



PEFC Council asbl
17 Rue des Girondins
L-1626 Hollerich
LUXEMBOURG

Tel: +352 26 25 90 59
Fax: +352 26 25 92 58
Email: pefc@pt.lu
Web Page: www.pefc.org

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PEFC Council General Assembly: PEFC Documentation Completely Revised

The PEFC Council approved its completely revised and updated procedures and documentation at the General Assembly today. The revision is a result of a review procedure established at the beginning of 2001 to look at improvements to the PEFC scheme. The changes include for instance a new, more user-friendly structure of the documents, clarification of terms and requirements and new guidelines to revise the national standards and to harmonise the processes for continuous improvement.

“In 2001, the PEFC had been operational for two years and practical experience already existed to allow us to start a comprehensive review procedure”, said Mr Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of the PEFC Council. The one-and-a-half-year evaluation procedure included amongst others an external consultant’s report to review the comments and criticism of the PEFC by various parties. The report formed the basis of a thorough consultation and development process which has now resulted in this substantial review of the PEFC documentation procedures.

“To do the evaluation in a credible manner, our Board took the bold step of commissioning, and publishing the complete report on the Internet. What we now have, as a result, is a streamlined and improved mechanism for the development and assessment of independently developed forest certification schemes”, Mr Gunneberg emphasised.

The newly approved documentation has been posted on the PEFC Council website for all interested parties to see (<http://www.pefc.org>).

Ends

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

Mr. Heikki Hamunen, Communications Co-ordinator - Tel +352 26 25 90 59 / +358 40 7716652 or
Mr. Ben Gunneberg, PEFC Council Secretary General - Tel +352 26 25 90 59

Editors Notes

Forest certification is a process to provide an assurance mechanism to purchasers of wood and paper products that the wood used in the products comes from sustainably managed forest. Sustainably managed forest are those whose management implements performance standards based on internationally agreed environmental, social and economical requirements.

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

Forest certification schemes from the following countries joined the PEFC Council as candidate schemes for assessment on Friday 22nd November:

- Australia
- Brazil
- Chile
- Estonia
- Lithuania (effective as of registration of the joining organisation as a legal entity)
- Luxembourg
- Malaysia
- Slovak Republic

When joining the PEFC Council, the national organisations 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.