



Promoting sustainable forest management

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Germany's successful certification for small-scale forest owners seeks PEFC re-endorsement

In the 5 years since its establishment PEFC certification in Germany has been a complete success story. Two thirds of all German forests have been certified to the German PEFC standard and it has also proven to be ideally adapted to the needs of small-scale forest owners. Following a comprehensive review, the system has been submitted to the PEFC Council for re-endorsement until 2010 and is now in the public consultation period.

“The demand for PEFC certification in Germany is increasing, and companies that decided not to be PEFC certified 5 years ago, are now choosing PEFC as a means of improving their market access and as evidence of their support for sustainability”, said Mr Dirk Teegelbekkers, PEFC Germany Secretary General. “The certification of small-scale forest ownership has been a special challenge for certification initiatives globally and I am delighted that with PEFC we have successfully solved this issue.”

Before its submission, the German system had undergone a thorough review and revision process over a period of two years, facilitated by independent consultants, Systain. Stakeholder groups contributed their expertise into the process through working groups and public consultation seminars were held at national and regional level. Ecological and socio-economic standards of PEFC Germany were developed further, including its technical requirements and the marketing of PEFC.

The revision process of the certification system now concludes with its submission to the PEFC Council for re-assessment including a final public consultation at international level. “PEFC only allows national systems that have been developed and revised in multi-stakeholder processes to be assessed for endorsement”, explained Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of the PEFC Council. Underlining PEFC’s commitment to continuous improvement Mr Gunneberg added: “To include latest scientific knowledge and practical experience from the field, PEFC endorsed systems undergo a thorough re-evaluation process by independent external auditors, including a consultation period, every 5 years. I invite all interested parties and individuals to review the revised German system on our website www.pefc.org and send comments directly to the independent auditor Indufor Oy by 14 September 2005.”

For details on the German system visit: <http://www.pefc.org>> [Members and Schemes](#)> [Germany](#)

press release



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Editors Notes

German forestry and sustainability

Forestry in Germany is characterized by small and medium sized forest ownership. Germany's total forest area of 10.74 million hectares is in the hands of 1.3 million forest owners, who manage an average plot size of approx. 3.5 hectares.

The principle of "sustainability" has its roots in forest management in Germany, where as long as 250 years ago a mechanism was established to ensure that no more wood was harvested than re-grew naturally. Since then the concept has been constantly further developed and was "re-discovered" by society through international initiatives such as the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The outcomes of the summit resulted in eight intergovernmental processes for sustainable forest management, to which 149 governments covering 85% of the world's forest area have signed up to. One such process is the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE - <http://www.mcpfe.org>), which also serves as a central element of the German forest certification system.

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.

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 123 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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