

<b>Guidelines</b> <b>Interpretation of the PEFC Council requirements for consensus in the standard setting process</b>	Adopted on 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2006	<b>GL5 /2006</b>
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## **Interpretation of the PEFC Council Requirements for Consensus in the Standard Setting Process**

### **1. OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this guideline is to provide an interpretation of the PEFC Council requirements for standard setting processes relating to the consensus for the purposes of developing forest management standards and their PEFC endorsement.

### **2. SCOPE**

This guideline serves to clarify the interpretations of Annex 2, chapter 3.5 of the PEFC Council Technical Document which requires the formal approval standard to be based on the evidence of consensus and the definition of the term consensus as defined in Annex 1 of the PEFC Council Technical Document.

This guideline was approved by the Board on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006 and will be used to further clarify the PEFC assessment process of schemes which have applied for the PEFC Council endorsement or re-endorsement after 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

### **3. INTERPRETATION OF CONSENSUS**

Annex 3 of the PEFC Council Technical Document requires that *“formal approval of the standards shall be based on the evidence of consensus”*.

The definition of the term consensus adopted by the PEFC Council as a part of Annex 1 of the PEFC Council Technical Documentation is identical with definition of ISO Guide 2:

**“Consensus:** *general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.*

*Note: Consensus need not imply unanimity.”*

The Forum responsible for the standard setting shall provide evidence on consensus having been reached before the formal approval of the standard.

In order to reach consensus the forum can utilise the following alternative processes to establish whether there is opposition to the standard:

- (a) A face-to face meeting where there is a verbal yes/no vote;
- (b) A face-to face meeting where there is a show of hands for a yes/no vote;
- (c) A face-to face meeting where there is a “secret ballot” of members on a yes/no vote;
- (d) A statement on consensus from the Chair at a face-to face meeting where there are no dissenting voices or hands (votes);
- (e) An e-mail meeting where a request for agreement is provided to members and the members providing written response (a proxy for a vote); or
- (f) A formal balloting process where votes are collated for the collective consensus decision.

No single concerned interest shall be allowed to dominate the process.

In any case of a negative vote which represents sustained opposition of any important part of the concerned interests to a substantive issue, the issue shall be resolved using the following mechanism:

- (a) Discussion and negotiation on the disputed issue within the Forum in order to find a compromise,
- (b) Direct negotiation between the stakeholder(s) submitting the objection and stakeholders with different view on the disputed issue in order to find a compromise,
- (c) Dispute resolution process.

The dispute resolution process shall be governed by the respective dispute resolution procedures agreed by the Forum.