

PRESS RELEASE

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Room for alternatives in forest certification

There is room for different forest certification systems in Finland, notes PEFC Finland's Chairperson Ritva Toivonen about the completion of Finland's FSC standard announced today.

"It's good that alternative forest certification systems exist, as long as they are credible and the intrinsically-related verification process is done by an independent and competent assessor," says **Toivonen**.

"The shared goal of PEFC and FSC is to promote ecologically, economically and socially sustainable forestry. In that respect, we share the same cause even though the systems are structurally different."

PEFC is used globally

PEFC certification is present on all continents and the system is used by different groups of forest owners, like small forest owners, companies, municipalities and states.

"A growing number of companies that manufacture wood-based products in Finland and around the world are participating in PEFC. As more and more PEFC-labelled products are introduced to the markets, consumers will also have better chances of making eco-conscious choices," says **Auvo Kaivola**, Secretary General, PEFC Finland.

PEFC already in Finland for a decade

The first PEFC system forest certification assessments in Finland were made back in 2000. Today PEFC certification covers over 95% of Finland's commercial forests.

In line with PEFC regulations, national standards are always created and revised through extensive and transparent collaboration by all interested parties. Finland's PEFC standard was revised in 2008-2009. The working group included 40 stakeholder groups through which e.g. forest owners, outdoor recreation associations, the Sami people, forest sector employees and entrepreneurs, consumers, and trade and industry provided input on the goals they felt important to be included in the revised standard.

"For us, PEFC forest certification is above all a people's matter, not an organizations' matter," says Toivonen. "Participating in voluntary certification or buying a certified product ultimately depends on people wanting to make responsible decisions."

Finland's new PEFC standard received international endorsement last July.

PEFC is the choice of Finns

PEFC is the forest certification best suited for Finnish forestry because, among other reasons, it includes the option for the owners of private forests to apply for certification together with other forest owners.

"Individual certification of small forested areas is expensive and doesn't support the achievement of the ecological goals as well as group certification does. Group certification makes certification possible for owners of all sizes of forests," says Kaivola.

With regional group certification, securing the diversity of the forest flora and fauna and the multipurpose use of forests can be planned more efficiently than with individual certification of small forests.

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

www.pefc.org