



SFM Ireland

Forest Management Certification Conference

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Why Forest Certification?

Deforestation, forest degradation and illegal logging are amongst the most serious challenges facing society globally.

- 1992: Rio Earth Summit – one of the goals was an internationally binding convention on the sustainable development of the world's forests.
- Agreement was reached on a set of Criteria and Indicators for SFM, but ultimately failure led to...
- Formation of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in 1993, followed by
- The Pan European Forest Certification Programme (PEFC) in 1999 – ensures forest owners have a choice of system to adopt
- Both systems are a response to growing consumer demand for verified sustainably produced forest products and are part of the **solution**, not the problem

PEFC

- Originally 11 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Finland, **Ireland**, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland joined forces
- PEFC's aim is 'to achieve compatibility between credible and independent forest certification systems and to implement and safeguard consistently high standards for SFM around the globe'
- Expansion beyond Europe's borders resulted in name change to Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC)
- By certified area now the larger of the two systems – globally 275 million hectares.
- BUT total certified area by all systems combine still only c. 10% of world's forests

PEFC International

- Small (12 staff) Geneva-based head office
- “Bottom-up”, mutual recognition, membership organisation
- Not for Profit NGO
- Standard setting must comply with internationally agreed rules under ISO; and with rules agreed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Accreditation bodies approving the certification bodies that carry out auditing must be members of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF)
- To date in Ireland, the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) has accredited NSAI to conduct PEFC FM certification

PEFC International cont.

- PEFC requires standards to be prepared and agreed at national level **prior to** endorsement and certification of forest management
- Now 41 members worldwide, and growing rapidly, eg SE Asia, with several more countries in process of applying for membership
- Provides support and sharing of experience at local, regional, national and international level
- Members from Poland to Portugal, Japan to Brazil, describe it as the “PEFC Family” – considerable levels of mutual trust built up over the years of its existence

PEFC Standard Setting

- Carried out by multi-stakeholder Forum in accordance with Agenda 21 – ie broader base than strict 3-chamber approach, acknowledging that environmental, social and economic issues overlap
- Agreement must be by consensus as defined by ISO – “a lack of sustained objection”
- Standards must incorporate the relevant inter-governmental processes built on post RIO – in Europe the C&I, and Operational Level Guidelines (PEOLG) agreed by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) – to which Ireland is a signatory
- Prior to endorsement, standards are assessed by an independent third party to ensure transparency and compliance with PEFC rules and [PEOLG]
- Revision / review of all standards every 5 years

PEFC Group FM Certification

- PEFC system designed by forest owners from the outset to ensure honestly labelled sustainably produced timber could access the markets
- PEFC pioneered the concept of “Group” FM certification – allows random sampling, therefore savings in audit costs
- No theoretical limit to group size – eg Austria has one group scheme for entire country, split into 9 regions, >40,000 members, both public and private; Denmark has 5 group schemes ranging from 4-85 members
- Originated as the system designed for small privately owned woodlands; now also covers large woodland owners and State forests

PEFC in Ireland

- Represented by ITGA, Ireland was one of the original 11 signatories to the formation of PEFC in 1999
- Observer status only until PEFC (Ireland) Ltd formed by ITGA in 2008 – admitted to full membership at General Assembly that year
- Standard Setting Forum convened in early 2009
- PEFC Irish Forest Certification Standard (IFCS) completed by the Forum in October 2010
- IFCS and PEFC Ireland Scheme for SFM endorsed by PEFC International December 2011
- Revision / review due end 2016 (possibly 2018)
- Online certification tool developed in conjunction with PEFC UK in 2013-15 now available for pilot testing

PEFC Ireland cont.

- IFCS modelled on United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) – 2nd Edition
- 8 sections, covering:
 - Compliance with the Law
 - Management Planning
 - Woodland Design
 - Operations
 - Protection & Maintenance
 - Conservation & Enhancement of Biodiversity
 - The Community
 - The Forestry Workforce

Each section contains *Requirements, Means of Verification, and Guidance Notes*

PEFC Ireland cont.

- Coillte Forest achieved PEFC FM certification June 2014
- A number of private group FM certification initiatives under way...
- 43 Irish companies now hold PEFC CoC certification – increasingly essential for those exporting to the UK and beyond
- PEFC & FSC certification a means to show compliance with the EUTR
- Min. 70% certified requirement under both systems to label product as certified; balance must be “controlled wood” (FSC) / “from controlled sources” (PEFC)
- Private growers now represent 47% of total forest estate, and increasing
- The maths isn’t complicated...! Private growers need to (a) form into groups in order to (b) achieve FM certification in the foreseeable future



Thank You

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