

PEFC™ Chain of Custody certification

Service information

What is PEFC Chain of Custody (CoC) certification?

PEFC Chain of Custody certification is an essential part of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC), a global system for certification and labelling of responsibly produced timber. Its main purpose is to control the flow of certified products throughout the supply chain. Your auditor will therefore focus on procurement, processing, volume accounting, sales and labelling of certified material to ensure the integrity of PEFC claims and trademark usage.

What are the key roles and responsibilities within the PEFC system?

PEFC is an international organisation that owns the PEFC system and develops the certification standards and requirements that certified companies need to follow. PEFC certification bodies are accredited by national accreditation bodies and need to follow applicable accreditation rules published by ISO and PEFC International. PEFC is nationally represented by PEFC National Governing Bodies (NGB), which may set additional accreditation rules. Preferred by Nature is accredited for PEFC Chain of Custody certification by Estonian Accreditation Centre (EAK).

Which certification standards apply to my company?

The main CoC certification standard (PEFC ST 2002:2013 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products) applies to all CoC certified companies and sets out general requirements for material handling. A separate standard (PEFC ST 2001:2008 PEFC Logo Usage Rules) regulates usage of PEFC logo and applies to companies that want to use PEFC trademarks on products or for promotion. You can find these documents as well as further tips and guidance on PEFC's website **www.pefc.org**.

Which trademarks can we use?

The PEFC logo can be applied to certified products and used for promotional purposes if you are CoC certified. However, a logo agreement shall be signed first between your organisation and the PEFC National Governing Body (NGB). The NGB also determines if there is any fee to be paid in relation to this.

What is the cost structure?

The certification cost consists of the costs related to the auditing services and a fee which is collected by the National Governing Bodies (NGB). This fee is called notification fee and helps cover the work of NGBs. The size of the fee is determined by each NGB and thus varies between countries. It may depend on the turnover of your company. Your local Preferred by Nature contact person can provide information about the applicable notification fees in your country. In some countries the notification fee is payable to Preferred by Nature, who will forward it to the NGBs, in other countries the fee is payable directly to the NGB.

What about confidentiality?

To check correct accounting for certified volumes, the CoC auditors will need access to confidential information, such as your suppliers, buyers and conversion factors. The confidentiality of all data is secured and our staff is bound by strict confidentiality requirements. All PEFC CoC certificates are however publicly listed in the PEFC database (https://pefc.org/) along with information about the scope of your certificate, such as product types and sites.



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What does the certification process entail?

PEFC certificates are issued for a five-year period. An initial assessment is conducted as a basis for certification, and subsequent annual audits are required to maintain the certificate.

1. Your preparation
2. Review of procedures
3. Main evaluation
4. Reporting and certificate issuance

After accepting the proposal and signing the service agreement, you need to prepare for certification by ensuring compliance with all the certification requirements. This includes assigning responsibilities, developing chain of custody procedures and training relevant staff. We assign a Preferred by Nature contact person who will be available throughout the audit process. We can also provide generic training if you request this.

We recommend you submit your procedures to us for review at least five working days prior to the main evaluation. We will review and inform you about any major gaps. By addressing these prior to the evaluation, you can greatly reduce the risk of major non-conformities being identified during the main evaluation.

PEFC audits are normally conducted on-site and last up to one workday per site. Interviews, document review, touring your facilities and review of your volume accounting system are common parts of an on-site audit. In case your company does not physically handle material, we may decide to conduct a desk-based evaluation.

After the audit, we prepare a written report describing the results of the audit. Any identified non-conformities are also described and these need to be corrected before the certificate can be issued. The report is quality reviewed and submitted to you for any comments. Upon positive certification decision, the certificate is issued and sent to your company. We will notify the National Governing Body (NGB), which will update the public PEFC database with information about your certified status.

How do I maintain my certificate?

You need to comply with the certification requirements to remain certified, and this is verified through annual audits. Preferred by Nature helps you stay up to speed on the requirements by providing regular updates on system changes that require adjustment from you. If non-conformities are identified in your system, you must take appropriate and effective action to address these.


Preferred by Nature™ hereby confirms that the
{{CERTIFICATE_CERTIFICATE_CATEGORY_LONG}} system of
{{CERTIFICATE_CERTIFICATE_ HOLDER_NAME}}
{{CERTIFICATE_CERTIFICATE_HOLDER_PRIMARY_STREET}}
{{CERTIFICATE_CERTIFICATE_HOLDER_PRIMARY_POSTAL_CODE}}
{{CERTIFICATE_CERTIFICATE_HOLDER_PRIMARY_CITY}}
{{CERTIFICATE_CERTIFICATE_HOLDER_PRIMARY_STATE}}
{{CERTIFICATE_COUNTRY}}
has been assessed and certified as meeting the requirements of
{{Table1.txt Standards!Standard_Name:}}
The certificate is valid from
{{CERTIFICATE_DATE_CERTIFICATE_ISSUED\@ "d-MM-yyyy"}} to {{CERTIFICATE_DATE_CERTIFICATE_EXPIRY\@ "d-MM-yyyy"}}
Certificate version date: {{Today\@ "d-MM-yyyy"}}
Scope of certificate
Certificate type: {{CERTIFICATE_TYPE}}
{{CERTIFICATE_CERTIFICATE_CATEGORY_LONG}}
Certificate registration code
{{CERTIFICATE_CERTIFICATE_REGISTRATION_CODE}}
Laura Tiina Kohler
Preferred by Nature™

To secure the integrity of the PEFC system, rigorous requirements apply to the follow-up on non-conformities, which are graded as major or minor. Minor issues are commonly verified during the next annual audit; if they have been insufficiently addressed, they are upgraded to major.

Major non-conformities must be addressed within maximum three months, thus requiring an additional audit to verify your timely compliance. Failure to address major non-conformities, or the discovery of five or more major non-conformities during an audit, will lead to suspension of your certificate. A certificate can be reinstated once the issues have been addressed; however, an additional audit is required prior to the reinstatement.

Accredited for PEFC Chain of Custody (EAK/reg.no. PC025). PEFC/09-44-02