PEFC certification of small forest owners

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Promoting Sustainable Forest Management
for more info: www.pefc.org
Purpose of forest certification

To provide confidence to customers that raw material originates in sustainably managed forests.

sustainably = set of requirements for forest management developed in an open and transparent multi-stakeholder process (what is it SFM?)

confidence = conformity assessment by a third party of forest management meeting requirements defined in advance (how to obtain the confidence?).
What is it sustainable forest management?

Helsinki definition:

“sustainable management” means the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems

•A result of human activities.

•Long-term, holistic and balanced approach instead of one-off action such as harvesting, re-forestation, forest protection.

•Sustainability approach to be implemented at the operational level but can be measured at the regional, national or even global level.
How to deliver confidence on SFM?

Statement by a third party (accredited) that “forest management activities are in compliance with SFM”:

Subject to certification is an organisation / person which has responsibility and authority for implementing SFM (i.e. taking decisions).

The design of a scheme, implementation procedures, auditing procedures shall lead to ensure confidence in the certification claim(s).
Individual certification

Individual certification: Claim: “Forest owner 1 (or 2, 3, 4, …) complies with SFM standard”

Main issue: costs
Certification of group of forest owners

Alternative to individual certification: (group, regional, multi-site, …)

“Group of forest owners meets the SFM standard”
(with a certain level of probability and based on sampling) = sampling results as well as a certification claim applies to the whole group

Key issues: uniformity of the pool, commitment of forest owners, enforceability of the commitment, structure and management system applying to the whole group
There is no difference between PEFC group and regional certification. Regional certification is a group certification limited by geographical boundaries (*better term would be “multi-site certification”*).
Why is the PEFC approach successful

In order to ensure that the claim can be used for the whole group based on sampling any application must ensure:

**Applicant (head office):**
- overall responsibility for conformity of all participants,
- inclusion and withdrawal of participants, register of participants,
- internal audits, corrective and preventive actions.

**Participant:**
- commitment to comply with SFM standard and certification rules,
- Implement actions imposed by an applicant
## PEFC and small forest owners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No of forest owners involved in certification</th>
<th>Certified area / percentage</th>
<th>Share of total forest area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>252 122</td>
<td>38 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>1976 000</td>
<td>75 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>314 345</td>
<td>22 144 082</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>20 800</td>
<td>4 351 587</td>
<td>29 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6 767</td>
<td>7 188 088</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>23 344</td>
<td>646 497</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>44 371</td>
<td>8 477 944</td>
<td>97 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>537 120</td>
<td>26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>972 152</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>24 957</td>
<td>7 047 960</td>
<td>26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>398 588</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

PEFC success re participation of small forest owners:

a) Schemes are using already existing structures of forest owners associations and co-operation between forest owners themselves,

b) Schemes do not distinguish between small and big forest owners (big forest owners help to carry costs of forest certification).

Discussion should be focused on definition of general rules and principles for certification of forest owners under one certificate rather than inventing ad hoc specific rules for specific situations.