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Foreword

The PEFC Council (the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) is the worldwide organisation promoting sustainable forest management through forest certification and labelling of forest based products. Products with the PEFC claim and / or label deliver confidence to customers and the end consumers that raw material originates in sustainably managed forests.

The PEFC Council provides endorsement of national forest certification schemes which are required to comply with the PEFC Council requirements subject to regular evaluations.
0 Introduction

PEFC Council recognised certifications for forest management and chain of custody rely on international certification and accreditation procedures as defined in the documentation of the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) and European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) as well as in the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

This document defines the certification procedures and requirements which shall be included in accreditation procedures for forest management certifications adopted and considered credible and reliable by the PEFC Council. The PEFC Council is not involved in the certification process.

Rather, it defines the requirements for certification bodies and certification processes for the purposes of PEFC endorsement of national and sub national schemes and recognition of certificates. This means that the standard is a “meta-standard” that has to be implemented on a national level by every scheme owner.

The PEFC Council requires that the certification bodies operating forest management certification to meet the requirements of the International Standard ISO/IEC 17021 and this PEFC document.

ISO/IEC 17021 is an International Standard that sets out criteria for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems. Forest management certification is considered as a management system certification. The requirements for forest management are described in PEFC ST 1003:2010 (Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements) and PEFC ST 1002:2010 (Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements).

The term “shall” is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions that, reflecting the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021 and requirements specific for PEFC forest management certification, are mandatory. The term “should” is used to indicate guidance that, although not mandatory, is provided by the PEFC Council as a recognised means of meeting the requirements.

This document strictly follows the structure of ISO/IEC 17021:2011. It does not include the text of ISO/IEC 17021:2011. This document can be obtained from ISO or national standard organisations. Clauses of 17021:2011 without PEFC specific amendments are indicated by the headline without further text.
1 Scope

This document provides additional scheme specific requirements for certification bodies operating forest management certification against PEFC ST 1003:2010 and PEFC ST 1002:2010.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this standard. For both dated and undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendment) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000:2004, Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles
ISO/IEC 17021:2011, Conformity assessment – requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
ISO 19011:2011, Guidelines for auditing management systems
3 Terms and Definitions


3.1 Certified area
The forest area covered by a certificate. In case of a group forest certificate the area represents the sum of forest areas of the participants.

3.2 Client organisation
Organisation, including a group organisation, that is applying for or whose forest management has been certified.

3.3 Group forest certificate
A document confirming that the group organisation complies with the requirements of the sustainable forest management standard and other applicable requirements of the forest certification scheme.

Note: The term "group forest certificate" is equivalent to the term "regional certificate" or other terms chosen by a relevant forest certification scheme which comply with the content of this definition.

3.4 Group forest certification
Certification of the group organisation under one group forest certificate.

Note: The term "group organisation" is equivalent to the term "region" or other terms chosen by the relevant forest certification scheme and complying with the content of this definition. The term "regional forest certification" is to be understood as "group forest certification" limited by geographical boundaries.

3.5 Group organisation
A group of participants represented by the group entity for the purposes of implementation of the sustainable forest management standard and its certification.

Note 1: The term "group organisation" is equivalent to the term "region" or other terms chosen by the relevant forest certification scheme and complying with the content of this definition.

Note 2: The term "group organisation" is a specific form of a "multisite organisation".

3.6 Major nonconformity
The absence of, or failure to implement and maintain, one or more requirements of the forest management standard, that may result in a systemic risk to the function and effectiveness of the forest management and/or effects confidence in the client organisation’s claims on material originating from certified forests.

Note: A major nonconformity may be an individual nonconformity or a number of minor but related nonconformities, that when considered in total are judged to constitute a major nonconformity.

3.7 Minor nonconformity
A single failure to fulfil the requirements of the forest management standard that may result in no systemic risk to the function and effectiveness of the chain of custody and/or affects confidence in the supplier’s claims on material originating from certified forests.
3.8 Observation
An evaluation finding that does not warrant nonconformity but is identified by the audit team as an opportunity for improvement.

4 Principles

4.1 General
The criteria against which the client organisation’s forest management is evaluated are those outlined in latest version of the forest management standard, group management certification standard and relevant mandatory appendices.

Note: The latest version of the standards and their amendments are available from the PEFC Council official website www.pefc.org.

4.2 Impartiality

4.3 Competence

4.4 Responsibility

4.5 Openness

4.6 Confidentiality

4.7 Responsiveness to complaints

5 General requirements

6 Structural requirements

The committee for safeguarding impartiality may include a representative from the National Governing Body. The National Governing Body at least shall be informed about this option.

7 Resource requirements

7.1 Competence of management and personnel

7.1.1 General Considerations

The certification body shall ensure that all personnel carrying out the key activities, such as contract review, auditing, granting of certification, monitoring of auditors, etc. have the relevant and appropriate competencies corresponding to these activities.

7.2 Personnel involved in the certification activities

7.2.1 Auditors

7.2.1.1 Education

The certification body shall ensure that auditors have the knowledge corresponding to at least a secondary education that includes or is supplemented with courses related to forestry.
7.2.1.2 **Forest management training**

The certification body shall ensure that auditors, in the last every two years, have participated in an education programme in forest management that is recognised by the PEFC National Governing Body responsible for the particular forest certification system.

7.2.1.3 **Audit training**

7.2.1.4 **Working experience**

7.2.1.4.1 The certification body shall ensure that the auditor has a minimum of three (3) years full time experience in forestry.

7.2.1.4.2 The number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one (1) year, if the auditor has completed a tertiary education in forestry.

*Note: Tertiary education, also referred to as third stage, third level, and post-secondary education, is the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education.*

7.2.1.5 **Audit experience**

7.2.1.5.1 For a first qualification of an auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor within the last three years has performed forest management audits for at least four client organisations under the leadership of a qualified auditor.

7.2.1.5.2 The number of forest management audits in training can be reduced by two (2) audits for auditors that are qualified for ISO 9001 or 14001 auditing in the forestry sector.

7.2.1.5.3 For maintaining the qualification of the auditor, the certification body shall ensure that the auditor has performed a minimum of five (5) external audits per year including at least two (2) forest management audits where the sum of these audits should cover at least seven (7) man-day of audit work.

7.2.1.6 **Competencies**

The certification body shall ensure that auditors demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:

a) principles and requirements of the forest management standard;

b) knowledge of the socio-demographics and cultural issues in the region of application of the forest management standard;

c) audit principles, procedures and techniques: to enable the auditor to apply those appropriate to different audits and ensure that audits are conducted in a consistent and systematic manner.

d) organisation situations including organizational size, structure, functions and relationships, general business processes and related terminology and cultural and social customs such as knowledge of the client organisation working language: to enable the auditor to comprehend the organisation’s operational context.

e) legislation, regulations or other relevant requirements – enabling the auditor to operate in the right legal framework and to be aware of the legislative requirements applicable to the entity which is the subject of the audit;

f) the principles of forest management based on techniques involving inventories, forest cropping, planning, protection and the management of forest ecosystems – to enable the auditor to examine the forest management system and to decide whether it is being adequately applied;

g) natural environment science, environmental technology and the economic principles applicable to forest management – to give the auditor a grasp of the fundamental relations between human activities and sustainable forest management;
h) technical aspects of forestry operations associated with exploitations, technology and derived uses – to allow the auditor to grasp the activities of the entity audited and their effects on the management itself and the territory.

The certification body shall provide evidence of annual monitoring of forest management auditors applying methods such as audit witnessing, reviewing audit reports or client organisations’ feedback, etc. based on the frequency of their usage and the level of risk linked to their activities. In particular, the certification body shall review the competence of its personnel in the light of their performance in order to identify training needs.

7.2.2 Audit Team

The audit team shall be comprised of by auditor(s) fulfilling the requirements defined in 7.2.1.6. In some cases technical experts may be required to support the required auditor competency in a particular technical area by providing appropriate technical expertise.

7.3 Use of individual external auditors and external technical experts

7.4 Personnel records

7.5 Outsourcing

8 Information requirements

8.1 Publicly accessible information

The certification body shall make a summary of the audit report which shall be made publicly available by the certificate holder. Confidential data can be excluded.

8.2 Certification documents

Certification bodies shall add to the certificate an accreditation mark as prescribed by the accreditation body (including accreditation number where applicable), and the date of granting, extending or renewing certification and the expiry date or recertification due date. The effective date on a certification document shall not be before the date of the certification decision.

8.3 Directory of certified clients

8.4 Reference to certification and use of marks

8.5 Confidentiality

The certification body shall inform the client organisation that it is obliged to provide information to the PEFC Council or a PEFC National Governing Body. In order to comply with the ISO/IEC 17021 requirements for confidentiality, the certification body shall have the written consent of the client organisation for the information disclosed to the PEFC Council or the PEFC National Governing Body.
8.6 Information exchange between a certification body and its clients

9 Process requirements

9.1 General requirements

9.1.1 Audit programme

9.1.2 Audit plan

9.1.2.1 The certification body shall have documented procedures to ensure that an audit plan is established for each audit to provide basis for agreement regarding the conduct and scheduling of the audit activities. The audit plan shall be communicated and the dates of the audit shall be agreed upon, in advance with the client organisation.

9.1.2.2 In the case of multisite certification, the audit plan shall list the sites to be sampled.

9.1.3 Audit team selection and assignment

The certification body shall have documented procedures for selecting and appointing the audit team, including audit team leader.

9.1.4 Determining audit time

9.1.4.1 Determination of audit time by a certification body

9.1.4.1.1 The certification body shall have documented procedures for determining audit time, and for each client organisation the certification body shall determine, with input from the auditor and / or technical expert, the time needed to plan and accomplish a complete and effective audit of the client organisation's forest management. The audit time determined by the certification body, and the justification for the determination, shall be recorded.

9.1.4.1.2 In determining the audit time, the certification body should consider among other things, the following aspects:

a) the requirements of the forest management standard (s),
b) size and complexity of the client organisation’s operation, geographical and natural conditions
c) any outsourcing of any activities included in the scope of forest management standard,
d) the results of any prior audits, including those of client organisation's management systems,
e) number of sites and multi-site considerations,
f) quality/ level of confidence of the internal monitoring programme.

9.1.4.2 Determination of the audit time by a certification system

9.1.4.2.1 A certification system can define a procedure for determining the audit time according to the regional, national or sub-national conditions. This procedure has to cover at least the criteria a) – f) in 9.1.4.1.

9.1.4.2.2 The certification body shall implement this procedure in its certification programme.

9.1.4.3 Minimum audit time

A minimum audit time can be defined by a certification system according to the regional, national or sub-national conditions.
9.1.5 Multi-site sampling

Requirements for evaluation of multi-site certification organisations (group forest certification) are defined in Annex 3 to this document.

9.1.6 Communication of audit team tasks

9.1.7 Communication concerning audit team members

9.1.8 Communication of audit plan

9.1.9 Conducting on site audits

9.1.10 Audit report

9.1.10.1 A report on the stage 1 audit shall be presented to the organization prior to the stage 2 audit.

9.1.10.2 The content of all reports on stage 2 audits, surveillance audits and reassessment audits shall:

   a) include a recommendation on certification by the audit team to the certification body;
   b) be sufficient for the certification body to make an informed decision on certification;
   c) allow for traceability of the objective evidence upon which the evaluation was based to establish conformance or nonconformance with the requirements of the forest management standard;
   d) include a summary of the most important observations, positive as well as negative, regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the forest management system;
   e) where possible, include suggestions for continuous improvement;
   f) support the conclusions reached by the audit team.

9.1.10.3 Additionally, the report shall contain a summary of the certified forest area and the audit results (i.e. a Summary Report) that the forest manager will make publicly available to relevant stakeholders.

9.1.10.4 Where applicable, reports (e.g. of surveillance and recertification audits) shall document the clearing of each nonconformity revealed previously.

9.1.11 Cause analysis of nonconformities

9.1.12 Effectiveness of corrections and corrective actions

9.1.13 Additional audits

9.1.14 Certification decision

9.1.15 Actions prior to making a decision

9.2 Initial audit and certification

9.2.1 Application

The client organisation, as a minimum, shall provide the following information as a part of the application for forest management certification:

a) corporate entity (if applicable), name, address and legal status,

b) description of the area of the client organisation
c) forest management documented procedures of the client organisation as defined in the forest management standard.

9.2.2 Application review

9.2.3 Initial certification audit

9.2.3.1 Stage 1 audit
The stage 1 audit has the function of a “Readiness Review”. The scope of this audit comprises:

- to confirm scope and objective of the certification audit
- to audit the client’s forest management documentation
- to evaluate forest management area specific conditions
- to evaluate procedures for internal audits and management system integrity and the effectiveness of their implementation.
- determine the conformity of the client organisation with the PEFC logo usage rules and its effective implementation
- to finalize the audit plan for stage 2 audit.

If necessary, the certification body can include an on-site visit. A stage 1 audit report has to be made available to the client organization.

9.2.3.2 Stage 2 audit

9.2.3.2.1 The stage 2 audit shall take place at the office and the area of the client organisation. The audit plan for the stage 2 audit is adapted on the basis of the findings of the stage 1 audit.

9.2.3.2.2 The stage 2 audit shall assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the forest management standard on the defined forest management area.

9.2.4 Initial certification audit conclusions

9.2.4.1 Audit findings shall be classified as major nonconformities, minor nonconformities and observations.

9.2.4.2 Major and minor nonconformities identified in the surveillance audits shall result in corrective action(s) by the client organisation resolving the nonconformities. The corrective action plan, including a timeframe shall be reviewed and accepted by the certification body. The time period for completion of the corrective action(s) for major nonconformities identified in surveillance audits and their verification by the certification body shall follow the rules of the certification body but not exceed 3 months. Corrective action(s) for minor nonconformities shall be verified no later than during the next audit.

9.2.4.3 Corrective action(s) for all nonconformities identified in initial, surveillance and re-certification audits shall be verified by the certification body by site visit or other appropriate forms of verification.

9.2.5 Information for granting initial certification

The certification body shall make its certification decision on the basis of the available reports and all other relevant information.

9.3 Surveillance activities

9.3.1 The certification body has to organize an annual surveillance of the client’s organisation. The surveillance activities have to be planned in a way that representative areas and functions of the client’s organisation are covered.
9.3.2 At each surveillance audit at least the following aspects shall be included:

- Compliance with legislation and regulations relevant in the areas and functions selected for the particular surveillance audit
- Review of progress of planned activities
- Sample of forest management activities in the field.

9.3.3 Surveillance audits shall be conducted at least once a year. The date of the first surveillance audit following initial certification shall not be more than 12 months from the last day of the stage 2 audit.

9.4 Recertification

9.4.1 In a cycle of three years the certification body carries out re-audits in order to demonstrate, that the applicant continues to comply with the requirements.

9.4.2 The requirements on the re-audit principally match with those of the first audit. Anyhow the presently valid requirements have to be obeyed.

9.5 Special audits

9.6 Suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of certification

The certification body shall advise the standard owner and/or the National Governing Body in writing, within a defined period if certification is suspended or withdrawn, or where there are any changes in decisions relating to the status of certification of an organization, and the reasons for those decisions.

9.7 Appeals

9.8 Complaints

The complaint procedure of a certification body shall include procedures for the following aspects:

a) Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint
b) Provision of progress reports and the outcome to the complainant
c) Giving formal notice of the end of the complaint-handling process to a complainant.

9.9 Records of applicants and clients

10 Management system requirements for certification bodies
Annexes

Annexes to this document provide requirements for or guidance on issues that are not covered by the scope of ISO/IEC 17021 or issues that are not enforced through the accreditation process (e.g. PEFC notification).

Annex 1 – Accreditations accepted by the PEFC Council

The PEFC Council requires that forest management certification shall be carried out by certification bodies who are accredited by accreditation bodies that are signatories of the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA of IAF or IAF's Regional Accreditation Groups such as European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), Interamerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) and Southern African Development Community in Accreditation (SADCA). The accreditation body shall be signatories to the IAF MLA with a main scope of ISO/IEC 17021.

The scope of the accreditation shall explicitly cover a specific PEFC forest management standard, based on PEFC ST 1003:2010 and PEFC ST 1002:2010 in its valid version and/or with reference to any future changes and amendments adopted by the PEFC Council and presented at the PEFC Council official website www.pefc.org.

The scope of accreditation shall also explicitly state ISO/IEC 17021, this document and other requirements against which the certification body has been assessed.
Annex 2 – PEFC notification of certification bodies

(Requirements are not applicable to the accreditation of the certification body)

The certification body operating the PEFC recognised forest management certification shall be notified by a PEFC authorised body for the specific country in which it operates.

The PEFC notification requires that the certification body shall have a valid accreditation recognised by the PEFC Council (see Annex 1 of this document). The certification body shall provide the relevant PEFC authorised body with information on granted certifications as specified by the relevant PEFC authorised body.

The PEFC notification may require the certification body to pay a PEFC notification fee as specified by the relevant PEFC authorised body.

In order to ensure the independence of certification bodies the PEFC notification conditions decided by the PEFC National Governing Bodies or by the PEFC Council shall only cover:

a) administrative conditions (e.g. communication of the certification body with the PEFC National Governing Bodies or the PEFC Council, transfer of information, etc.),

b) financial conditions (fees imposed on certified entities),

c) compliance with requirements for certification bodies verified through accreditation as described in this standard.

The PEFC notification conditions shall not discriminate against certification bodies or create trade obstacles.
Annex 3 – Group Forest Management Certification

(PEFC International Standard PEFC ST 1002:2010)

1 Introduction

This annex is for the audit and certification of forest management in client organisations with a network of sites to ensure that the audit provides adequate confidence in the conformity of the client organisation’s forest management with the forest management standard across all sites listed and that the audit is both practical and feasible in both economic and operative terms.

2 Eligibility criteria for the group certification client organisation

2.1 Eligibility criteria for the group certification organisation, including definitions, are included in the Group Forest Management Certification Standard PEFC ST 1002:2010 (Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements).

2.2 In addition to general eligibility criteria the Group Forest Management Certification Standard PEFC ST 1002:2010 (Group Forest Management Certification – Requirements) contains requirements concerning functions and responsibilities of the group entity and the participants of a group certification model.

3 Eligibility criteria for the certification body

3.1 General

3.1.1 The certification body shall provide information to the client organisation about the eligibility criteria laid down herein before starting the evaluation process, and should not proceed with the evaluation if any of the eligibility criteria for the group certification are not met.

3.1.2 Before starting the evaluation process, the certification body should inform the client organisation that the certificate will not be issued if during the audit nonconformities in relation to these eligibility criteria are found.

3.2 Application review

3.2.1 The certification body’s procedures shall ensure that the initial contract review identifies the complexity and scale of the activities covered by the forest management system subject to certification and any differences between sites as the basis for determining the level of sampling.

3.2.2 The certification body shall identify the central function of the client organisation that is its contractual partner for the performance of the certification. The agreement shall allow the certification body to carry out the certification activities at all sites of the group certification client organisation.

3.3 Audit

3.3.1 The certification body shall have documented procedures to deal with audits under its group certification procedure. Such audit procedures, including documentation and records review, on-site audits, etc., shall establish the way the certification body satisfies itself, inter alia, that the forest management requirements are actually applied to all the sites and that all the criteria in the forest management standard are met.

3.3.2 If more than one audit team is involved in the evaluation/surveillance of the network, the certification body shall designate a unique audit leader whose responsibility is to consolidate the findings from all the audit teams and to produce a synthesis report.
3.4 Nonconformities

3.4.1 When nonconformities are found at any individual site, either through the client organisation’s internal auditing or from auditing by the certification body, an investigation shall take place to determine whether the other sites may be affected. Therefore, the certification body shall require the client organisation to review the nonconformities to determine whether they indicate an overall forest management deficiency applicable to all sites or not. If they are found to do so, corrective action should be performed both at the group entity and at the individual sites. If they are found not to do so, the client organisation shall be able to demonstrate to the certification body the justification for limiting its follow-up action.

3.4.2 The certification body shall require evidence of these actions and increase its sampling frequency until it is satisfied that control is re-established.

3.4.3 If the nonconformities indicate an overall forest management deficiency applicable to the overall function of the group certification shall be denied to the whole multi-site client organisation pending satisfactory corrective action.

3.4.4 It shall not be admissible that, in order to overcome the obstacle raised by the existence of a nonconformity at a single site, the client organisation seeks to exclude from the scope the "problematic" site during the certification process.

3.5 Certificates

3.5.1 One single certificate shall be issued with the name and address of the central office of the client organisation. A list of all the sites to that the certificate relates shall be issued, either on the certificate itself or in an appendix or as otherwise referred to in the certificate. The scope or other reference on the certificate shall make clear that the certified activities are performed by the network of sites in the list.

3.5.2 A sub-certificate may be issued to the organization for each site covered by the certification on condition that it contains the same scope, or a sub-scope of that scope, and includes a clear reference to the main certificate.

3.5.3 The certificate will be withdrawn in its entirety, if the central office or a significant number of the sites does not/do not fulfil the necessary criteria for the maintaining of the certificate.

3.5.4 A list of all participants, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/their size(s), shall be kept updated by the group entity.

4 Sampling for on-site audits

4.1 Methodology

4.1.1 The certification body can apply sampling of sites for on-site audits where the site sampling is appropriate to gain sufficient confidence in the compliance of the group certification client organisation with the forest management and group certification requirements. The certification body shall be able to demonstrate its justification for the selection of sites for the on-site audits to ensure that all differences across the sites and implementation of forest management and group certification have been assessed.

4.1.2 The sample for the initial, surveillance as well as re-certification audits shall be determined separately for representative categories of sites. The following indicators shall be used in order to ensure representativeness:

a) forest ownership type (e.g. state forest, communal forest, private forest)
b) size of forest enterprises (different size classes)
c) biogeographic region (e.g. lowlands, medium range mountains, alps).

4.1.3 Additionally, other indicators representing specific forest management practices can be used.
4.1.4 The sample should be partly selective based on the factors set out below and partly non selective, and should result in a range of different sites being selected, without excluding the random element of sampling.

4.1.5 At least 25% of the sample should be selected at random.

4.1.6 Taking into account the criteria mentioned hereafter, the remainder of the sample should be selected so that the differences among the sites selected over the period of validity of the certificate is as large as possible.

4.1.7 The site selection criteria, besides the basic criteria described in 4.1.2 shall include the following aspects:

   a) Results of internal audits or previous certification audits,
   b) Records of complaints and other relevant aspects of corrective and preventive action,
   c) Significant variations in production processes of the sites,
   d) Modifications since the last certification audit,
   e) Geographical dispersion.

4.1.8 Depending on the specific situation the certification body should implement a procedure for taking a sub-sample in cooperatives.

4.1.9 This selection does not have to be done at the start of the evaluation process. It can also be done once the audit at the central office has been completed. In any case, the central office shall be informed of the sites to be part of the sample. This can be on relatively short notice, but should allow adequate time for preparation for the audit.

4.1.10 The central office shall be examined during every initial, surveillance and re-certification audit.

4.2 Size of sample

4.2.1 The certification body shall have in place documented procedures for the determination of the sample size.

4.2.2 Generally, these procedures should follow the following calculation:

   • Initial audit: the size of the sample should be the square root of the number of remote sites: \( y = \sqrt{x} \), rounded to the upper whole number.

   • Surveillance audit: the size of the annual sample should be the square root of the number of remote sites with 0.6 as a coefficient \( y = 0.6 \sqrt{x} \), rounded to the upper whole number.

   • Re-certification audit: the size of the sample should be the same as for an initial audit. Nevertheless, where the management system has proved to be effective over a period of three years, the size of the sample could be reduced by a factor 0.8, i.e.: \( y = 0.8 \sqrt{x} \), rounded to the upper whole number.

4.2.3 The size of the sample can be different in the categories ensuring representativeness established according to the criteria in 4.1.2.

4.2.4 The calculation procedure for the size of the sample can be adapted by the certification body taking into account one or more of the following indicators:

   a) size and complexity of the client organisation’s operation, geographical and natural conditions
   b) the results of any prior audits, including those of client organisation’s management systems,
   c) number of sites and group member considerations,
   d) quality / level of confidence of the internal monitoring programme.
4.3 Audit times

4.3.1 The certification body shall be able to demonstrate its justification for the time spent on group certification audits in terms of its overall policy for allocation of audit time.

4.3.2 The minimum audit time to spend for each individual site as a part of the initial, surveillance and re-certification audits is the same as for the initial audit defined in clause 9.

4.3.3 Reductions can be applied to take into account the clauses of the forest management and group certification standard that are not relevant to sites and are only examined at the central office.

4.3.4 No reduction is permitted for the central office.