



PEFC - Promoting Sustainable Forest Management

PEFC Council

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## Leading public procurement policy confirms PEFC's sustainability status

The UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) confirmed in an assessment released today that PEFC's sustainable forest management standards and procedures continue to meet UK government requirements for sustainable timber.

The assessment found that all forest certification schemes commonly encountered in tenders and sales to the UK central government – PEFC International as well as MTCC<sup>i</sup> and FSC – meet the criteria for legality and sustainability set out by the Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET)<sup>ii</sup>. Certification to any one of these schemes is important for companies supplying timber for public sector projects as from April 2009, the UK government will require its departments to procure legal and sustainable timber or FLEGT<sup>iii</sup>-licensed timber only.

"The results confirm the robustness and integrity of credible forests certification schemes", commented Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC). "Furthermore, the revised procurement policy sends a strong message to companies and consumers to buy responsibly and to support sustainable forest management by choosing PEFC-certified products."

With nearly one third of the world's land mass covered by forests, sustainable forest management is crucial to address so many of society's challenges. "Given the vast potential of forests in tackling climate change, the new UK procurement policy is an important step in the right direction", said Mr. Gunneberg. "With only 9 percent of the world's forests currently certified, measures that promote sustainable procurement are of utmost importance."

Since PEFC's initial rating as legal and sustainable by the UK Government in August 2005, the PEFC certified forest area has increased by more than 60 percent globally and currently tops the 210 million hectares mark, making it the largest forest certification scheme in the world. The number of Chain of Custody certificates in the UK has risen sharply over the past two years and to date, more than 900 companies in the UK have chosen PEFC certification for their businesses.

"We are delighted once again the government has judged PEFC to meet its sustainability criteria. This provides UK companies with a strong incentive to commit to responsible sourcing of wood products by undergoing PEFC Chain of Custody certification<sup>iv</sup>", added Peter Latham PEFC UK's Chairman.

The announcement by DEFRA follows a detailed, bi-annual review of forest certification schemes by CPET. The UK also announced its intention that for future reviews, PEFC endorsed schemes such as SFI and CSA will no longer be assessed separately.

press release

*A world in which people manage forests sustainably*

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## Editors Notes

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**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 on to the market place from over 200 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.

**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 economic requirements.

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<sup>i</sup> MTCC is currently introducing new requirements for the scheme. The review found that once these are fully implemented the MTCC scheme will deliver requirements for sustainability. Once the transition to the new requirements is complete and this has been verified by CPET the new status of MTCC will be reported on the CPET website. This is currently expected to be in early 2009 as the timetable for the transition is for completion at the end of 2008.

<sup>ii</sup> CPET (Central Point of Expertise on Timber) In 2004, the UK Government established the Central Point of Expertise on Timber to assess certification schemes and provide guidelines for central government departments on legal and sustainable timber procurement (see [www.proforest.net/cpet](http://www.proforest.net/cpet))

<sup>iii</sup> FLEGT – The EU Action Plan for Forest law Enforcement Governance and Trade is the European Union's response to the global problem of illegal logging and the international trade in illegally-harvested timber. See <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/eupresidency2005/flegt.asp> for further details

<sup>iv</sup> Chain of custody certification is a mechanism for tracing certified material from the forest to the final product to provide certainty that the product or product line, about which a claim is being made, is linked to a certified forest.