



Position Paper

Tribal and Indigenous people, local people, local communities, forest dependent communities and the PEFC Council

Introduction

The PEFC, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes, is the world's leader in the certification of sustainable forest management (SFM). PEFC's role is to assess multi-stakeholder developed, accredited third party national forest certification schemes to ensure that the highest standards of sustainable forest management are achieved worldwide. To date 21 out of 31 national member schemes have been assessed accounting for 127 million hectares of certified forests producing over 10% of the world's industrial round wood.

With the increasing recognition by customers of the need to support and only buy wood and paper based products from certified sustainable forest management (SFM), the question increasingly arises as to how certification schemes ensure the incorporation of the interests of forest dependent communities such as indigenous people, local peoples and local communities.

To answer this question in a meaningful way requires the consideration of

- Defining who are forest dependent communities;
- How SFM, with its balance of the three pillars (social, economic and environmental criteria) takes into account the interests of forest dependent communities;
- How PEFC ensures that forest dependent communities can be involved in standard setting and certification processes including consultation to ensure not only the incorporation of their interests, but also their say and involvement in the decision making in the management of the forests they live in or are dependent upon.

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Defining Forest Dependent Communities

There are 8 intergovernmental processes for SFM supported by 165 governments around the world covering over 85% of the world's forest area, which grew out of the Statement of Forest Principles and Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

- The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE);
- The Montreal Process;
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) Criteria & Indicator for sustainable management of natural tropical forests;
- Criteria & Indicator for the sustainable management of Amazonian Forests (Tarapoto Proposal) ;
- Lepaterique Process;
- Regional Initiative of Dry Forests in Asia;
- Criteria & Indicator for sustainable management in Dry-zone Africa,
- African Timber Organization (ATO).

The definitions of forest dependent communities are specific to the geographical coverage of these intergovernmental processes and different terms are used for people who live in, near or from a forest. So for example whereas the ITTO refers to forest dependent communities, tribal and indigenous peoples and or local communities based in part on definitions such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, the Montreal Process refers to local populations; the needs of societies, forest dependent communities including indigenous peoples and the MCPFE refers to local communities, forest owners and local peoples. The latter also covers "indigenous peoples" such as the Sami in the Nordic countries for example. What all these definitions have in common is that they cover anyone who lives in, from or near to forestlands.

How SFM covers Indigenous peoples, local peoples and communities

There is a need to explain better what SFM actually entails and covers, in particular with regards to humans and thus also the social criteria as they relate especially to all local peoples, in particular local communities and indigenous peoples wherever these are located.

SFM is based on the environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of forests for present and future generations. This definition derives from the intergovernmental processes on sustainable forest management supported by 165 governments around the world and the thousands of stakeholder groups, including local peoples, involved in its development and definition. All local peoples, including local communities and indigenous peoples are covered by the intergovernmental processes for SFM, including the MCPFE, ITTO, ATO, Montreal process and others.

SFM intergovernmental processes and the certification of SFM cover all aspects of forest management and, in as far as it affects all indigenous peoples, local peoples and local communities, it covers:

- Their property rights and or land tenure or user rights and agreements
- Their customary and traditional rights relating to the forest land and other rights
- The protection and management of specific historical, archaeological, cultural and or spiritually significant sites to ensure they are managed with due regard to the significance to the sites
- Making the best use of local and indigenous forest related experience and knowledge
- The involvement of indigenous peoples, local communities and other forest dependent communities in forest management capacity-building, consultation processes, decision making and implementation (ITTO)

The three pillars of SFM, namely social, environmental and economic are all relevant to indigenous and local peoples, and in addition to the above address safe working conditions, training, and the consideration of new opportunities for employment in connection with the social economic functions of forests.

How PEFC incorporates indigenous peoples and other local peoples inputs

The intergovernmental processes for SFM, which were developed with open, transparent and multi-stakeholder participation, form a central element and the basis of all PEFC endorsed forest certification schemes.

The elements of the intergovernmental processes on land tenure rights, customary and traditional rights, protecting historical, archaeological, cultural or spiritually significant sites, the use of indigenous related experience and knowledge and the involvement of indigenous people and forest dependent communities in consultation, decision making and implementation, are important elements of PEFC certification.

The PEFC Council is unique in that it is the only global certification system in the world, which insists on and only recognises the results of a full national standards setting process in which all local stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, local communities and other local peoples can fully participate.

Local peoples, communities and indigenous peoples views are considered along with all other stakeholder views and consensus is required for all national schemes which are endorsed by the PEFC Council.

The public consultation process during a certification audit ensures their views are considered for the forests of most importance to their livelihoods.

As a result indigenous and other local peoples can participate in both the development of the criteria for SFM, the standard setting process and in the public consultation process which accompanies a certification audit for the forest they live in, near or are dependent upon.

PEFC Council
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