

## PEFC UNIQUE FEATURES

### What makes PEFC unique AND the system of choice?

As the largest forest certification system globally, PEFC is the certification system of choice, with over 300 million hectares of forests globally upholding PEFC's Sustainability Benchmarks. To date, more than 20,000 companies have achieved PEFC Chain of Custody certification, offering tens of thousands of PEFC-certified products globally.

With alternative forest and Chain of Custody certification systems available, there are good reasons why so many people are choosing PEFC. Here we present some of the unique and distinguishing features of PEFC when compared to other international certification systems.

#### **PEFC upholds the highest standards without exception**

- Requires compliance with all fundamental ILO Conventions in forest management since 2001, setting new benchmarks for social issues;
- Is tailored to the specific needs of family and community-owned forests, with lasting contributions to livelihoods and rural development;
- Offers well-established processes for group certification, thereby offering access to certification and the marketplace for certified products from locally controlled forestry;
- Sets the highest standards for forest certification aligned with the majority of the world's governments, including:
  - Maintaining or enhancing biodiversity
  - Identifying, protecting and/or conserving ecologically important forest areas
  - Prohibiting forest conversions and excluding certification of plantations established by conversions
  - Prohibiting use of the most hazardous chemicals and GMOs, minimizing the use of pesticides
  - Protecting workers' rights and welfare, and encouraging local employment
  - Recognizing the principle of free, prior and informed consent, the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights, and the ILO Convention
  - Respecting property, land tenure, customary and traditional rights; provisions for consultation with local people stakeholders

- Abiding by applicable laws
- Safeguarding the basic rights of workers
- Includes social, health and safety requirements in Chain of Custody certification.

#### **Level of stakeholder engagement equally high for all standards**

- Strictly separates standard-setting, certification and accreditation to ensure complete independence and impartiality;
- Requires all national standards to be independently developed with participation open to all interested parties;
- Recognizes the importance of the nine major groups as defined by Agenda 21;
- Requires that all standards undergo public consultation at national and international levels and third-party assessment;
- Demands and implements regular revisions of national certification systems.

#### **Builds on intergovernmental agreements & globally recognized processes**

- Builds its understanding of sustainable forest management on broad societal consensus as expressed in international and intergovernmental processes;
- Supports the implementation of governmental agreements through a voluntary, market-based mechanism;
- Follows globally accepted ISO Guidelines for certification and accreditation.