



Event Covered: 2016 PEFC Forest Certification Week held in Bali, Indonesia, November 14 to 18, 2016



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This report covers the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification's (PEFC) Forest Certification Week held in Bali, Indonesia from November 14-18, 2016, where 230 participants from 40 countries came together to discuss progress made on PEFC forest certification efforts and sustainable forest management (SFM). National governing bodies (NGBs), certification and accreditation bodies, non-

governmental organizations, academics and representatives from the timber, pulp and paper and other industries were represented. The PEFC endorses national forest certification systems that have demonstrated compliance with their globally recognized Sustainability Benchmark. National forest management standards must be tailored to country-specific priorities, as defined through a multistakeholder, consensus-driven process. The PEFC Forest Week 2016 was comprised of the general meeting that featured technical updates from heads of units, the general assembly attended by the PEFC body (including the NGBs), and finally the PEFC Stakeholder Dialogue that explored the role of forest certification and sustainable supply chains in promoting sustainable landscapes for sustainable livelihoods, the main theme for the week.

Day 1: Reflections

The first day featured updates on the progress the PEFC has made over the year in its work toward achieving SFM through independent certification. The PEFC standard is being reviewed and strengthened, with work being carried out on how to address issues such as forest conversion to plantations, the role of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and the rights of indigenous and forest communities. Six working groups¹ are currently under way, with one scheduled to start in 2017. The issue of certifying trees outside of areas delineated as forests was also discussed as they currently remain outside the scope of the PEFC, and could have potential for improving SFM, especially for smallholders. The certification of ecosystem services is another

issue being discussed for inclusion within the PEFC certification, and a case study is underway to overcome its methodological difficulties and determine its feasibility.

In a breakout session, participants sought to determine how the NGBs benefit from PEFC membership in ways that differ from the organization's provision of a global framework for the development and management of national forest certification systems and how they, in turn, add value to the PEFC. Participants determined that their PEFC membership allowed for access to a global forestry network that feeds into their development and pursuance of SFM. This global network is grounded in local experiences that allow for improved forest management learning opportunities. They highlighted that the PEFC also facilitates improved export options for its members by helping to clarify myths about the forestry industry and by providing assistance with public procurement through verified, first-hand information. PEFC membership also enables access to information and experiences through networks to reach goals—including increased diversity of sustainably managed forests through knowledge creation; improved risk management; and solidarity where the group represents the interests of one member on a particular issue. Participants recognized that international recognition is gained from PEFC certification and they concluded that the PEFC stimulates global forest management improvements, with a snowball effect that results in collective change in livelihoods globally.

The PEFC members saw themselves as a positive face of globalization since each new NGB widens the perspective of others, bringing credibility while challenging systemic assumptions and fostering growth. Further, they highlighted that the increasing presence of tropical countries within the PEFC network improves the image of the organization by showing that it is international and growth-oriented. Participants of the breakout session did, however, recognize that there is room for improvement, suggesting that the PEFC devise a strong, coherent approach to responding to criticism from the

¹ Working Group 1: Sustainable Forest Management Standard, Working Group 2: Forest Management Certification Procedures and Group Certification, Working Group 3: Standard Setting Procedures, Working Group 4: Chain of Custody and Labelling, Working Group 5: Chain of Custody Certification, Working Group 6: Endorsement Process.



Enabling Communications for Sustainability in Supply Chains

Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSSs) often act as pseudo-governance systems for enabling sustainability in supply chains. The PEFC has been contributing to this endeavour in the forestry sector since 1999. A key function of VSSs is to provide communication platforms that allow the various stakeholders in supply chains to debate and discuss how to enable sustainable consumption and production. One of the most important VSS communication efforts is the establishment of annual multistakeholder meetings. To this end, the PEFC annually hosts the “PEFC Forest Week” to explore specific themes, challenges and opportunities related to enabling sustainability in forestry. Members of the PEFC expressed their hopes for the PEFC Forest Week 2016, and reflected on its accomplishments.

Natalie Hufnagel-Jovy, PEFC Vice Chairman, shared that the PEFC is expanding its reach. Given the very strong commonalities between the values of European family forest owners and those of forest owners in Asia, the Forest Certification Week provided an opportunity to share experiences and challenges, with the stakeholders’ dialogue helping to chart the way forward. Dradjad Wibowo, Host, Indonesian Forestry Certification Cooperation (IFCC) Chairman hoped that the meeting would be a milestone in the PEFC’s journey to be a world leader in certification. Reflecting especially on Indonesia, he highlighted the need to expand the implementation of PEFC to provide solutions for tough challenges such as forest fires and illegal forestry. He noted that Indonesia has over 1 million hectares of certified forest that serve as a model to other Asian countries.

outside, clearly identifying their benefits and strengths. Work should be done on improving the public procurement process, on ensuring that the PEFC is clearer in its communications, and on helping NGBs to feel like more of a family.

Day 2: Updates

The second day featured updates from heads of units at PEFC International, the supporting centre of the wider PEFC network. It highlighted how PEFC International is working to meet some of the issues identified by participants at the close of Day 1. Regarding the earlier identified need for clear communication in material emanating from the PEFC, Thorsten Arndt, Head of Communications, explained that the unit is publishing updates on the organization’s work more widely through improved social media outreach. To ensure that communication is useful and clear for the members of the PEFC network, the PEFC is developing and offering trainings for participants as noted by Michael Berger of the Technical Unit. Further, Berger highlighted the work the unit is doing toward supporting clear communication even outside of the PEFC network by working on trademark protection and tracking of the PEFC brand, including online use and misuse. This effort plays a central role in ensuring that the goods that are branded with the PEFC logo come from sustainably managed forests.

In working toward making members of the PEFC feel more like a family through cohesion and collaboration, Sarah Price, from the Projects and Development Unit, described how the unit brokered collaboration between members by supporting scheme

developments in 18 countries and pursuing regional initiatives in the Congo Basin, Balkans, Asia and South America. Strengthening the PEFC family features both collaboration and growth. To that end, Price pointed out that the PEFC is making progress in getting recognized in the Congo Basin, starting with Gabon, an area that covers 2 million hectares. Cameroon’s scheme is nearing completion, and the NGB is being formed in Congo. Work is being done on a regional approach to scheme administration with funding options being currently pursued. PEFC’s presence is also growing in South East Asia.

The unit is exploring synergies between PEFC and Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), and connections are being made between FLEGT funding sources and certification measures in some countries. Further, they are continuing to support the emergence of inclusive smallholder certification that is affordable and accessible. The unit is working with Connecting Natural Values and People (CNVP) in the Balkans. In South America, promotion initiatives are ongoing in Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Uruguay. Information is being shared amongst this grouping with cooperation taking place at the regional level. The priorities for 2017 are welcoming new members, attracting larger sums of money to support projects, fostering a higher profile and recognition of PEFC globally, and stimulating and delivering innovation within the organization. Further, Fabienne Sinclair addressed marketing issues, explaining that training tools are available to facilitate learning. Highlighting that there is an increasing demand for certified material, she highlighted the unit’s greater outreach in terms of packaging and their efforts to network with new companies.



PEFC's 21st General Assembly

Day 3: General Assembly

The general assembly took place on the third day of the PEFC Forest Certification Week. A new working group was proposed to examine the PEFC funding structure and mechanism. Ben Gunneberg, CEO of PEFC International, updated the assembly, continuing the focus on strengthening the PEFC family by explaining that there has been a 3.24 per cent growth of chain of custody certificates and a growth of 35 million hectares, half of which originates from Australia. Ghana, Hungary and the Republic of Korea are now PEFC members, taking the organization to 43 national members. There are also 25 international stakeholder members. Further, he highlighted how PEFC International was working toward strengthening the PEFC network. He identified some of the key areas being addressed, including standards revision, the launch of the South America promotion initiative, the training programs available and being developed, the collaboration between members as collaborative clusters, and efforts to ensure that procurement policies facilitate global access to trade.

However, the PEFC Council observed that more work should be done on empowering the PEFC network.² As such, NGBs, stakeholders and actors should be strengthened both individually and collaboratively. A strengthened network should increase the resources available for facilitating participation in PEFC-related activities while ensuring that work continues in respective countries. Gunneberg also encouraged the sharing of knowledge and cross-cutting communication across members, emphasizing the importance of shaping PEFC into a learning organization. He also highlighted that the impact of certification is important. While some of the impact is clear at the national level, he insisted that the PEFC can have an even greater effect on SFM by empowering the network.

Three new country member applications—from Romania, Republic of Macedonia and Thailand—were accepted unanimously, and all country members and their representatives were formally introduced to the general assembly. Peter Latham was elected as Chairman, Natalie Hufnagel-Jovy was elected First Vice Chair (Representing Forest Owners). Juan Carlos Jintiach (Representing Indigenous People), Genevieve Chua (Representing Traders\Buyers), Fermin Olable (Representing Forest Owners), David Ford (Representing Forest Owners) and Eduardo Rojas Briales were elected as members to the PEFC Board. Olivier Bertrand and Pedro Albizu stepped down from the board. The day closed with a call for developing solutions to large-scale global challenges such as climate change, poverty,

ecosystem health, development challenges, biodiversity and human rights.

Day 4: PEFC Stakeholders Dialogue: “No single solution”

In the closing two days of the PEFC Forest Certification Week, the PEFC Stakeholder Dialogue was held to explore the role of forest certification and sustainable supply chains in promoting landscape approaches for sustainable livelihoods. There was a wide variety of presentations and panel discussions on sustainable forest management issues, with a diverse set of participants and organizations represented. The landscape approach was discussed as an integrated means of thinking about competing land uses, environmental and developmental priorities, and to identify opportunities for adaptation and scaling-up solutions.

The incoming chairman, Peter Latham, started the Stakeholder Dialogue by outlining the need to match the supply of certified fibre with demand, and to look at forests in a wider context. Certification must protect forests but also create value through the supply and demand for certified products. Certification has great potential because of the many environmental benefits that it can support. Quantifying these benefits, however, remains a challenge.

The panel entitled “Bridging the Gap: Sustainable Forests, Agriculture and Food Security” led by Terry Sunderland of the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), examined forestry in relation to the SDGs and climate change impacts.³ Questions were asked about the innovative nature of the landscape approach, given that previous approaches have attempted to incorporate stakeholders in conservation efforts. The panellists explained that interventions need to integrate stakeholders from the outset, so they can be involved in measuring impact, monitoring and reporting. Sunderland highlighted that there will always be trade-offs at the landscape scale.

Sadanandan Nambiar, Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), stated that forestry plays an essential role in addressing poverty in the rural forest landscapes of developing countries. He highlighted that climate change mitigation efforts will not be successful if they are at the expense of the economy and living standards. He argued that conservation and sustainable resource use are not opposing values. Charles Barber (Director of the Forest Legality Initiative in the

² The PEFC network includes the PEFC international, national members, international stakeholder members and the general assembly.

³ CIFOR is aiming to address growing populations, changing consumption patterns, economic growth, equitable justice, migration and increased climate variability by aligning forestry with the Sustainable Development Goals.



Stakeholder Dialogue

Forests Program of the World Resources Institute [WRI]), another panel member, explained that in a complex political milieu, forest certification agencies and advocacy for forest conservation remain important. Consumer expectations are also important because people want to know the origin and the impacts of the goods they buy. Dr. Rufi'ie, of the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry, explained that ensuring the legality of raw materials in supply chains is important.

The dialogue highlighted the need for certification systems to adapt and change to deal with new developments and expectations. Ensuring that ecological conservation is compatible with poverty alleviation, human rights, labour and other concerns was also discussed. The affordability of certification for smallholders was an important consideration due to their importance for enabling landscape approaches. Several examples were presented to offer insights on how collaborative approaches could benefit forest communities, wildlife and conservation.

Day Five: Additional Impacts of Forest Certification

The second day of the stakeholder's dialogue and final day of the PEFC Forest Certification Week saw several perspectives being posited on the role of forests and landscape approaches to achieve SFM through parallel side events. Wendy Young Sze Yee of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia, in one such event, demonstrated that forest certification plays an important role in ensuring species are protected in some areas. Melvin Gumal of the Wildlife Conservation Society, described how forest certification enables biodiversity

conservation by providing a framework for landscape and tree audits. Panellists highlighted other forest certification impacts, such as facilitating forest management requiring stakeholder collaboration, forest landscape restoration, maintaining livelihood and an openness to learning from experience.

In a panel discussion led by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) designed to explore the operationalization of the landscape approach, the representative of Asia Pulp and Paper, Dewi Bramono, explained that local and central governments remain important to set regulatory boundaries. She asserted the importance of helping communities meet their economic needs because they can be a direct threat to forests. Yu Ling of the China Forest Certification Council (CFCC) explained that non-timber forest products could enable social development and support farmers. Many participants and panellists emphasized the importance of recognizing the central role of people in sustainable development. Appropriate tools should be used to work with local communities and obtain their consent.

The day closed with reflections on the following key takeaways: 1) forests and trees are critical landscape components that deliver a range of products and services, 2) the viability of forests and forestry must be economically strong and 3) multistakeholder collaboration and shared objectives are paramount to managing landscapes sustainably. These takeaways highlight the need for ensuring that forestry supports sustainable livelihoods for communities living within landscapes in and in proximity to forests for which forest certification can play—and has often played—an important enabling role.

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