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Forest Certification Council to grow by a third

The PEFC Council, the world's largest forest certification umbrella organisation for promoting the independent third party certification of sustainable management of forests, is to expand massively. Eight new independent national forest certification schemes from Asia, Australia, South America and Europe are expected to join the nineteen existing member schemes from Europe and North America at the PEFC Council General Assembly this Friday.

According to Mr Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of the PEFC Council, the membership of the eight new national schemes is a significant step and an excellent prospect for the future for all parties involved in the wood flow from certified sources onto the market place. "News about rapid expansion of forest certification around the world encourages not only forest owners but also timber traders, wood processing industries and retailers to participate in the process and to get their wood flows certified", Mr Gunneberg stated.

Joining the PEFC Council is the first stage for the independent national schemes to participate in the global framework for promoting sustainable forest management. The next stage will be to undergo assessment against the PEFC Council's requirements. Schemes successfully completing the independent assessment procedures mutually recognise each other under the PEFC Council umbrella, thus facilitating the increasingly international trade of timber from certified sources.

"Co-operation between the national schemes and mutual recognition based on the agreed regulations are the best way to ensure that the wood from each national scheme attains equivalent requirements and can be traded internationally", Mr Gunneberg added. As a result of the new national schemes joining, he expects the PEFC Council to be very busy in the coming years, as the new member schemes would bring to 26 the number of schemes wishing to participate in the mutual recognition process.

[For more information contact PEFC Council:](#)

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Editors Notes

PEFC is a framework for the mutual recognition of credible national or regional forest certification schemes which have been developed to meet 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 tens of millions of 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.

To date, the PEFC Council has endorsed 13 schemes, which account for over 44 million hectares of certified sustainably managed forests.

Schemes already endorsed by PEFC:

Schemes Endorsed by PEFC	Hectares Certified
Austrian Forest Certification Scheme	3.924 000
Belgian Forest Certification Scheme	
Czech Forest Certification Scheme	
Danish Forest Certification Scheme	
Finnish Forest Certification Scheme	21.910 000
French Forest Certification Scheme	583 908
German Forest Certification Scheme	6.047 181
Latvian Forest Certification Scheme	17 019
Norwegian LFS Certification Scheme	9.352 000
Spanish Forest Certification Scheme	86 679
Swedish Forest Certification Scheme	2.203 531
Swiss Q Label Holz Scheme	64 572
UK Certification Scheme for SFM	
TOTAL	44.188 290

National forest certification schemes from the following countries are applying to join the PEFC Council on Friday 22nd:

- Australia
- Brazil
- Chile
- Estonia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malaysia
- Slovak Republic

When joining the PEFC Council, the national organizations commit themselves to implement the PEFC requirements set out by the rules of the PEFC Council. The members are responsible for initiating and directing the implementation of their PEFC-compatible national schemes.