



Promoting sustainable forest management

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Russian forest certification initiatives sign historic agreement

The two national initiatives for forest certification in Russia have decided to come together under the PEFC Council. The chairmen of the two national certification councils operating in Russia have signed a founding document establishing a national umbrella organization to represent both systems in PEFC. The PEFC Board of Directors today announced that it will recommend the PEFC Council General Assembly in October to transfer the Russian membership to the new organisation. Both initiatives have revealed that they will submit their certification systems for PEFC endorsement in due course.

Mr Nikolai Eremeev, Chairman of The National Council of Voluntary Forest Certification in Russia (RSFC) said: "When we joined the PEFC Council as the first Russian member in October 2004 we confirmed our willingness to co-operate with other Russian stakeholders interested in PEFC. This is now happening through the establishment of the new umbrella organization."

Professor Alexander Isaev, Chairman of the Russian National Council for Forest Certification (RNFCF), an initiative supported by the Russian Ministry for Natural Resources and the World Bank, said: "PEFC certification is of utmost importance to the forest and timber sector in Russia. We are delighted to become a member of the PEFC Council and look forward to advancing forest certification in Russia."

Mr Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of the PEFC Council said: "There has been a very strong interest of both Russian certification initiatives in PEFC. Furthermore, a large number of international stakeholders active in Russia had asked PEFC to be a mediator in bringing together the two Russian forest certification initiatives. Subsequently we engaged in frequent and direct contacts with both councils and facilitated meetings in Russia and at PEFC. We are delighted that the Russian actors now have taken this important milestone decision."

"The approach Russia has taken by uniting two independent forest certification systems under one umbrella organisation is not uncommon for large countries like Russia and the USA", Mr Gunneberg added. "We already have the example of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), both being PEFC member systems through their US American member organisation in PEFC, the Sustainable Forestry Board."

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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 over 101 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