

Guidelines Involvement of the Panel of Experts in the endorsement of national forest certification schemes	Adopted on 30 April 2008	GL 8/2008
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INVOLVEMENT OF THE PANEL OF EXPERTS IN THE ENDORSEMENT OF NATIONAL FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this guideline is to provide procedures governing the appointment and work of the Panel of Experts (PoE) within the process of the endorsement of national forest certification schemes.

2. SCOPE

This guideline outlines the operational rules and procedures for the PoE whose tasks and duties are covered in chapter 6.4.3 of Annex 7 the PEFC Council Technical Document and the decision of the Board of Directors of 26 October 2006 which made the PoE's review of the evaluation reports mandatory (bullet point a below):

In summary the tasks of the PoE are:

- a) To review the quality and robustness of evaluation reports on national forest certification schemes prepared by external assessments consultants,
- b) To assess whether a revision is major or minor,
- c) In cases where a revision is deemed minor, to undertake an assessment on the conformity of the revision with the requirements of the PEFC Council,
- d) To provide advice to the PEFC Council's Board of Directors.

This guideline was approved by the Board of Directors on 30 April 2008.

3. LIST OF EXPERTS

The PEFC Council keeps a list of experts which creates the basis for the appointment of the PoE for a specific task. The list consists of individuals which are recruited by the Executive Committee, on behalf of the Board of Directors, as meeting the qualification and/or expertise in the following categories:

- a) forestry,
- b) certification and accreditation processes,
- c) NGOs (including social and environmental interests),

d) Market access.

An expert can be listed as having qualification and expertise in one or more of the above categories.

4. REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION REPORTS

4.1 Purpose

This refers to bullet (a) of the scope (chapter 2) and is mandatory for the assessment of all schemes. The role of the PoE here is to assess and provide comment on the quality and robustness of the independent consultant work and reporting which shall be considered by the independent assessment consultant prior to finalising his report. NB: The PoE does not replace the consultant's report as the basis for decision by PEFC. The PoE assures the quality of that report.

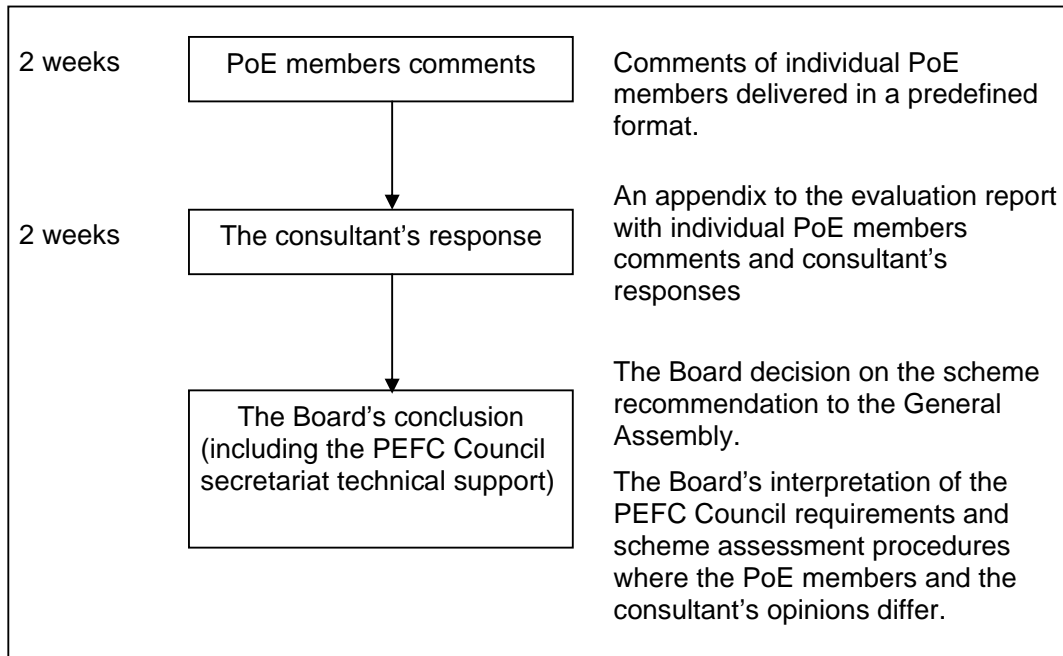
4.2 Selecting the PoE

The PEFC Council secretariat selects and appoints the PoE for a specific review of a certification scheme evaluation report based on following criteria:

- a) PoE consists of members who sufficiently cover all competencies and expertise categories as outlined in chapter 3,
- b) The members of PoE shall be free of conflict of interest in relation to the assessed scheme or the consultant,
- c) The members of PoE have declared their availability to deliver their comments within the defined time period.

Subject to approval by the Executive Committee, the PEFC Council Secretariat may also appoint persons outside the list of experts if the availability of experts on the list is inadequate to meet the above criteria or where a specific additional expertise is needed. In every case, the names of the PoE will be reported in the publicly available evaluation reports.

4.3 Review process



Each member of the PoE is free to provide his/her own comments and view from their own perspective on the quality of the consultant's work.

The consultant will have an opportunity to respond to the individual PoE member comments by clarifying the issue in question or revising his/her report accordingly. The consultant shall include the individual comments of all the PoE members and his/her responses in an appendix of the consultant's evaluation report which will be publicly available when the report is published.

4.4 Resources

The PEFC Council provides the PoE members with a fixed honoraria fee for a maximum of one day's work agreed between a PoE member and the PEFC Council Secretariat.

5 OTHER PoE TASKS

For tasks other than the mandatory evaluation report review (see chapter 4), the PoE is appointed by the PEFC Council Secretariat from the list of experts based on specific competency and expertise required to perform the task and time availability of the experts. The PoE can consist of one member, dependant on the task.

Based on the approval of the Executive Committee, the PEFC Council Secretariat can also appoint a person outside the list of experts in cases where the availability of experts is not adequate to allow the PoE to sufficiently perform the task or a specific additional expertise is needed.

The PoE's work is performed based on terms of reference prepared by the PEFC Council Secretariat, including timetable, maximum work time, reporting requirements, etc.