



Results of the 2010 review of certification schemes to monitor continued compliance with UK government's timber procurement policy

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Defra is responsible for the development and implementation of the UK Government timber procurement policy which requires all timber purchased by central government departments to come from legal and sustainable sources or FLEGT licensed or equivalent sources.

A Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) was set up by Defra in 2004 to provide practical support and assistance in implementing the policy. This includes assessing the certification schemes most widely used to certify timber used in the UK to establish which provide adequate evidence of legality and sustainability. CPET undertook an initial assessment of five forest certification schemes in 2004, and carried out a further review in 2006 and 2008.

This year's review was undertaken against the April 2010 version of *Criteria for Evaluating Certification Schemes*. These set out the definition of legal and sustainable currently used by the UK government for procurement which includes technical and environmental and, as of April 2010, also social requirements.

To provide the greatest technical rigour and independence, the assessment of schemes was, as in 2008, undertaken by an independent technical panel using the March 2008 version of *Category A Review Methodology* which focuses on the scheme requirements as set out in publicly available documentation, but does not include investigation of outcomes on the ground.

The 2010 review covered a full review of the schemes: Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and did not, as previous reviews, include a full review of other schemes, as they are now endorsed by PEFC. *The results of the 2010 review conclude that both FSC and PEFC continue to deliver evidence of sustainability in compliance with the UK Government's timber procurement policy.*

Both schemes have made improvements since the last assessment in 2008, passing the new social criteria and ensuring that the 'conversion' and 'national implementation' criteria were met.

Compliance with the UK government's timber procurement policy is mainly demonstrated by certification under either the FSC or PEFC schemes and the schemes are very important for the implementation of the policy. As per recommendation from the Reference Board, the UK government has asked CPET to supplement the desk reviews with some field visits to further investigate the implementation of schemes. CPET will conduct observer pilot visits in 2011 to both FSC and PEFC to witness accreditation activities. Through these visits, following both

chain of custody and forest management accreditation, it is envisaged that CPET will gain an even greater understanding of schemes' operations and implementation, and therefore will be better placed to further contribute to the development of the schemes.

The final report and further details can be found on the CPET website at www.cpet.org.uk

Notes

1. The UK government's timber procurement policy requires all central government departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) to demand that all timber and wood-derived products must be from independently verifiable sustainable sources or FLEGT licensed timber only. Further details on the policy are available on the CPET website and in the Government's timber procurement advice note see www.cpet.org.uk.
2. FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) is an EU initiative to support countries to address illegal logging. A key component of FLEGT will be a licensing scheme between producer partner countries and the EU which verifies legal origin of timber. FLEGT licensed timber is expected to become available by the end of 2011, after which more detailed guidance will be available on the CPET website.