
<p>forest management standard, and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme,</p> <p>- the implementation of an internal monitoring programme, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken;</p>			<p>documents of conformity with its all requirements.</p> <p>6.5.1: Record concerning group entity and participants's conformity.</p> <p>6.5.2: Record concerning different aspects of the implementation of an international monitoring program.</p> <p>The records should be maintained for at least 5 years.</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
<p>e) To establish connections with all participants <u>based on a written agreement</u> which shall include the participants' commitment to comply with the sustainable forest management standard. The group entity shall have a written contract or other <u>written agreement with all participants</u> covering the right of the group entity to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any participant from the scope of certification in the event of non-conformity with the sustainable forest management standard;</p> <p><i>Note: The requirements for "participant's commitment" and "written contract or other written agreement with all participants" can also be satisfied by the commitment of and written agreement of the forest owners/managers' association, where the association can demonstrate that it has a legal mandate to represent the participants and where its commitment and the terms and conditions of the contract are enforceable.</i></p>	<p>YES</p>	<p><i>TD SFCS 1002: 2009, Articles 5.5, 5.6 & 5.9,</i></p>	<p>Article 5.5. states that forest owners participate in regional certification on <u>contractual basis</u></p> <p>Association participate through the decisions made by their executive bodies...</p> <p>Bodies managing forests shall include a permission of the forest owners as part of their application to regional certification (on contractual basis)</p> <p>Article 5.6 states that the application for the participation in any regional or group cortication scheme, among others, should include:</p> <p>(Article 5.6(c)) the voluntary commitment to the fulfillment of conditions which comply with PEFC program objectives in sustainable forest management;</p> <p>(Article 5.6(d)) mandate for the authorized representative of forest owners associations.</p> <p>The mandate is given in written contract (103 contracts signed in October 2013)</p> <p>(Article 5.9) forest owner/manager shall submit a complete application for participation in regional certification... Issuance of confirmation on participation in the regional certification establishes a contractual basis....</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p> <p><i>Application to regional certification, issuance of confirmation of participation</i></p>

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to system documentation	Comments
			<i>and mandate contracts and documentation requirements provide adequate evidence to demonstrate that participation to regional certification is based on written, documented contracts.</i>
g) To provide all participants with information and guidance required for the effective implementation of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme;	YES	TD SFCS 1002: 2009, Articles 6.2	Article 6.2: Providing all participants with information and guidance as specified in PEFC requirement 4.2.1 (g) is the responsibility of the applicant. <i>Compliant</i>

3.3 PEFC ST 1003:2010 – Sustainable Forest Management - Requirements

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation	Comments
<p>5.1.11 Conversion of forests to other types of land use, including conversion of primary forests to forest plantations, shall not occur unless in justified circumstances where the conversion:</p> <p>a) is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation relevant for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority including consultation with materially and directly interested persons and organisations; and</p> <p>b) entails a small proportion of forest type; and</p> <p>c) does not have negative impacts on threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species or other protected areas; and</p> <p>d) makes a contribution to long-</p>	YES	SFCS 1003:2009, Indicators 1.1.2 & 1.1.3	<p>1.1.2: Existence of legal and directive framework for the protection of forest lands.</p> <p>1.1.3: Observation of the principles of forest land protection.</p> <p>Reference to appropriate legislations – Act 326/2005 on Forests and Decree 12/2009 on the projection of forest lands in territorial planning. Especially the conditions the § 5 of the Act 326/2005 specifies:</p> <p>of the principle of protection of forest land:</p> <p>(1) forest land can be used for purposes other than to fulfill the functions of forests, <u>only where the competent authority of the state forest management, prior to the opinion of the state administration bodies, decides on the temporary or permanent withdrawal from performing the functions of forests (hereinafter "exemption"), or restricts the use of the forests on it ("the restriction of the use"). The exclusion or limitation of use can occur only in necessary and justified cases, particularly where the role of social</u></p>

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation	Comments
<p>term conservation, economic, and social benefits.</p>			<p><u>for other uses of forest lands and economic development cannot be ensured any other way.</u></p> <p>(2) When forest land is used for purposes other than to fulfill the functions of forests, this land shall:</p> <p>a) be protected, especially in protective forests (§ 13) and in special purpose forests (§ 14),</p> <p>b) be used only at <u>indispensable area</u> and <u>shall not disturb the integrity of the forest</u>,</p> <p>c) not restrict the use of the functions of the surrounding forest,</p> <p>d) where practical and technically feasible, cleared of organic-mineral surface horizons of the soil and these should be effectively used,</p> <p>e) re-cultivated, after its use for other purposes,</p> <p>f) divided by placing lines in the forest so that the extent of wind threats was minimised.</p> <p>These are fully consistent with the PEFC requirement 5.1.11(a) – (d).</p> <p>Moreover, the <u>Act 24/2006 on the Assessment of Environmental Impacts</u> deals with the assessment of the interference with ecosystems and socially important forests</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
<p>5.2.9 The WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available.</p> <p><i>Note: Any exception to the usage of WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides shall be defined by a specific forest management standard.</i></p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>SFCS 1003:2009, Indicator 2.4.1</p>	<p>2.4.1: Existence of list of permitted chemical preparation with given effects and procedure for their application and effects in accordance with valid norms of EU, including mechanisms for their revision.</p> <p>The PEFC Slovakia through its website publishes for the forest owners a List of Allowed Chemical Substances for the use in forestry which does not contain any WHO Type 1A & 1B chemicals. It can be mentioned here that the chemical substances themselves are selected from the List of Authorized Plant Protection Products and Other Products that the</p>

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation	Comments
			<p>Slovak Central Controlling and Testing Institute in Agriculture publishes at least once a year in the Official Bulletin of the Ministry of Agriculture of Slovakia. This list complies with the prohibitions and limitations imposed by different relevant international agreements.</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
<p>5.2.10 Pesticides, such as chlorinated hydrocarbons whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use, and any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited.</p> <p><i>Note: "pesticides banned by international agreements" are defined in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants 2001, as amended.</i></p>	YES	SFCS 1003:2009, Indicator 2.4.1	<p>The Slovak law prohibits the use of pesticides covered the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants as well as by the Rotterdam Convention.</p> <p>Moreover, the plant protection products in Slovakia are subject to strict regulations in accordance with different relevant European Union (EU) regulations – Directive 91/414/EEC & EC Regulation 1107/2009 (both on placing of plant protection products on market), Directive 2009/128/EC (on community action to achieve sustainable pesticide use) and Slovak Act 405/2011 (on plant care).</p> <p><i>Complies</i></p>
<p>5.2.11 The use of pesticides shall follow the instructions given by the pesticide producer and be implemented with proper equipment and training.</p>	YES	SFCS 1003:2009, Indicator 2.4.4	<p>2.4.4: Keeping records on pesticides application according to actual approved lists, observance of documented procedures in using pesticides, their rests and packages,</p> <p>The forest managers/forest owners are required to keep and provide, when asked, the record on the kind of chemical, unit of spatial forest arrangement, date of application, applied amount and treated area in hectare.</p> <p>Moreover, the Slovak Act 405/2011, § 8 requires the users to follow the manufacturers' instructions, while Act 67/2010 requires the entities placing pesticides on market to provide the user guidelines.</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
<p>5.4.2 Forest management planning, inventory and mapping of forest</p>	YES	SFCS 1003:2009,	<p>1.2.3: Management of all forest lands according to FMP or the projects of care</p>

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation	Comments
<p>resources shall identify, protect and/or conserve ecologically important forest areas containing significant concentrations of:</p> <p>a) protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems such as riparian areas and wetland biotopes;</p> <p>b) areas containing endemic species and habitats of threatened species, as defined in recognised reference lists;</p> <p>c) endangered or protected genetic <i>in situ</i> resources;</p> <p>and taking into account</p> <p>d) globally, regionally and nationally significant large landscape areas with natural distribution and abundance of naturally occurring species.</p> <p><i>Note: This does not necessarily exclude forest management activities that do not damage biodiversity values of those biotopes.</i></p>		Indicator 1.2.3	<p>about forest land - FMP, forestry maps are elaborated for all forest lands including lands fulfilling specific and acknowledge nationwide environmental and protective functions.</p> <p>The Slovak Act 326/2005 on Forests, Act 543/2002 on Nature and Landscape Protection, and Decree 453/2006 on Forest Management and Nature Protection govern the process of forest management planning, inventory and mapping, and the protection and conservation of forests. More specifically:</p> <p>Act 326/2005,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • §14: protecting ecologically important forest • §36: professional forest management • §38: forest management <p>Act 543/2002,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • §6: protection of habitats • §7: protection of natural species composition of ecosystems • §17: protected areas & their buffer zones <p>Decree 453/2006,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • §12: protected forests • §13: forest for conservation of genetic resources <p>Also, the Slovak Working Procedures for Forest Management No. 455/2009-710 provides directives for mapping the forest resources and the development of special purpose forest maps.</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
<p>5.4.3 Protected and endangered plant and animal species shall not be exploited for commercial purposes. Where necessary, measures shall be taken for their protection and, where relevant, to increase their population.</p>	YES	<p>SFCS 1003:2009, Indicators 4.7.3 & 4.7.4</p>	<p>4.7.3: Keeping written documentation on the occurrence of endangered and protected plant and animal species.</p> <p>4.7.4: Observance of the requirements of approved programmes of preservation or programmes of care about protected species of plants and animals in forests,</p>

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation	Comments
			<p>including their biotopes.</p> <p>The Slovak Act 543/2002 (on Nature and Landscape Protection), §34 & §35 prohibit the sale and exchange of protected and endangered plant and animal species.</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
<p>5.4.7 Genetically-modified trees shall not be used.</p> <p><i>Note: The restriction on the usage of genetically-modified trees has been adopted based on the Precautionary Principle. Until enough scientific data on genetically-modified trees indicates that impacts on human and animal health and the environment are equivalent to, or more positive than, those presented by trees genetically improved by traditional methods, no genetically-modified trees will be used.</i></p>	YES	SFCS 1003:2009, Indicator 4.4.3	<p>4.4.3: Observance of the principles of the use of reproduction material in forest regeneration and reforestation from approved reproduction sources, keeping records on the origin of reproduction material in reforestation</p> <p>The Slovak Act 138/2010 on Forest Reproduction Material does not allow the use of genetically modified trees.</p> <p><i>There is a discrepancy in referencing the Act in question. In the legislative framework section given in connection to Indicator 4.4.3, the No. of Slovak Act on Forest Reproduction is mentioned as 217/2004.</i></p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>
<p>5.6.4 Forest management activities shall be conducted in recognition of the established framework of legal, customary and traditional rights such as outlined in ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which shall not be infringed upon without the free, prior and informed consent of the holders of the rights, including the provision of compensation where applicable. Where the extent of rights is not yet resolved or is in dispute there are processes for just and fair resolution. In such cases forest managers shall, in the interim, provide meaningful opportunities for parties to be engaged in forest management decisions whilst respecting the processes and roles and responsibilities laid out in the policies and laws where the</p>	YES	SFCS 1003:2009, Sub-criteria 6.1	<p>6.1: Ownership & management of forest lands</p> <p>The rights of the Slovak citizens are clearly defined by the Slovak Constitution.</p> <p>According to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, there are not indigenous people in Slovakia.</p> <p><i>Compliant</i></p>

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation	Comments
certification takes place.			
5.6.6 Sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance and areas fundamental to meeting the basic needs of local communities (e.g. health, subsistence) shall be protected or managed in a way that takes due regard of the significance of the site.	YES	SFCS 1003:2009, Sub-criteria 6.6	6.6: Cultural & spiritual values in forests The sub-criteria ensures the adequate protection or management of sites with historical, cultural, spiritual and social values. <i>Compliant</i>
5.6.10 Forest management shall provide for effective communication and consultation with local people and other stakeholders relating to sustainable forest management and shall provide appropriate mechanisms for resolving complaints and disputes relating to forest management between forest operators and local people.	YES	SFCS 1003:2009, Indicators 6.7.3 & 6.7.4	6.7.3: Forest management plans, respective maps, basic frameworks of management and information on the results of management in forests are available for public, except strictly secret information which subject to trade secrecy. 6.7.4: Communication with self-governments, local communities and NGOs on the impacts of sustainable forest management on the quality of life of inhabitants – competent proposals are incorporated into executive plans. These two indicators, aided by Slovak Act 326/2005 (on forests) and Act 211/2000 (on free access of information), are clearly consistent with the requirements specified. <i>Compliant</i>
5.7.1 Forest management shall comply with legislation applicable to forest management issues including forest management practices; nature and environmental protection; protected and endangered species; property, tenure and land-use rights for indigenous people; health, labour and safety issues; and the payment of royalties and taxes. <i>Note: For a country which has signed a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the European Union and the producing country, the "legislation applicable to forest management" is defined by the VPA agreement.</i>	YES	SFCS 1003:2009 <i>All criteria</i>	There are a number of Slovak legislations that govern different aspects of forest management in the country (such as Act 326/2005, Act 543/2002, and Decree 453/2006 and Codes on labour rights and work safety). Forestry and forest management practices in Slovakia also comply with a number of EU-level and international legislations. Most of these legislations are referenced in connection with appropriate sub-criteria and indicators throughout the document SFCS 1003:2009. Over all, the Slovak Forest Certification System respects the general legislative system of the Slovak Republic, and is based on the legislation and policy covering the forestry, environment, protection of nature, landscape and water resources, and protection of ownership

Question	YES / NO*	Reference to scheme documentation	Comments
			rights, social affairs and employees. <i>Compliant</i>
5.7.2 Forest management shall provide for adequate protection of the forest from unauthorised activities such as illegal logging, illegal land use, illegally initiated fires, and other illegal activities.	YES	SFCS 1003:2009, Indicators 1.1.3, 2.2.7 & 2.3.4	1.1.3: Observance of the principles of forest lands protection 2.2.7: Implementation and effectiveness of fire control measures 2.3.4: Monitoring of the occurrence of waste on forest lands and its directed removal, cooperation in eliminating illegal waste depots . These three indicators ensures the forest management with necessary protection against all unauthorized activities mentioned. <i>Compliant</i>

4 Further Observations

In the SFCS Technical Document SFCS 1003:2009 *Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management*, number of legislations are mentioned in connection with each sub-criteria.

Box 1 List of Relevant Legislation in View of PEFC Requirements

Forest conversion

Act 326/2005 on forests, Act 543/2002 on nature and landscape protection, and Decree 12/2009 on forest management and nature protection, allows the conversion of forest land to other uses only under very restrictive conditions. These legislations also ensures the identification, protection and conservation of ecologically important forests as necessary to comply with the PEFC Requirement 5.4.2.

Protection of endangered species

The Act 543/2002 prohibits commercial exploitation, and ensure adequate care of all protected and endangered species.

Use of genetically modified organisms

Act 138/2010 on Forest Reproduction Material does not allow the use of genetically modified trees in Slovakia

Restrictions on chemical use.

The PEFC Slovakia, by following the relevant Slovak and EU legislations, prohibits all SFCS participants from using WHO Type 1A & 1B, and any toxic pesticides covered by the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions

The Slovak Act 405/2011 requires the SFCS participants to follow the manufacturers' instructions when using pesticides.

Respect of social and cultural values of forests

The SFCS pays full respect to the Slovak Constitution which defines the rights of the Slovak citizens also applicable to forests to comply with PEFC requirement 5.6.4. As per SFCs 1003:2009, the SFCS has criteria and indicators recognizing all cultural, spiritual and social values ensuring that forest management provides effective communication and consultation, and protection against illegal activities to bring SFCS in compliance with the PEFC requirements 5.6.6, 5.6.10 and 5.7.2, respectively.