

PRESS RELEASE

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International endorsement for Finland's new PEFC forest certification standard

PEFC International has endorsed PEFC Finland's new forest certification standard. PEFC is the certification of choice for family-owned forests in Finland.

In line with PEFC's regulations, the revision to the standard was conducted through extensive and transparent collaboration with different parties. The working group included 40 stakeholder groups through which e.g. forest owners, consumers and trade and industry provided input on the important goals they wanted included in the revision.

"Our view is that PEFC forest certification is above all a people's matter, not an organizations' matter", says PEFC Finland's Chairperson **Ritva Toivonen**.

Endorsement required rigorous assessment

Obtaining endorsement for the revised forest certification standard involved a comprehensive and thorough assessment process.

"The assessment included e.g. a period of open national and international commenting and feedback as well as a report by a PEFC-independent assessor on the compliance of the new national standard compared to international requirements", says **Auvo Kaivola**, Secretary General of PEFC Finland.

PEFC International selected the Dutch consulting firm FORM International as the independent assessor of Finland's new standard. In its report, it recommended endorsement of the standard and noted, among other things, that Finland's PEFC forest certification system is structurally clear and very functional.

The endorsement was decided upon by a vote in which the national PEFC organizations from different countries exercised their voting rights.

The changing forestry sector as a premise

PEFC Finland's standard is the first in the world to have been revised twice since the initial international endorsement, which was received back in 2000. National forest certification standards within the sphere of PEFC are revised at five-year intervals.

"The new standard monitors and anticipates changes in the forest sector and in society", says Toivonen.

The revised standard includes e.g. pioneering criteria concerning the sustainable harvesting of energy wood, which is a global first in the world of forest certification.

Another significant addition is the consideration to the significance of forests in climate change mitigation. The standard emphasizes the ability of vital tree stands to act as carbon sinks and presumes that stem wood continuously absorbs more carbon than is released in harvesting.

Additionally, the new requirements strengthen the position of the multipurpose use of forests as part of sustainable forestry. Also the social criteria of the standard are now clearly more diverse and ensure, for example, that special needs of foreign workers are fulfilled.

The new standard will be applied for the first time in the assessments made by independent players next year. This autumn's training events will focus on the details of the requirements.

The new PEFC forest certification standard is available for reading and downloading at www.pefc.fi -> News -> Standard revision 2008-09.

Additional information:

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PEFC Finland promotes and develops the PEFC forest certification system applied in Finland. PEFC is the certification of choice for Finland's family-owned forests. More than 95% of Finland's commercial forests are PEFC certified. The PEFC label identifies products that have originated from sustainably-managed forests.

www.pefc.fi

PEFC (Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes) is an international certification scheme and the world's biggest environmental movement promoting ecologically, socially and financially sustainable forestry globally.

www.pefc.org