



Promoting sustainable forest management

PEFC Council
17 Rue des Girondins
L-1626 Hollerich
Luxembourg
Telephone: +352 26 25 90 59
Facsimile: +352 26 25 92 58
E-mail: pefc@pt.lu
Web: www.pefc.org

15 December 2005
Luxembourg

Indigenous people and PEFC forest certification

Although a fast growing number of customers are aware of the need and the advantages of buying timber from certified forests, the question repeatedly arises as to whether forest certification systems adequately recognize the interests of indigenous forest people, like the Indians in the Amazon, the tribal communities in Africa or Sami people in the Arctic Circle. To answer this question, the PEFC Council has published a new Position Paper explaining how the livelihoods of tribal and indigenous people, their local communities and their traditional rights are taken into account through PEFC certification.

“It seems to be a little known fact that forest certification systems today cover in much detail the situation and the needs of forest dependent communities” said Mr Ben Gunneberg, Secretary of the PEFC Council and went on to explain how indigenous people are involved in PEFC. “At international level sustainability criteria are developed democratically through the intergovernmental processes, like the ‘*Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe*’ or the ‘*African Timber Organization (ATO) and International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) Criteria & Indicator for sustainable management of African natural tropical forests*’. These criteria form the basis for PEFC certification systems in their respective continents. They include aspects such as securing land tenure as well as customary and traditional rights; protecting historical, archaeological, cultural or spiritually significant sites; making use of indigenous related experience or knowledge and involving indigenous people and their communities in the consultation, decision making and implementation processes. Secondly indigenous people’s participation happens when PEFC certification systems are being created in consensus with relevant groups of society at national level. And last but not least, PEFC requires stakeholders consultations during the certification audits of individual forests, ensuring that indigenous and all other forest dependent people’s views are considered for the forests they live in, live near to or are dependent upon.”

The PEFC Position Paper on Indigenous People and further information are available at the PEFC Council website www.pefc.org > Documentation > Position Papers.

ENDS

[For more information please contact:](#)

Mr Oliver Scholz, Communications Manager PEFC Council – Tel. + 352 26 25 90 59

press release



Promoting sustainable forest management

PEFC Council
17 Rue des Girondins
L-1626 Hollerich
Luxembourg
Telephone: +352 26 25 90 59
Facsimile: +352 26 25 92 58
E-mail: pefc@pt.lu
Web: www.pefc.org

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 forests. Sustainably managed forests 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 185 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.

Intergovernmental processes for sustainable forest management

There are 8 intergovernmental processes for SFM supported by 165 governments around the world covering over 85% of the world's forest area, which grew out of the Statement of Forest Principles and Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

- The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE);
- The Montreal Process;
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) Criteria & Indicator for sustainable management of natural tropical forests;
- Criteria & Indicator for the sustainable management of Amazonian Forests (Tarapoto Proposal);
- Lepaterique Process;
- Regional Initiative of Dry Forests in Asia;
- Criteria & Indicator for sustainable management in Dry-zone Africa,
- African Timber Organization (ATO).

An example of requirements for indigenous people in intergovernmental processes for the African tropical forests are the **ATO/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of African natural tropical forests** (Excerpts - sub-indicators not listed. For further details see www.itto.or.jp/live/Live_Server/155/ps14e.pdf.)

The rights and responsibilities of workers in the FMU and local populations are clearly defined, acknowledged and respected.

- The legal and customary rights of local populations in respect to the ownership, use and tenure of the forest land and resources are clearly defined, acknowledged and respected.
- The modalities of access to natural resources are clearly defined and respected by all.
- Information is provided on and all stakeholders are fully informed of their rights and duties.
- Damages caused are compensated according to the norms in force or after negotiation.

The concessionaire encourages the participation of local populations present in the FMU in the management of forest resources.

- The concessionaire sets up ad hoc bodies for consultation and negotiation with local populations.
- The procedure for dialogue and the resolution of conflicts is functional both between stakeholders and within each stakeholder body.
- All stakeholders participate in the control of natural resources management on the basis of a protocol accepted by all.
- Procedures for consultation with populations during the establishment and demarcation of forest concession boundaries are respected.
- Mechanisms for applying sanctions in the case of rule violations are in place and agreed by stakeholders.

press release



Promoting sustainable forest management

PEFC Council
17 Rue des Girondins
L-1626 Hollerich
Luxembourg
Telephone: +352 26 25 90 59
Facsimile: +352 26 25 92 58
E-mail: pefc@pt.lu
Web: www.pefc.org

All stakeholders consider the share of benefits derived from forests to be satisfactory.

- The forest concessionaire ensures that the populations living within or near the FMU receive a portion of the revenue generated by the exploitation of the FMU.
- Local communities living in or near the harvested forest area benefit preferentially from opportunities in employment, training and other services.
- In accordance with the importance and impact of the forest operations at the local level, the concessionaire contributes to the development of the local economy.

According to the importance and impact of the forestry operations, the concessionaire contributes to improving the health and education of local populations.

- The concessionaire takes preventive measures to minimize any professional hazards in relation to forestry activities.
- Health-related aspects of living conditions are improved for employees and their families.
- The health conditions of local populations are improved as a result of the forestry activities.
- The concessionaire contributes to the basic education of local populations and workers present in the FMU, in accordance with the contractual provisions established consistent with national norms.

An example of requirements for forest dependent people in intergovernmental processes for European forests are the **Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines** (Excerpt Criterion 6. Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions. See www.mcpfe.org/mcpfe/resolutions/lisbon/resolution_l2a2.pdf).

6.1 Guidelines for Forest Management Planning

- Forest management planning should aim to respect the multiple functions of forests to society, have due regard to the role of forestry in rural development, and especially consider new opportunities for employment in connection with the socio-economic functions of forests.
- Property rights and land tenure arrangements should be clearly defined, documented and established for the relevant forest area. Likewise, legal, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land should be clarified, recognised and respected.
- Adequate public access to forests for the purpose of recreation should be provided taking into account the respect for ownership rights and the rights of others, the effects on forest resources and ecosystems, as well as the compatibility with other functions of the forest.
- Sites with recognised specific historical, cultural or spiritual significance should be protected or managed in a way that takes due regard of the significance of the site.
- Forest managers, contractors, employees and forest owners should be provided with sufficient information and encouraged to keep up to date through continuous training in relation to sustainable forest management.

6.2 Guidelines for Forest Management Practices

- Forest management practices should make the best use of local forest related experience and knowledge, such as of local communities, forest owners, NGOs and local people.
- Working conditions should be safe, and guidance and training in safe working practice should be provided.
- Forest management operations should take into account all socio-economic functions, especially the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests by maintaining for example varied forest structures, and by encouraging attractive trees, groves and other features such as colours, flowers and fruits. This should be done, however, in a way and to an extent that does not lead to serious negative effects on forest resources, and forest land.