



Promoting sustainable forest management

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30 June 2006
Luxembourg

Fully revised Austrian system undergoes public consultation

The national forest certification system for Austria has been fully revised and an independent consultant is currently assessing whether the system conforms with all PEFC benchmark requirements. Part of the assessment is an international public consultation period for two months during which the consultants considers comments from all interested individuals and organisations globally.

“A year ago the Austrian system was submitted to the PEFC Council for re-endorsement and in the following months was rigorously analyzed by the consultants. A number of necessary improvements of the national system were identified through this process. The Austrian certification system therefore underwent a further revision in a national development process through workshops and national consultations before being re-submitted to the PEFC Council”, said Mr Gunneberg, Secretary General of the PEFC Council. He added: “The PEFC Council public consultation period at international level now is the final step in the series of public consultations that all national PEFC standards have to undergo before they can be considered for endorsement. I invite everyone to review the revised PEFC Austria system, which is available on our website and send comments directly to the assessing consultancy SAVCOR INDUFOR OY by 28 August 2006.”

ENDS

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press release



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Editors Notes

Austrian Forest Certification system

The Austrian PEFC standard has been very successful during its first 5 years of PEFC endorsement. More than 3 million hectares of Austrian forests, which are mainly managed by small- and medium-scale family owned enterprises, have been certified to the PEFC system. Close to 300 Austrian timber and paper trading and processing enterprises have opted for a PEFC Chain of Custody for their businesses, demonstrating their commitment to the responsible sourcing of raw materials. PEFC Austria is strongly supported by a wide range of stakeholders, among them the Austrian ENGO community, who actively participate in the PEFC system through their national umbrella organisation, the *Umweltdachverband*.

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 190 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