



**NETWORK FOR CERTIFICATION AND CONSERVATION OF FORESTS
(NCCF)**

REQUIREMENTS FOR STANDARD SETTING PROCESS

NCCF STD SSP: 01/2015

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Foreword

The Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) is a 'not for profit' organization registered in India under Societies Registration Act, 1860. NCCF is involved in developing Forest Certification scheme in the country. It is an institutional mechanism to ensure collaborative and streamlined efforts for development of National Forest Certification System and Standards. It aims to promote the implementation of improved Forest management practices in the country, and further the development of healthier and sustainable: economically beneficial, environmentally responsible and socially appropriate, management practices, in accordance with national policies, institutional frameworks and sustainability usage norms.

This document is based on ISO/IEC Guide 59 and PEFC ST 1001:2010. Moreover, Normative Document by Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) and the ISEAL Code of Good practice for setting Social and Economic Standards, are also taken into consideration, in developing the document.

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1. This document describes the Directions to be followed in the standard setting process to develop the National Forest Certification System and Standard (NFCSS), operated by the Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF).
- 1.2. The standard setting process may be carried out at national or at any sub-national level, and the standard drafted to be applied for individual, group and/or regional certification.

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

NCCF is the National Governing Body member of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) , it is important to ensure that in developing the standards used in the NFCSS, the standard setting process complies with the PEFC Council requirements, as mentioned:

- 2.1. PEFC ST 1001:2010 Standard Setting - Requirements;
- 2.2. PEFC GD 1003:2009 - PEFC Council Technical Documents Development Procedures
- 2.3. ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994 Code of good practice for standardization;
- 2.4. ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 Standardization and related activities—General vocabulary.

References from other PEFC endorsed nations, taken into account while framing this document is as mentioned:

- 2.5. MTCC SSP3/2014 Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme : Rules on Standard

Setting Process for Development of Timber Certification Standards

3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For fulfilling the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions contained in PEFC ST 1001:2010 (**see list in ANNEXURE A**) and ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 Standardization and related activities – General vocabulary apply.

4. STANDARDISING BODY

4.1. The development of certification standards shall be supported and coordinated by NCCF, as the standardization body.

4.2. The NCCF shall have written procedures for standard-setting activities describing:

- a. Its status and structure, including a body responsible for consensus building and for formal adoption of the standard; (Figure 1)
- b. Procedures for keeping and maintaining records; (ANNEXURE B)
- c. The procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders; (ANNEXURE C)
- d. The standard-setting guidelines; (Refer Section 5)
- e. The mechanism for reaching consensus; (Refer Section 5.8) and
- f. Revision of standards/normative documents (Refer Section 6)

4.3. The NCCF shall make its standard-setting procedures publicly available.

4.4. The NCCF shall keep records relating to the standard-setting process, providing evidence of compliance with the requirements of this document as well as its

own procedures. The records shall be kept for a minimum of five years and shall be available to interested parties upon request.

4.5. The NCCF shall establish a Standard Development Group (SDG) responsible for standard-setting activities. The standard development group shall:

- a. be accessible directly affected stakeholders;
- b. have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories as mentioned in the UN Agenda 21, relevant to the subject matter with balanced representation from : environment, economic, social (workers' trade union, communities in and around forests, forest dwellers, tribals), certification bodies, forestry institutions, accreditation bodies and relevant government agencies where single concerned interests should not dominate nor be dominated in the process; and
- 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 and monetarily affected stakeholders shall represent a meaningful segment of the participants.
- d. Standard development group (SDG) may constitute a technical working group (TWG)/drafting committee (DC) to facilitate its working, for technical, regional or thematic requirements. TWG/DC may meet at regular interval to expedite drafting, review of drafts as well as incorporating SDG and stakeholders feedback and comments in working drafts.
- e. A Secretariat representative shall also be a member of the technical working group to coordinate, support and oversee the developments of the Draft Standards.

4.6. The NCCF shall follow this procedure, which will be accessible to stakeholders, for dealing with any substantive and procedural complaints relating to the standardizing activities. Upon receipt of these complaints, the NCCF shall:

- a. acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant,
- b. collect and verify all necessary information to validate the complaint, impartially and objectively evaluate the subject matter of the complaint, and make a decision upon the complaint received , and
- c. Formally communicate the decision on the complaint and of the complaint handling process to the complainant.
- d. Maintaining Record for complaints (Refer ANNEXURE B)

4.7. At least one contact point/person for enquiries and complaints relating to its standard-setting activities shall be established by NCCF. The Secretariat shall forward the enquiries and complaints received to the Dispute Resolution Committee and the Committee shall deal with the complaints as indicated in the Dispute/Complaint/Appeal Resolution Procedures of NCCF (**NCCF DRP: 01/2016**)

5. STANDARD SETTING PROCESS

5.1. The NCCF shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work. In the case of forest management certification, all the relevant stakeholder groups shall represent the different aspects of sustainable forest management at national or sub-national/ regional level covering the social, economic, environmental interest groups and the relevant institutions and government agencies.

[Note: A stakeholder mapping exercise that includes defining which interest sectors are relevant and why, and for each sector what are likely to be the key issues, who are the key stakeholders, and what means of communication will best reach them, is a recognized means of meeting the requirement.]

5.2. The NCCF shall identify and classify key stakeholders, their balanced representation. It shall also address the constraints of their involvement and proactively seek their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities.

5.3. The NCCF shall make a public announcement for the commencement of the standard-setting process. NCCF shall also provide an opportunity to Stakeholders by sending them invitation for their participation in the standard setting process, in a time bound manner on the website and in suitable media. The announcement and invitation made for stakeholders shall include:

1. objectives, scope and the steps of the standard-setting process and its probable timelines,
2. opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,
3. An invitation to stakeholders to nominate their representative. 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,
4. An invitation to comment on the scope and the standard-setting process, and
5. Reference to publicly available standard-setting procedures.

5.4. The NCCF shall review the standard-setting process based on comments received from the public announcement and establish a standard development

group or adjust the composition of an already existing standard development group, based on received nominations. The acceptance and refusal of nominations shall be justifiable in relation to the requirements for balanced representation of the standard development group and resources available for the standard-setting.

5.5. The work of the standard development group shall be organized in an open and transparent manner where:

(a) working drafts shall be made available to all members of the Standard development group,

(b) all members of the standard development 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,

(c) comments and views submitted by any member of the standard development group shall be considered in an open and transparent way and their resolution and proposed changes shall be recorded.

5.6. The NCCF shall organize a public consultation on the Draft Standard and shall ensure that:

(a) the start and the end of the public consultation is announced in a timely manner in suitable media,

(b) the invitation of disadvantaged and key stakeholders shall be made by means that ensure that the information reaches its recipient and is understandable,

(c) the Draft Standard shall be made publicly available and accessible,

(d) the public consultation is for at least 60 days,

(e) all comments received are considered by the standard development group in an objective manner,

(f) a synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration, is publicly available on the website.

5.7. The NCCF shall organize pilot testing of the new standards and the results of the pilot testing shall be considered by the Standard development group, or its constituted working group/ committee.

Note: Pilot testing is not required in case of revision of a standard where experience from its usage can substitute for pilot testing.

5.8. The decision of the Standard Development Group to recommend the final draft for formal approval shall be taken on the basis of a consensus. In case of any opposition the following processes can be used by the standard development group to reach an accord :

(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.,

(b) a telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote,

(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

(d) combinations thereof.

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 standard development group in order to find a compromise,

(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,

(c) dispute resolution process.

5.10. Documentation on the implementation of the standard setting process shall be made publicly available.

5.11. The NCCF shall formally approve the standards/normative documents based on evidence of consensus reached by the standard development group. All standards and normative documents shall be approved by the Governing Body of NCCF.

5.12. The formally approved standards/normative documents shall be published in a timely manner and made publicly available.

6. REVISION OF STANDARDS/NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS

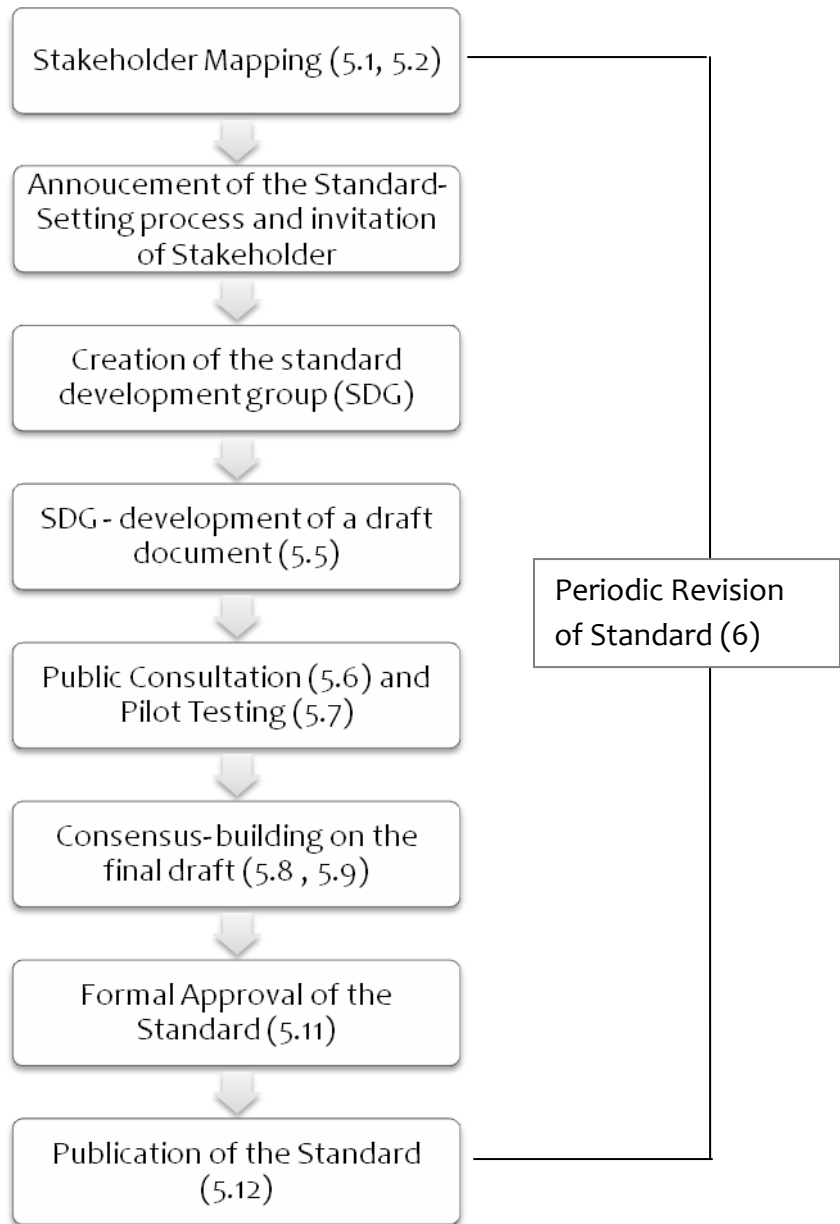
6.1. The standards/normative documents shall be reviewed and revised at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period and as and when required. The procedures for the revision of the standards/normative documents shall follow those set out in section 5.

6.2. The revision shall define the publication date and transition date of the revised standards/normative documents.

6.3. The publication 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.

6.4. The transition period 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.

FIGURE 1: STANDARD-SETTING PROCESS



ANNEXURES:

Annexure A

Terms and Definitions

➤ **Consensus**

General agreement or accord characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interest and by a process that involves taking into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.

Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity.

➤ **Disadvantaged Stakeholder**

A stakeholder who might be financially or otherwise disadvantaged in participating in the standard-setting processes and works.

➤ **Enquiry draft**

Proposed document that is available for public consultation.

➤ **Final Draft**

A proposed document that is available for formal approval.

➤ **Key Stakeholder**

A stakeholder whose participation is critical to the results of the standard-setting work.

➤ **Normative document**

A document that provides rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results.

Note 1: The term “normative document” is a generic term that covers such documents

as standards, technical specifications, codes of practice and regulations.

Note 2: “A document” is to be understood as any medium within formation recorded on or in it.

Note 3: The terms for different kinds of normative documents are defined considering the document and its content as a single entity (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

➤ **Revision**

Introduction of all necessary changes to the substance and presentation of a normative document.

Note: The results of the revision are presented by issuing a new edition of the normative document (ISO/IEC guide 2).

➤ **Review**

Activity of checking a normative document to determine whether it is to be reaffirmed, changed or withdrawn.

➤ **Stakeholder**

A person, group or organization with an interest in the subject of the standardization.

Note: The nine major groups that have been defined by Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 provides an example of stakeholders involved in/concerned by sustainable forest management: a) business and industry (b) children and youth, (c) forest owners (d) indigenous people (e) local authorities (f) NGOs (g) scientific and technological community, (h) women, and (i) workers and trade unions.

➤ **Standard**

A document established by consensus and approval by a recognized body that

provides, for common as well as repeated use, rules, guidelines, or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree or order in a given context.

Note: Standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, and aimed at the promotion of optimum benefits (ISO/Guide 2).

➤ **Standardizing body**

Body that has recognized activities in standardization (ISO guide 2).

Note: A standardizing body, here NCCF, for a forest management scheme/standard is a body which is responsible for the development and maintenance of standards for the forest certification scheme.

➤ **Working Draft**

Proposed document that is available generally for comments or voting within a working group/committee.

➤ **Standard Development Group**

Standard Development Group (SDG) is the apex body constituted for developing the Standard. The main functions of the SDG is to overall monitor, control and supervise the process of drafting the standards for Forest Management and help that draft document is approved by the Governing Body of the NCCF.

Annexure B

Record Maintenance Procedures

1. Record Maintenance

The NCCF shall keep records relating to the standard-setting process providing evidence of compliance with the requirements of this document and their own procedures. The following records shall be kept for a minimum of five years and should be available to interested parties upon request.

- a. The Records of the Documents and Processes mentioned in the Standard Setting Rules shall also be maintained in the form of hardcopy so as to have the evidence available in case, the soft copy is destroyed or inaccessible for any reason.
- b. The records of each process/standard developed should be maintained in a separate file.
- c. The Records of the Standard Development Group Minutes of Meetings in the Process of the Standard Setting shall be maintained separately.
- d. The comments received from the stakeholders after each consultation for the particular standards, shall also be maintained along with that of the particular document.
- e. The records of the revision period of the standards shall be maintained in a separate file.
- f. NCCF shall be keeping and maintain the records of all the complaints¹ at Administrative office in the form of a complaint register/file.

A Checklist should be prepared for each file so as to keep a record of the documents in that file, as follows:

S. No.	Document Name	Date of Recording	Authority	Retention Time

1. Publicly Available

All the documents that are required to be available publicly will be made available on the website of NCCF and upon request.

2. Public Consultation

Wherever obligatory, NCCF shall organize public consultation through Electronic Media, Newspapers, Industry, Magazines and Newsletters *etc.*

ANNEXURE C

Procedures for balanced stakeholder representation

1. The NCCF shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work. In the case of forest management certification, the relevant stakeholder groups should represent the different aspects of sustainable forest management at national or sub-national level covering the social, economic, environmental interest groups and the relevant government agencies.
2. The NCCF shall identify disadvantaged and key stakeholders. The standardizing body shall address the constraints of their participation and proactively seek their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities.
3. As per the UN Agenda 21 classes mentioned in ANNEXURE A, potential stakeholders from each of the group having the requisite qualification and related to the forest sector in any manner, shall be represented in the Standard development process to achieve the objectives of the NCCF and the Document.