



Distr.
GENERAL

TIM/SEM.1/2003/R.7 (Summary)
6 January 2003

Original: ENGLISH

Seminar on
STRATEGIES FOR THE SOUND USE OF WOOD
Poiana Brasov, Romania
24-27 March 2003

Forest Certification – experiences with PEFC in Germany
Session V

Paper by Mr. Dirk Teegelbeekers,
General Secretary, PEFC Germany, Germany

Summary

The theory of science distinguishes four phases of scientific work: a problem, testing several possible solutions, eliminating the problem, evolving of a new problem. With respect to forest certification there has been the problem of fulfilling a demand, e.g. of newspaper publishers, for wood from sustainable forest management (SFM). The public has been sensitive of the destruction of tropical rainforest and a boycott of tropical timber seemed to be the only alternative but did not solve the problem.

A possible solution was the development of forest certification schemes. First the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as global approach was founded by the major environmental NGOs. In 1999 the Pan European Forest Certification (PEFC) was established as alternative to the FSC due to unsolved problems like an appropriate representation of forest owner's interests or a cost-efficient certification of small scaled forest ownership.

None of the existing forest certification scheme can be regarded as "perfect" system which is able to eliminate the problem at once. A continuous improvement is necessary and an essential component of the PEFC system. The last two years have proved that the competition between PEFC

and FSC has favoured this improvement process. It has lead, for instance, to decreased certification costs and the globalisation of PEFC.

A part of the original problem has been eliminated: now there is a sufficient supply of certified timber from sustainably managed forests. 45 million hectares of forests in Europe and over 6 million hectares in Germany (60% of the German forests) have been certified according to PEFC within three years. Another part, namely the protection of endangered tropical rainforest, remains more ore less unsolved.

And new problems have evolved: the timber market is not willing or able to promote more than one label at the point of sale. Consequently there are strong forces pushing towards mutual recognition between credible certification schemes. Latest studies in Germany reveal that there is no demand for certified/labelled timber from the end consumer. Less than two percent have ever heard from PEFC or FSC. Forest certification as a market driven tool to implement SFM is threatened by one-sided political influence, e.g. the intended procurement policy of the German government. Another risk derives from new legal regulations which adopt high certification standards to define the term "good practice".

Key words: forest certification, PEFC, demand/supply of certified timber, mutual recognition, procurement policy.
