



NETWORK FOR CERTIFICATION AND CONSERVATION OF FORESTS (NCCF)

Requirements for Standard Setting Procedure

NCCF-STD-SSP-ToF 02/2022

Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF)

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The official language of this document is English. Only Network for Certification and Conservation Forests can provide the Translations of this document.

Justification for “Time-critical revision”: For developing the Standard version 01/2018, NCCF has followed PEFC 1001:2010. The revision has been necessitated in view of revised PEFC 1001:2017 Standard Setting requirements and PEFC endorsement of ToF Certification Scheme.

Document Name: Requirements for Standard Setting Procedure

Document Title: NCCF-STD-SSP-ToF 02/2022

Approved By: Governing Body NCCF

Date of Approval: 20th May 2022

Date of Review: 19th May 2027

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 1001:2017. 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 member of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (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:

- a. PEFC ST 1001:2017 Standard Setting - Requirements.
- b. PEFC GD 1007 Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of Certification Systems and their Revision
- c. ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994 Code of good practice for standardization.
- d. NCCF-STD-DRP 01/2017 Procedures for complaints and appeals investigation and resolution
- e. ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 Standardization and related activities–General vocabulary.

3. Terms and Definitions

For fulfilling the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions contained in PEFC ST 1001:2017 (see list in ANNEXURE A) and ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 Standardization and related activities – General vocabulary apply

4. Standardizing 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. 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.
 - c. Procedures for balanced representation of stakeholders; (Annex C)
 - d. Standard-setting guidelines.
 - e. Mechanism for reaching consensus.
 - f. Approval and Revision of standards/normative documents

- 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. Documented information shall be kept until completion of the next review or revision of the standard. Otherwise, the documented information must be kept for a minimum of five years after publication of the standard. *Also refer to Annex B for record keeping.*
- 4.5. The NCCF shall establish a Standard Development Group (SDG) responsible for standard-setting activities. The standard development group shall:
- a. Be accessible to materially and directly affected stakeholders.
 - b. Have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories. NCCF should take reference from the categories mentioned in the UN Agenda 21, relevant to the subject matter for balanced representation of stakeholders within the SDG in sectors of 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.
 - 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.
Note: For stakeholder mapping and categorization the stakeholder categories can be revised depending upon the scope and interests of stakeholders being covered by the particular standard.
 - 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 the procedures for complaints and appeals investigation and resolution (**NCCF DRP: 01/2019**), which will be accessible to stakeholders, for dealing with any substantive and procedural complaints relating to the standardizing activities.
- 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 (Refer **NCCF DRP: 01/2019**)

5. Standard Setting Process

- 5.1. The NCCF shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting activities by means of a stakeholder identification mapping exercise. It shall define which stakeholder groups are relevant to the subject matter and why. For each stakeholder group the standardizing body shall identify the likely key issues, key stakeholders, and which means of communication would be best to reach them.
- 5.2. For the creation of a new standard, the standardizing body shall develop a concept paper/proposal including:
- a. the scope of the standard,
 - b. justification of the need for the standard,
 - c. a clear description of the intended outcomes,
 - d. a risk assessment of potential negative impacts arising from implementing the standard, such as;
 - factors that could affect the achievement of the outcomes negatively,
 - unintended consequences of implementation,
 - actions to address the identified risks,
 - e. description of the stages of standard development and their expected timetable.
- Note: The concept paper shall be used while communicating with stakeholders.
- 5.3. The NCCF shall make a public announcement of the start of the standard-setting process and include an invitation to stakeholders to participate in the process. The announcement shall be made in a timely manner, through suitable media, as appropriate, to give stakeholders an opportunity for meaningful contributions. The announcement and invitation shall include:
- a. overview of the standard-setting process,
 - b. access to the concept paper for the standard,
 - c. information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the process,
 - d. requests to stakeholders to nominate their representative(s) or themselves to the working group. The request to disadvantaged stakeholders and key stakeholders shall be made in a manner that ensures that the information reaches intended recipients and in a format that is easy to understand,
 - e. explicit invitation and clear instruction on how to submit feedback on the scope and standard setting process, and
 - f. access to the standard-setting procedures.
- Note 1: In a timely manner means (at the latest) four weeks before the first standard-setting activity is scheduled to occur.
- Note 2: Through suitable media means at least through the standardizing body's website and by direct invitation viz. email and/or letter to identified stakeholders. Other media includes press releases, news articles, features in trade-press, information sent to branch organizations, social media, digital media, etc.
- 5.4. The NCCF shall review the Standard setting process and procedures based on comments received from public announcement. NCCF shall establish the Standard Development Group or adjust the composition of an already existing Standard development group based on review of nominations received, ensuring that SDG:
- a. have balanced representation and decision-making by stakeholder categories, relevant to the subject matter and geographical scope of the standard, where no single concerned stakeholder group can dominate, nor be dominated in the process, and

- b. include stakeholders with expertise relevant to the subject matter of the standard, those that affected by the standard, and those that can influence implementation of the standard. The affected stakeholders shall be represented in an appropriate proportion among participants.

Note1 : Refer Annex C for stakeholder engagement procedure

- 5.5. In order to achieve balanced representation, the NCCF shall strive to have all identified stakeholder groups represented. The NCCF shall set targets for the participation of key stakeholders and proactively seek their participation by using outreach such as (but not limited to) personal emails, phone calls, meeting invitations etc.

Note: When a stakeholder group is not represented and key stakeholders cannot be encouraged to participate, the standardizing body may consider alternative options.

- 5.6. 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
- 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

- 5.7. 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, at least the day before the start of public consultation
- b. The invitation of key and disadvantaged 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. Direct invitation to mapped stakeholders, SDG members and any other stakeholder(s) will be sent for inviting comment(s) on the enquiry draft
- f. All comments received are considered by the standard development group in an objective manner
- g. A synopsis of received comments compiled from material issues, including the results of their consideration, is publicly available on the website.

- 5.8. For new standards, a second round of public consultation lasting at least 30 days shall also be organized.

- 5.9. 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.

- 5.10. The decision of the Standard Development Group to recommend the final draft for formal approval to the NCCF Governing Body 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:

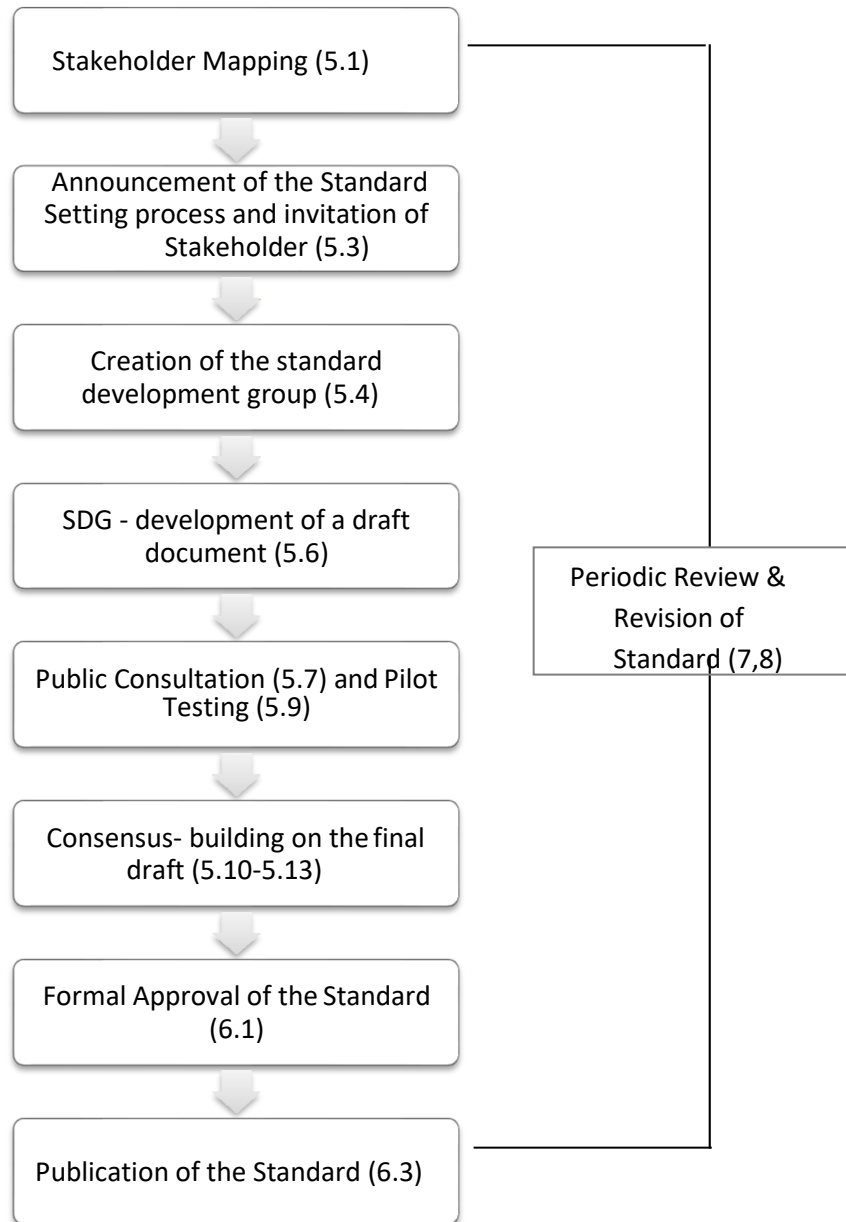
- a. A face-to face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote, show of hands for a yes/no vote; a statement on consensus from the Chair where there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes); a formal balloting process, etc.
 - b. A telephone conference meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote
 - 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 of the above a. to c. thereof
- 5.11. Where a vote is used in decision-making, decision-making process shall be consensus based wherein majority vote shall not override sustained opposition in order to achieve consensus.
- 5.12. 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. additional round(s) of public consultation (if necessary) where further stakeholder input can help to achieve consensus on unresolved issues. NCCF shall determine the scope and duration of any additional public consultation.
- 5.13. When a substantial issue cannot be resolved and sustained opposition persists, NCCF shall initiate dispute resolution in accordance with its procedures for impartial and objective action.
- 5.14. Documentation on the implementation of the standard setting process shall be made publicly available.

6. Approval and Publication

- 6.1. The NCCF Governing Body shall formally approve the standards based on evidence of consensus reached by the standard development group. All standards shall be approved by the Governing Body of NCCF.
- 6.2. Standard(s) shall include:
- a. identification and contact information for the standardizing body,
 - b. official language of the standard,
 - c. The approval date and the date of next periodic review
- Note: The date of next periodic review may be within a shorter period than five years based on stakeholder expectations or other foreseen developments.
- 6.3. The formally approved standards/normative documents shall be published in a timely manner and made publicly available on website of NCCF within 14 days of approval or as otherwise advised by the Governing Body in case of any changes suggested in the standard.
- 6.4. Printed copies shall be made available upon request. If priced, shall only be covering the administrative costs.

- 6.5. NCCF shall prepare a development report after completion of standard development process and shall make it publicly available.

FIGURE 1: Standard-Setting Process



7. Periodic Review of Standard

Standard(s) shall be reviewed at intervals that do not exceed a five-year period. The review shall be based on consideration of feedback received during the standard’s implementation and a gap analysis. If necessary, a stakeholder consultation shall be organized to obtain further feedback and input.

7.1. Feedback Mechanism

- a. NCCF shall establish and maintain a permanent mechanism for collecting and recording feedback on standard. This mechanism shall be accessible on the website of NCCF

and/or PEFC National Governing Body with clear directions for providing feedback.

- b. All feedback received through all channels, including meetings, training courses, etc. shall be recorded and considered.

7.2. Gap Analysis

- a. At the start of a review, NCCF shall evaluate the standard against appropriate PEFC International standards, national laws and regulations, and other relevant standards to identify potential gaps in the standard.
- b. NCCF shall consider the latest scientific knowledge, research and relevant emerging issues.

7.3. Stakeholder consultation for review of the Standard

- a. Where the feedback and the gap analysis do not identify a need to revise the standard, NCCF shall organize stakeholder consultation to determine whether stakeholders see a need for revising the standard. NCCF shall include the gap analysis in the stakeholder consultation.
- b. At the start of a review, NCCF shall update the stakeholder identification mapping.
- c. NCCF shall organize:
 - i. a public consultation period of at least 30 days and/or,
 - ii. stakeholder meetings.
- d. NCCF shall announce the review in a timely manner. The public consultation process during standard review and revision is as detailed in Section 5.7.

7.4. Decision Making

- a. Based on the feedback received during the period of a standard's implementation, the outcome of the gap analysis and the consultations, the NCCF shall decide whether to reaffirm the standard or whether a revision of the standard is necessary.
- b. The decision shall be made at the highest decision-making level of the NCCF
- c. Where the decision is to reaffirm a standard, the NCCF shall provide a justification for the decision and make the justification publicly available.
- d. Where the decision is to revise the standard, the NCCF shall specify the type of revision (normal or editorial revision).

8. Revision of the Standard

- 8.1. NCCF to ensure that the Requirements for Standard Setting Process and procedure shall be revised in a timely manner prior to the initiation of the revision of the management standards or at interval that do not exceed a five-year period and as and when required.
- 8.2. The revision shall define the application date and transition date of the revised standards/normative documents.
- 8.3. 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.
- 8.4. 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.

8.5. Revisions may be classified as:

a. Normal Revision

Procedures for revision of standard(s)/normative document(s) shall conform to those stated in section 5. A normal revision can occur at the periodic review, or between periodic reviews, but does not include editorial revisions and time-critical revisions.

b. Editorial Revision

Editorial revisions can be made without triggering the normal revision process. The NCCF shall approve the editorial changes formally and publish an amendment or a new edition of the standard.

c. Time-critical revision

A time-critical revision is a revision between two periodic reviews using a fast-track process. A time-critical revision can be conducted only in the following situations:

- i. Change in national laws and regulations affecting compliance with PEFC International requirements
- ii. Instruction by PEFC International to comply with specific or new PEFC requirements within a timescale that is too short for a normal revision.

The time-critical revision shall follow these steps:

- i. NCCF shall draft the revised standard,
- ii. NCCF may consult stakeholders,
- iii. The revised standard shall be approved formally at the Governing Body, highest appropriate decision-making level of the NCCF,
- iv. NCCF shall explain the justification for the urgent change(s) and make the justification publicly available.

Annex 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.

Draft Standard (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 outcome of the standard setting process.

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 an 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).

Working Draft

The document that is available 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 SDG are to overall monitor, control and supervise the process of drafting the standards for various components of trees outside forests.

Annex B

Record Maintenance

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 complaints at Administrative office in the form of a complaint register/file.

a. Publicly Available

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

b. Public Consultation

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

Annex C

Procedures for balanced stakeholder representation of stakeholders

- a. The NCCF shall identify and map stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting process. In the case of trees outside forests certification, all the relevant stakeholders including institutions and government agencies which represent different aspects of sustainable management of trees outside forests at national and state level covering social, economic, environmental aspects.
- b. The NCCF shall identify key and disadvantaged stakeholders. The standardizing body shall address the constraints of their participation and proactively seek their participation and contribution in the standard-setting activities.
- c. With reference to the stakeholder categories identified, potential stakeholders from each of the group having the requisite qualification and related to the particular management standard sector in any manner, shall be represented in the Standard development process to achieve the objectives of the NCCF and the Document.

Note: For stakeholder mapping and categorisation the stakeholder categories of can be revised (addition or deletion) depending upon the scope and interest being covered by the standard.

Bibliography

- a. PEFC GD 1003:2009 PEFC Technical Documents Development Procedure

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

- b. MTCC SSP3/2014 Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme: Rules on Standard Setting Process for Development of Timber Certification Standards