

**REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES OPERATING
AGAINST THE VIETNAM FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEME
AND PEFC COC CERTIFICATION**



VFCS/PEFC ST 1006:2022

Vietnam Forest Certification Office
46 Duc Thang, Bac Tu Liem, Hanoi, Vietnam
Tel: +84 2466857688.
Email: vfco.vietnam@vafs.gov.vn
Website: <https://vfcs.org.vn/>

Copyright notice
© VFCS/PEFC 2022

This document is copyrighted by the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme (VFCS). This document can be accessed free of charge at the website of the Vietnam Forest Certification Office (<https://vfcs.org.vn/>).

No part of this document covered by the copyright may be changed, amended, reproduced, or copied in any form or by any means for commercial purposes without the prior written permission of the Vietnam Forest Certification Office.

The official language of this document is Vietnamese. In case there is a difference in the content of the translated English version, the original in Vietnamese is the basis for comparison.

Document name:	Requirements for certification bodies operating against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme and PEFC CoC Certification
Document title:	VFCS/PEFC ST 1006:2022
Approved by:	Vietnam Forest Certification Office
Issue date:	11/04/2022
Effective date	11/04/2022

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. NORMATIVE REFERENCES	2
III. SCOPE AND APPLICATION.....	2
IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES OPERATING FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION (CB-FM).....	2
V. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES OPERATING CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION	4
VII. IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY.....	5
1. Bureau of Accreditation (BoA).....	5
2. Vietnam Forest Certification Office (VFCO)	5
3. Certification Bodies (CB)	5

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable forest management and forest certification (SFM&FC) has been implemented in Vietnam since the 2000s based on the implementation of the Vietnam Forestry Development Strategy for the period 2006-2020 and most recently the Forestry Development Strategy in the period of 2021-2030, a vision to 2050. Besides, SFM&FC has been codified in Articles 27 and 27 of the Forestry Law.

The Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme (VFCS) was established based on Decision No. 1288/QĐ-TTg dated October 1, 2018 of the Prime Minister approving the Plan on Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification. In the period of 2019-2021, the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) acted as the National Governing Body (NGB) and the Vietnam Forest Certification Office (VFCO) is under the VNFOREST. During this period, Vietnam became the 51st member of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) on May 30, 2019 and VFCS was officially endorsed by PEFC on October 29, 2020. In October 2021, the role of NGB was assigned to the Vietnamese Academy of Forestry Sciences (VAFS) and VFCO was transferred to the VAFS through the Decisions No. 3924/QĐ-BNN-TCCB and Decision No. 3925/QĐ- BNN-TCCB dated October 4, 2021 by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. In this change, VFCO is a legal entity taking full responsibility to operate VFCS.

A set of forest management standards (including Sustainable Forest Management Standard; Group Sustainable Forest Management Standard) issued by VFCS and Chain of custody standard issued by PEFC are the documents for Certification Bodies to use in auditing and certifying for forest owners, wood and forest based-product manufacturing and wood processing entities.

Requirements for certification bodies operating in the VFCS are developed based on the Decree 107/2016/NĐ-CP Regulations on business conditions for conformity assessment services, Decree 154/2018/NĐ-CP Amending and supplementing Decree 107/2016/NĐ-CP; ISO Standards, Vietnam Standards on Conformity Assessment – Requirements for certification bodies auditing and certifying management systems, and standards for Conformity Assessment - Requirements for certification bodies acceptance of products, processes and services, regulations of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and PEFC ST 2003: 2020 - Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard.

This document sets forth the requirements for certification bodies; Vietnam Bureau of Accreditation (BoA) and stakeholders who provide certification services according to the VFCS. This document replaces VFCS/PEFC GD 1006:2019 - Requirement for organizations certifying sustainable forest management in VFCS.

II. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

Decree 107/2016/ND-CP, dated July 1, 2016 on Regulations on business conditions for conformity assessment services.

Forestry Law November 15, 2017.

Decree 156/2018/ND-CP, dated November 16, 2018 detailing the implementation of several articles of the Law on Forestry.

Decision No. 3924/QD-BNN-TCCB dated October 4, 2021 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the adjustment and supplement of Decision No. 190/QD-BNN-TCCB dated January 11, 2019 on delivery the tasks of sustainable forest management and forest certification.

Decision No. 3925/QD-BNN-TCCB dated October 4, 2021 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the adjustment and supplement of Decision No. 191/QD-BNN-TCCB dated January 11, 2019 on the establishment of Vietnam Forest Certification Office.

Decision No. 368/QD-KHLN-TCHC dated November 1, 2021 of the Vietnam Academy of Forest Sciences on defining the functions, tasks, powers, and organizational structure of the Vietnam Forest Certification Office.

Annex 06, PEFC Checklist - Certification and Accreditation Procedures (Annex 6) Technical Documentation of the PEFC.

PEFC ST 2003: 2020 Requirements for Certification Bodies operating Certification against the PEFC International Chain of Custody Standard.

III. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This document is to apply for Certification bodies (CBs); Bureau of Accreditation (BoA) and organizations, individuals, and stakeholders involved in providing certification services of sustainable forest management against the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme and certification of the PEFC chain of custody standards.

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES OPERATING FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION (CB-FM)

Certification bodies participating in the certification services of sustainable forest management under the VFCS must meet the following requirements:

1. Be a national or international organization, registered and licensed to operate in accordance with the laws of Vietnam.
2. The certification body operating forest management certification against the VFCS shall have a management system and operational capacity which meets the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015, Vietnamese national standard TCVN ISO/IEC 17021:1-2015 on Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Requirements or replacing standard (if any); the scope of the certification audit must include the VFCS/PEFC ST 1003: 2019 Sustainable Forest Management Standards or an alternative

standard (if any); the standard of group forest management VFCS/PEFC 1004: 2019 or alternative standards (if any).

3. The Certification Body must have internal certification procedures and guidelines in place, which must include the use of information from 3rd parties as evidence for the certification activity; the certification body's process must meet the requirements of the international standard ISO 19011 or the national standard TCVN 19011:2013 for guidance on auditing management systems.
4. Certification bodies must be assessed and recognized by the Bureau of Accreditation (BoA) under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
5. The certification body must register its services at the VNFOREST of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development or the General Department of Standards, Metrology and Quality, Ministry of Science and Technology for management system certification activities of sustainable forest management.
6. The certification body must have capable human resources in charge of professional, administrative, and accounting fields, etc. to ensure the inspection and supervision of the auditor's activities.
7. The certification body shall have evidence of annual monitoring of its auditors. In addition, the certification body shall ensure that auditors always meet the requirements for expertise and experience in auditing and certification activities.
8. The certification body must have at least 4 official auditors of the organization (officers or employees contracted with a term of 12 months or more or an employee with an indefinite term contract). In case the certification body has been operating in the certification field and has applied for additional certification activities, there must be at least 02 official auditors of forest management.
9. The certification body must be appointed by the Vietnam Forest Certification Office (VFCO) under the notification Contract.
10. The certification body must meet professional competence in forest management, assessment of economic, social, and environmental impacts in forest management and criteria for sustainable forest management.
11. The certification body must understand well about the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme; the standards for sustainable forest management and related documents during the operation of the Vietnam Forest Certification Scheme.
12. Agree to publicize referral information on the website of VFCS (<https://vfcs.org.vn>) and PEFC (<https://www.pefc.org>), including information on certification and other relevant information in accordance with PEFC GD 1008:2019 guidelines and alternative documents (if any).
13. Ensure that certified entities sign a contract with VFCO to use the VFCS, PEFC labels.
14. The experts of certification bodies participating in sustainable forest

management certification activities under VFCS must meet the following requirements:

- a) Having at least a university degree in the field of forestry, environment, biology, natural resource management and related disciplines; have at least 3 years working in the field of forestry, environment, biodiversity conservation. Graduates from other disciplines require a minimum of 5 years working in the fields of forestry, environment, and biodiversity conservation. Years of work experience can be reduced by one year if the auditor has participated in four sustainable forest management audits under the supervision of a qualified auditor.
- b) The certification body shall ensure that auditors have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011 or Vietnam standard TCVN 19011:2013 - Guidelines for auditing management systems.
- c) Having a valid certificate of successful training on sustainable forest management standards according to VFCS issued by VFCS.
- d) Participated in at least 20 man-day audits of a sustainable forest management system certification program as an auditor or a technical expert during training to become an auditor.
- e) Have sufficient understanding of forestry laws and other regulations and related regulations to forest management.

V. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES OPERATING CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION

Certification bodies participating in the chain of custody certification and certification services under PEFC must meet the following requirements:

1. Being a national organization established under Vietnamese law; if it is an international organization, it must have legal status in the host country; have registered to operate in accordance with the laws of Vietnam.
2. The certification body must register at the VNFOREST of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development or the General Department of Standards, Metrology and Quality, the Ministry of Science and Technology for certification of chain of custody.
3. The domestic certification body must be recognized and qualified by the Bureau of Accreditation (BOA).
4. An international certification body must be approved by the BOA or a recognized international accreditation body that is a signatory of the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and designated by PEFC qualified accreditation.
5. Agree to publicize referral information on the website of VFCS (<https://vfcs.org.vn>) and PEFC (<https://www.pefc.org>), including certification information and other relevant information in accordance with PEFC GD 1008:2019 guidelines and alternative documents (if any).

6. Ensure that the certified entities sign a contract with VFCS to use the PEFC label and trademark.
7. The certification body must have a management system, operational capability and certification process that meets the requirements specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17065-1:2013, or the national standard ISO /IEC 17065:2015 on Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services or alternative standards (if any); the scope of the certification audit should include PEFC ST 2003:2020 - Requirements for certification bodies to perform certification activities against the international chain of custody standards.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY

1. Bureau of Accreditation (BOA)

- 1.1. Guide organizations wishing to become a certification body on the procedures and registration documents.
- 1.2. Be responsible for assessing and accrediting the certification body for the competence and expertise specified in this document; organize the implementation of required surveillance assessment.
- 1.3. Notify the results of the accreditation of the certification body to the Vietnam Forest Certification Office and on the website of the BOA.

2. Vietnam Forest Certification Office (VFCS)

- 2.1. Collaborating with the BOA to review and assess the capacity of the certification body; monitoring and evaluating, periodically once a year or in case of need, the quality of certification provided by certification bodies.
- 2.3. Settlement and handling of complaints of stakeholders about the capacity and experience of certification body operating in the Vietnam forest certification scheme.

3. Certification Bodies (CBs)

- 3.1. Ensure that all requirements set in this document are met for operating certification services.
- 3.2. Strictly implement the reporting requirements on certification results according to the announcement of the Vietnam Forest Certification Office.
- 3.3. Pay the certification fees on time according to the announcement of the Vietnam Forest Certification Office.
- 3.4. Reflecting on problems and contributions to improving the quality of the Vietnam Forest Certification System.