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PEFC endorses Malaysian chain of custody scheme

The Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) has become the first tropical timber certification scheme in the Asia Pacific region to be endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC). BM TRADA offers certification under the scheme.



Ben Gunneberg, PEFC Secretary General, said: 'The endorsement of MTCS is a significant achievement for the sustainable forest management community as whole. While the certification movement has its origins in efforts to protect tropical forests, over 90% of the world's certification today takes place in the temperate forests of Europe and North America. Yet tropical forests in the Southern hemisphere offer the most benefits to tackling some of society's biggest challenges, including climate change, combating deforestation and forest degradation, and maintaining the world's precious biodiversity.'

Dato' Dr Freezailah Che Yeom, Chairman of the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC), which operates the MTCS, said the Council was 'pleased and proud' to have obtained the PEFC endorsement. 'This shows that the various aspects of the MTCS, such as the institutional arrangement and certification standards used, have met the stringent requirements of the PEFC. It gives further assurance that forests certified under the MTCS are implementing the best management practices and contributing towards the challenging efforts to ensure sustainable forest management, particularly for the tropical rainforests.'

Dr. Freezailah added that the endorsement enables the MTCS to achieve mutual recognition with 26 other PEFC-endorsed certification schemes. This means that the MTCS-certified timber product manufacturers and exporters will soon be able to combine PEFC-certified material from Malaysia with other PEFC-certified material under the PEFC logo.

The decision to endorse the 2002 Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management Certification was announced on 5th May 2009 following a General Assembly vote among the PEFC members on the recommendation of the Board of Directors, based on an assessment of the MTCS by an independent assessor appointed by the PEFC Council.

The endorsement is valid for a five-year period, with periodic review to ensure the continued compliance of the MTCS.

The full report of the conformity assessment of the MTCS can be obtained from the PEFC website at <http://www.pefc.org/>.

MEDIA CONTACTS

AFSL--CEO Kayt Watts: ceo@forestrystandard.org.au or +61 (0) 2 6232 5356
<http://www.forestrystandard.org.au>

NOTES

Australian Forestry Standard Limited is a Standards Development Organisation and a not-for-profit public company registered in July 2003. The company owns the standard development functions and manages the elements of the **Australian Forest Certification Scheme**. The Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS) will:

- provide Australian and overseas consumers with an independent, internationally recognised third-party certification scheme for forest management in Australia
- promote a culture of 'continuous improvement' of the sustainable forest management practices in Australia
- support a market for forest products that are a result of sustainable forest management practices and value adding processes that maintain the integrity of the source forest certification and promote the broader environmental benefits of using wood-based products.

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.