



Promoting sustainable forest management

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18 January 2006
Luxembourg

PEFC publishes Position Paper on a phased approach to forest certification

Should developing countries be allowed to participate in international forest certification systems and demonstrate their gradual compliance with the standards through a series of pre-determined steps and timelines? This questions has been discussed for a number of years under the heading “The Phased Approach to Forest Certification” by scientists, governments and supporters of forest certification systems alike. To move the debate forward, the PEFC Council has published a position paper, describing key issues and requirements needed for such an approach to be successful and meaningful.

“For a phased approach to work the support by key consumers and governments, especially through their procurement policies is essential”, said Mr Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of the PEFC Council raising the question as to how these users, who still show reluctance to give preference to fully developed systems with complete standards, will react to the less demanding steps of a phased approach. Mr Gunneberg remarked that such an approach probably would entail the use of different wood tracking systems, labels and communications efforts which would add considerably to the overall internal and external costs.

“Although one sixth of the PEFC Council members have forests located in the tropics and subtropics, none of them has requested a phased approach so far”, Mr Gunneberg continues. “Nevertheless, the PEFC Council is prepared and willing to work with institutions, like the International Tropical Timber Organization ITTO and others, to deliver technically feasible and politically acceptable solutions once a market demand and political support can be demonstrated.”

The PEFC Position Paper on a phased approach to forest certification is available at the PEFC Council website www.pefc.org > Documentation > Position Papers.

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press release



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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 currently 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.

press release