



Promoting sustainable forest management

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12th March 2004

Luxembourg

PEFC announces public consultation on Australian Forest Certification Scheme

PEFC (the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) is pleased to announce the start of the public consultation period for the assessment of the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS). PEFC has to date successfully assessed and endorsed 13 independent national forest certification schemes covering some 52 million hectares of certified forests, delivering millions of tonnes of certified wood based products from sustainably managed forests to the market place.

Australia is covered by nearly 165 Million hectares of forests of which only 1,7 Million are forest plantations. This leaves 163 Million hectares of native forest of which the majority is eucalyptus but which also includes acacia, melaleuca, casuarina, mangrove, callitris, rainforest and others.

“AFS, a national performance based standard for forest certification, reflects the multi-stakeholder intention to capture community values as well as the science of forest management to support continual improvement towards sustainable forest management” said Mr Mark Edwards, Executive Officer of Australia Forestry Standard Limited, “If the Australian scheme is endorsement by PEFC, it will provide a mark which will be recognized in Australia’s niche markets in Europe as well as open up the expanding Asian market which is seriously examining forest certification in relation to product purchases from Australia.” The PEFC umbrella, as the world’s largest mutual recognition umbrella, provides the mechanism for independent assessment against its 195 requirements for credible forest certification schemes and we urge all interested stakeholders around the world to participate in the public consultation process which forms an essential part of the rigorous assessment process.

Mr Gunneberg added “The independent consultant appointed, after a competitive tending process, is Jaako Poyry Management Consulting, and interested people or organizations are encouraged to view the Australian scheme on our website www.pefc.org and send comments direct to the consultants by 15th May 2004.”

Ends

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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 forest.

Australia and AFS

Forest Area: 164.9 million hectares of which 98 % are natural forests and 2 % plantations
Production: 24 Million m3 per annum
Importance: Value of turnover of forest product industries 15,077 Million USD representing 1-2 %GDP

The AFS scheme was developed between 2000 and 2002 by a partnership of federal, and state and territory governments, forest and timber industry, indigenous interests, independent scientists, community groups and trade unions with some participation by E-NGO's.

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.

Table with 6 columns: Certified Forest Area, Hectares Certified, No of CoC Certificates issued, Certified Forest Area, Hectares Certified, No of CoC Certificates issued. Includes a TOTAL row at the bottom.

press release