



Promoting sustainable forest management

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New International Chain-of-Custody Standard for all certification systems

The PEFC Council today presented a new international Chain-of-Custody Standard to track wood flows from certified forests to final consumers that can be used by all forest certification systems worldwide to verify the origin of procured material. Instead of having different national Chain-of-Custody (CoC) systems, PEFC provides the opportunity to have one single common international Chain-of-Custody standard valid in all countries. This holistic approach provides consistency and efficiencies for international companies operating in more than one country.

Its new structure allows the Chain-of-Custody standard to be easily implemented into companies' quality and environmental management systems e.g. the ISO 9001 and 14001 standards. Group Chain-of-Custody certification, a new element of the standard, is now available for all countries as a cost effective solution especially for small companies. Furthermore, stringent verification requirements for uncertified wood have been included. Companies that procure uncertified material from countries with a higher risk of unsustainable sources now have to implement independent second or third party verification safeguards assuring the exclusion of illegally logged wood.

"What is unique about the new PEFC Chain-of-Custody is that it enables wood processing companies to procure certified material from different countries using different national certification systems or labels and to control the wood flow with only one CoC system" explained Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of PEFC. "Once the percentage of certified material coming from PEFC endorsed schemes reaches the required threshold, companies can market the resulting products under one label, the PEFC logo."

The new CoC standard was developed in an extensive process including a public consultation period and was approved by the PEFC General Assembly at its annual meeting in Santiago, Chile. Currently more than 1,700 PEFC CoC certificates have been issued and the number is growing rapidly.

Companies planning to apply for a PEFC CoC will be required to use the new international CoC from 1st April 2005 onwards. Manufactures currently holding a PEFC CoC certificate will have to comply with the new international standard by the time of their next yearly audit, at the latest by 1st April 2006.

press release



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For questions or clarifications holders or applicants for PEFC CoC certificates should contact their certification body or national certification schemes. The new international Chain-of-Custody standards can be downloaded under: www.pefc.org .

ENDS

Editors Notes

Forest Certification

Forest certification is a process which provides an assurance mechanism to purchasers of wood and paper products that the wood used in the products comes from sustainably managed forest. Sustainably managed forest are those whose management implements performance standards based on internationally agreed environmental, social and economical requirements.

Chain-of-Custody certification (CoC)

Consumers in growing numbers are seeking evidence of environmentally sound business practices. Public authorities and enterprise procurement policies increasingly demand reassurance and proof from the wood-processing industries that the wood they use comes from sustainably managed sources. By and large wood-based products have a better overall environmental record than competitor materials, but questions have arisen about the management of the forests from which the wood originates. Businesses therefore need a reliable and credible mechanism, the Chain-of-Custody certification, to prove to their customers where their products have come from. See PEFC brochure on Chain-of-Custody certification at http://www.pefc.org/internet/html/documentation/4_1311_402/4_1208_174/5_1177_466.htm.

PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes)

PEFC is a framework for the mutual recognition of credible national or regional forest certification schemes that have been developed based on internationally recognised requirements for sustainable forest management. Since its launch in 1999, PEFC has become the largest forest certification umbrella organisation covering national schemes from all over the world, delivering hundreds of millions of tonnes of wood to the processing industry and then onto the market place from over 52 million hectares of certified forests. PEFC has strong grass roots support from many stakeholders including the forestry sector, governments, trade associations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

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