

# PASSING IT ALONG

COMMUNICATING CHAIN  
OF CUSTODY TO SUPPLIERS  
AND CUSTOMERS



## ABOUT PEFC

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) is an international not-for-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting Sustainable Forest Management through independent third-party certification. It works throughout the entire forest supply chain to promote good practice in the forest and to ensure that timber and non-timber forest products are sourced with respect for the highest ecological, social and ethical standards.

PEFC is an umbrella organization. It works by endorsing national forest certification systems developed collaboratively by all interested stakeholders, from forest owner to businesses and NGO's,

and tailored to local priorities, needs and conditions. Each national forest certification system undergoes rigorous third-party assessment against PEFC's unique Sustainability Benchmarks.

These Benchmarks are based on broad consensus by society, expressed in globally respected international and intergovernmental processes and guidelines for the promotion of SFM. The Benchmark criteria are regularly revised through multi-stakeholder processes to take account of new scientific knowledge, societal change, evolving expectations and to incorporate the latest best practices derived from practical experiences on the ground.

Today, PEFC has recognized certification systems in about 30 countries. Together they account for over 230 million hectares of certified forests, making PEFC the world's largest forest certification system. It is the certification system of choice for small forest owners including family and community-owned forests. PEFC-certified materials are accepted by numerous public and private procurement policies worldwide.



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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Congratulations on the award of your PEFC Chain of Custody certificate. You are now part of the 'PEFC family', a unique forest certification system that includes more than half a million forest owners and managers throughout the world, and join over 10,000 companies globally that have achieved PEFC Chain of Custody certification.

With more than 230 million hectares of forest worldwide certified to its Sustainability Benchmarks, PEFC is the world's largest forest certification system. It is also the first forest certification system that requires

companies to comply with social, health and safety requirements, based on the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998). In addition to providing assurances about the sustainable sourcing of wood and wood-based products, these requirements provide an extra layer of confidence to consumers and buyers that workers' rights in companies along the supply chain have been respected.

Your company is part of this important initiative, and while it is laudable that you are – through PEFC certification – supporting responsible forest management around the world, there's also a clear business case for certified companies.

As consumer demand for products from environmentally-friendly sources

continues to grow, demand for certified products is also increasing, and Chain of Custody certification brings with it several important advantages.

In the pages that follow we will explain how you can make the most of your certification and so reap the benefits of these advantages.

Crucially, we will make suggestions the value of PEFC certification as a communications and marketing tool and give examples of how you can use your certified status to position your brand or products within increasingly competitive markets – in cooperation with PEFC, if desired.

# BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

PEFC Chain of Custody certification offers several important benefits.

**Helps to protect the world's forests** – as pressure increases on the goods and services that forest ecosystems provide, forest certification offers assurances that forests are managed sustainably and helps to curb illegal logging.

**Access to markets** – provides companies in the value chain with access to markets demanding environmentally responsible products; and it offers market advantages when compared to companies with uncertified products.

**Risk management** – includes social, health and safety requirements to protect the fundamental rights of workers along the supply chain. It is the first international system to incorporate such requirements.

**Availability and choice** – two-thirds of the world's certified forest area is certified to PEFC. This is currently more than 230 million hectares, offering the widest supply of certified fibre and timber.

**Alignment with legality legislation** – PEFC's Due Diligence System (DDS) excludes wood from conversions, illegal and controversial sources.

**Traceability** – offers assurances that the certified wood or fibre in a final product can be traced back to sustainable sources managed with due respect for environmental, economic and social standards.

## WHY CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION?

While Sustainable Forest Management is crucial in maintaining and enhancing the goods and services that forests provide, it does not provide the link from the forest to the market.

In order to provide assurances that wood and wood-based products can be traced back to sustainably managed forests, PEFC promotes Chain of Custody certification. This is a mechanism that outlines requirements for tracking certified material from sustainably managed forests to the final product.

Unique in the world of forest certification, PEFC Chain of Custody certification also includes requirements protecting workers' fundamental social, health, and safety rights.

For a product or products to qualify for Chain of Custody certification, all entities along the supply chain must be certified. Only then are companies eligible to use the PEFC label and logo on products and in product marketing to promote their responsible sourcing of material.





## WHY COMMUNICATE YOUR COMPANY'S CERTIFIED STATUS?

Certification is a selling point on a par with product features and quality. In short, certification should be an integral part of your marketing activities.

As consumer demand for environmentally responsible goods is continuously growing, PEFC certification can help highlight the sustainability of your company's products and allows you to distinguish yourself in the marketplace.

### **A clear and transparent message**

– the PEFC logo and label on your certified product communicates to your customers in a clear, concise and transparent manner that your wood, wood products, and non-timber forest products have been sourced from

sustainably managed forests and that they have been manufactured with due respect for workers' rights.

**Enhances brand value** – certification and the corresponding use of the logo and label enhances your brand image, especially among consumers whose preference is for responsibly manufactured products. Products carrying the PEFC logo are preferred by consumers seeking environmentally and socially responsible products.

### **Business leadership on**

**sustainability** – by choosing PEFC Chain of Custody certification, businesses such as yours enhance their competitive advantage over other suppliers in the value chain.

**Certified really is certified** – under the PEFC standard, for a product to carry the PEFC label it must contain no less than 70% certified material, the highest benchmark of any forest certification system globally.

## WHO SHOULD YOU TELL?

The starting point for communicating your PEFC-certified status is to identify your audience. This will ensure that you reach out to all appropriate stakeholders, from your business partners through to consumers.

Your audience may include:

**Customers** – your customers are among the most important audience to communicate your PEFC-certified status to. Your decision to obtain certification is likely to impact on them and determine some of their procurement choices.

Customers that have themselves achieved certification may appreciate that you can provide them with PEFC-certified material, and make you their procurement source of choice. Potential customers seeking certified material will favour you over non-certified suppliers and likely put more business your way. Customers yet to achieve certification may be encouraged to seek PEFC certification themselves, knowing that you are able to supply PEFC-certified products.

**Suppliers** – some of your suppliers may already be certified and providing you with PEFC-certified material. Knowing that you have achieved certification will provide them with added impetus to remain your supplier of certified material. For non-certified

suppliers, the knowledge that you are certified may encourage them to follow your lead in order to supply you with certified material you receive. Communicating your PEFC-certified status to suppliers will therefore both diversify and strengthen your supply chain.

**Employees** – research shows that staff are increasingly attracted to organizations with a strong corporate social responsibility ethos and a commitment to ethical practices. Raising awareness among your staff and employees of your certified status is proof of your commitment to such practices and can help you attract the most talented and dedicated staff. It can also help retain employee loyalty.

It is crucial that your employees are aware of your PEFC-certified status and understand fully what this means. In addition to employees directly responsible for managing your Chain of Custody certification, other employees such as your sales team need to understand **what certification means** so that they can discuss it knowledgeably with colleagues, customers, sector peers, etc. Your employees are your messengers and excellent assets to profile your sustainable goals externally.

**Consumers** – as consumers increasingly demand products from

environmentally-friendly sources, respecting for the highest ethical standards, your PEFC certification becomes an important selling point. For this reason, communicating your PEFC-certified status to consumers is crucial and will offer you a competitive advantage over organizations that have not acquired certification.

There are other stakeholders that are potentially interested in knowing about your PEFC-certified status. This includes **shareholders** who will appreciate your responsible sourcing practices as an important element of your corporate social responsibility commitments; **banks** and **financial rating agencies** that consider PEFC certification positively in the assessment of your company; or your **local community** which will appreciate knowing your company is operating responsibly.

# EASY TO UNDERSTAND MESSAGING: THE PEFC LOGO AND LABEL

## USING THE LOGO

Communicating your certified status does not require costly marketing campaigns or significant changes to your current communications strategy. It can be simply achieved by placing the PEFC logo on your goods and products, marketing and advertising materials, and company letterheads and documentation. In that way, whether on store shelves or in showrooms, on letters or invoices, in catalogues or on your website, your PEFC-certified status is prominent.

Using the logo and label enables you to:

- Demonstrate your commitment to sustainable development and corporate social responsibility
- attract environmentally and socially-minded customers and consumers
- help generate demand for products from PEFC-certified forests
- highlight your engagement in sustainable forest management

PEFC has three distinct labels: the PEFC Certified and PEFC Recycled labels for on-product use and the Promoting Sustainable Forest Management label for off-product use.

## ON-PRODUCT USE

On-product use of the PEFC Certified and PEFC Recycled labels implies use of the logo and label on:

- Physical unpackaged products, e.g. pencils, furniture
- Packaging products, e.g. stationary, decking boards
- Containers, e.g. food and drink containers
- Wrapping and packaging e.g. paper and boxes used to wrap products
- Containers used for transportation of products, e.g. packing boxes, crates, pallets

On-product use also includes use of the logo and label on:

- Documentation associated with a particular PEFC Certified product, e.g. invoices, packaging lists, envelopes
- Marketing materials for specific products, e.g. catalogues, brochures, advertisements



*Certified label (On-product)*



*Recycled label (On-product)*

## OFF-PRODUCT USE

Off-product use of the Promoting Sustainable Forest Management label implies the use of the insignia on/at/in:

- Reports and brochures, e.g. annual reports, CSR reports
- Trade fairs, e.g. on stand signage
- In-store, e.g. posters
- Advertisements, e.g. posters, flyers
- Company websites
- Company letterhead
- Promotional material



*Off-product label*

## SOME RULES TO REMEMBER

The PEFC labels and logo are registered trademarks, as a result they are protected and their use is subject to stringent conditions. Only those bodies that have been certified and received a logo license and

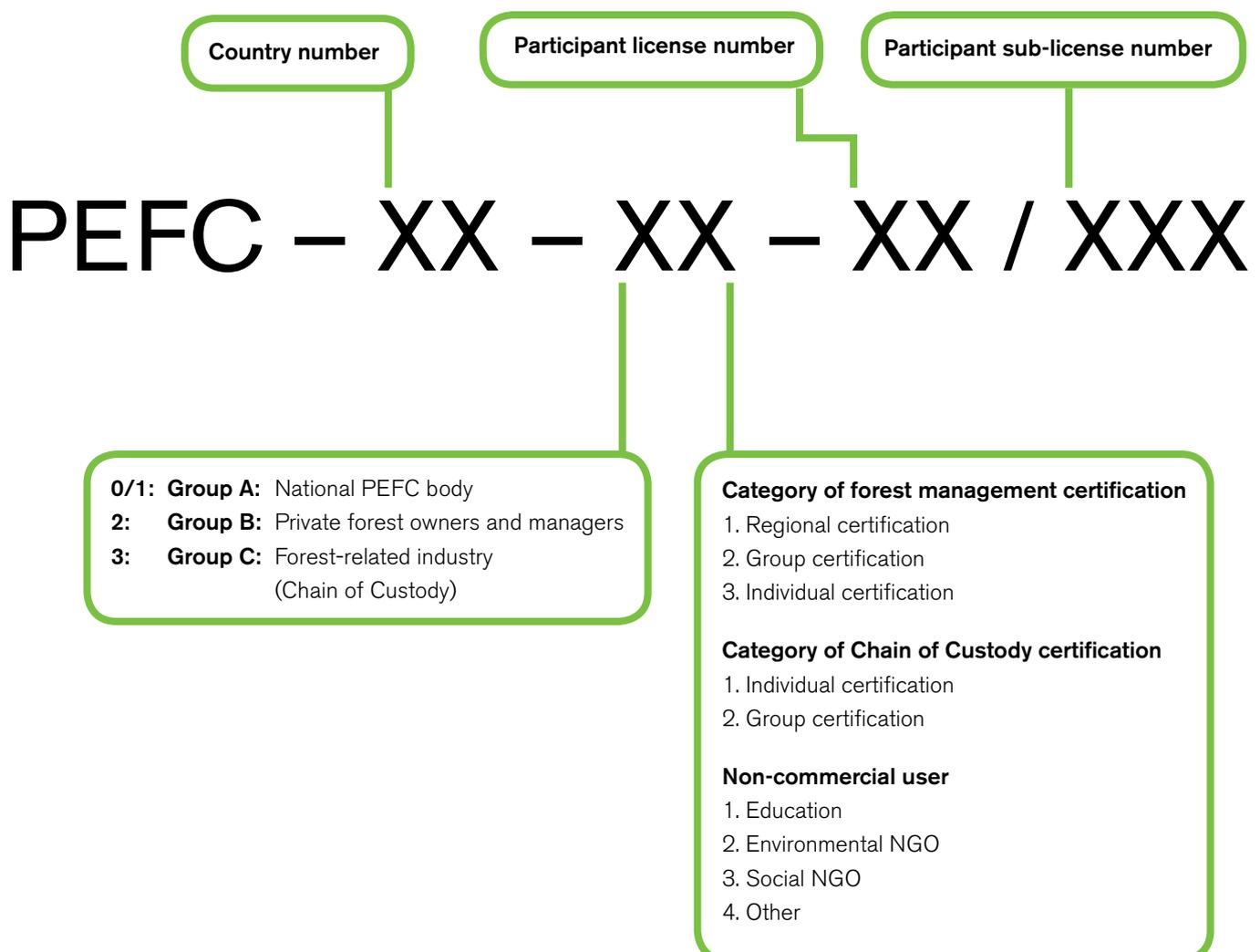
their personalized logo number are authorized to use them. Each logo license number is unique and allows ready identification of the holder.

The PEFC label and logo must conform to the visual presentation, colours, and other specifications

outlined in the Logo Use Toolkit. The Toolkit is available at: <http://pefc.org/resources/brochures/item/687>. Only products with a minimum of 70% PEFC-certified material may carry the PEFC label.

## IDENTIFYING THE COMPONENTS OF YOUR PEFC LOGO NUMBER

All PEFC logo license numbers follow the same format which makes them easy to decipher.



# ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

## CO-BRAND INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

If you would like to co-brand material provided by PEFC such as brochures and posters to include your company's logo and other information, contact us to discuss your specific needs in more detail.

In addition to labelling, other platforms are available to you to inform stakeholders of your PEFC-certified status.

To assist you with this, PEFC has developed several free-of-charge templates on which you can base your announcements and information. These are available as part of the PEFC Welcome Kit and as web-based templates and accessible at [www.pefc.org/communicate](http://www.pefc.org/communicate).

## PEFC WELCOME KIT

**Press release** – PEFC has developed a press release template which can be used to announce your PEFC certification to the media and other stakeholders.

**PEFC posters** – several different PEFC posters are available. Distribute these within your company and to your suppliers and customers.

**PEFC sign** – this sign bearing the PEFC label and logo can be hung in your office, in your warehouse, or in your centre of operations to indicate your PEFC-certified status.

**PEFC Information Card** – this double-sided, pocket-sized card contains some key points about PEFC and certification. Distribute it to all your employees so that they can “talk the talk”.

**PEFC brochures** – these short informational flyers might come in handy to inform your business partners, suppliers, customers, employees and others about PEFC. Contact PEFC for additional copies, or download them as PDF files from [www.pefc.org/communicate](http://www.pefc.org/communicate) for electronic distribution.

**PEFC INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF FOREST CERTIFICATION**

**We stand for sustainability**

PEFC is an independent, not-for-profit NGO promoting sustainable forest management through forest and Chain of Custody certification.

Forest certification assures that forests are managed in line with challenging environmental, social, and economic requirements (See overview).

Chain of Custody certification enables certified material to be tracked from the forest to the final product.

The PEFC logo – the green trees symbol – allows consumers to easily identify your PEFC-certified products with confidence.



**CARING FOR OUR FORESTS GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY**

**PEFC's Sustainability Benchmarks include requirements to:**

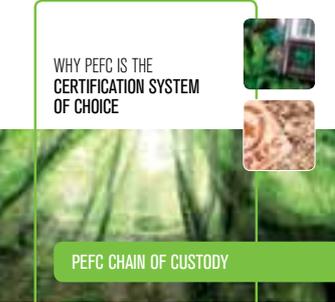
- Safeguard ecologically important forest areas
- Protect and enhance biological diversity
- Prohibit forest conversions
- Prohibit most hazardous chemicals
- Prohibit genetically modified trees
- Respect the rights of workers and indigenous peoples
- Encourage local employment
- Comply with fundamental ILO conventions
- Provide consultation with local people and stakeholders
- Respect traditional land rights and local customs

Want to know more? Visit [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org)

**ARCHITECTS, DESIGNERS AND CERTIFIED TIMBER**



**WHY PEFC IS THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM OF CHOICE**



**PEFC CHAIN OF CUSTODY**



**GROWING DEMAND FOR THE PEFC LOGO**

In response to increasing global buyer demand for products made from sustainable sources, many consumers, leading paper merchants are offering a range of PEFC certified papers, with more and more companies obtaining PEFC Chain of Custody certification.

Now increasing numbers of publishers and brand owners are opting to use the PEFC logo on their publications to demonstrate responsible paper sourcing.

The PEFC logo is a symbol of national and international trust, with global publications such as The Economist and publisher's and companies from all sectors opting to use the PEFC logo on their publications, brochures, and reports.



**WHY CHOOSE PEFC?**

Concrete sustainability policies often seek to ensure that your firm uses responsible raw logs and sustainable sources. One of the easiest ways of demonstrating that your firm comes from responsibly managed forests is to source from forests that have been independently certified. Certification also ensures that products are tracked through the supply chain.

Partnerships with PEFC bring the best global system to include social requirements in global forest certification, the basic rights of potentially millions of workers along the supply chain are protected.

**CHAIN OF CUSTODY**

- Workers' protection
- Environmental protection
- Chain of custody
- PEFC logo
- The best companies

**PEFC PROGRAMME FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF FOREST CERTIFICATION**

The Benchmark criteria are regularly revised through multi-stakeholder

**ABOUT PEFC**

Founded in 1988, the Programme for the Enhancement of Forest Certification (PEFC) is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) through independent third-party certification. It works throughout the sector to set rigorous criteria for responsible forest practices and to ensure that timber and non-timber forest products are sourced with respect for the highest environmental, social and ethical standards.

Each nation that participates in PEFC is led by an industry system-led, independent, multi-stakeholder body. These bodies coordinate and globally harmonize the requirements for responsible forest management to contribute to sustainable development.

PEFC is an umbrella organization made up of industry national forest certification systems developed collaboratively by all interested stakeholders and tailored to local policies and conditions. Such national forest certification systems undergo rigorous third-party assessment against PEFC's Common Sustainability Benchmarks.

These Benchmarks are based on broad consensus by society, represent a global environmental, international and intergovernmental process and published for the promotion of SFM. The Benchmark criteria are regularly revised through

multi-stakeholder processes to take account of new scientific knowledge, national change-making opportunities and to incorporate the most up-to-date best practices.

Today, PEFC has recognized such national forest certification systems in about 30 countries. Together these account for more than 200 million hectares of certified forest, making PEFC the world's largest forest certification system. In the certification system of choice for most forest owners including family and community-owned forests, PEFC-certified forests are assessed by independent public and private international public standards.

**INTRODUCTION**

Forests contain some of the most valuable and biodiverse ecosystems on the planet. They:

- give food, fuel, energy, medicines, and wood
- generate biodiversity by giving habitats and shelter for all kinds of life
- are an integral part of the Water and Carbon cycles, and prevent desertification and have a fundamental role in climate regulation

Without forests, many of these services would be lost, with many of the species with which we would share the planet unable to survive. An estimated 1.3 billion people worldwide are heavily dependent on forests and the services they provide. In the tropics, roughly 1 billion and related industry sectors account for a significant share of the global economy.

We forests are among the most valuable ecosystems. Thanks to forests, the world's climate includes land conversion for agriculture and mining development and water expansion, unsustainable forestry practices and illegal logging.

Today, the sustainability imperative and increasing environmental awareness mean that there is a clear need for responsible companies in the forest and forest-products sectors to demonstrate that they are operating sustainably. Customers and consumers expect products to be responsibly sourced to meet the highest environmental, economic and social standards.

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PEFC Sustainable Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification meet these standards and requirements. Their third-party auditors verify that the standards are being applied in practice.

## WEB-BASED TEMPLATES

**Seminars and webinars (employee/supplier/customer)** – seminar presentations offer an effective vehicle for communication: they enable interaction and a chance to reach a large audience for information and training purposes. PEFC has developed templates for seminar presentations, and PEFC representatives are happy to provide further assistance in the preparation and delivery of seminars.

**Company presentations** – information about your PEFC certification can be integrated into presentations given by company representatives with readily available template slides.

**Company website** – your website is an effective tool to disseminate information about your PEFC-certified status. Add the PEFC logo to your website, take advantage of short template descriptions to include on your website, and add a copy of your Chain of Custody certificate as proof of certification.

## OTHER PLATFORMS

**Internal newsletter and intranet** – publish information about your PEFC-certified status in your internal newsletter; this is a particularly effective way of reaching out to your staff.

**Customer newsletter** – include information about your PEFC-certified status in your customer newsletter and other documents sent to external audiences.

**Company visits** – invite your customers and suppliers to witness certification in action by organizing visits to your company or operations. Similarly, contact your national PEFC member organization to arrange a fieldtrip to a certified forest. This will also offer customers and suppliers a chance to meet with certified forest owners and managers.

**Trade shows** – showcasing your PEFC-certified products and information about PEFC at your trade show stand demonstrates your commitment to responsible forestry and your PEFC-certified status to a multitude of customers and suppliers.

**Advertisements** – highlight your certification by including the PEFC logo on your advertisements: newspapers, flyers, direct mail, radio, TV, and web-based.

**Product catalogue** – clearly identify PEFC-certified products in your print and online product catalogues.

## PROMOTE YOUR CERTIFIED STATUS THROUGH PEFC

**Case stories** – take advantage of free-of charge promotional opportunities for your products and company, provided by PEFC. Stories about successful experiences are a particularly effective communications tool. Tell your story and submit it to PEFC. It will be integrated in the online PEFC Case Study Library and potentially be utilized for PEFC publications and presentations.

**PEFC Showcase** – ensure that a picture of your certified products is included in PEFC's Product Showcase, a display of thousands of products that carry the PEFC logo.

**PEFC Information System** – add your certified products to the PEFC's Information System, which serves as a repository for all things certified, including companies, forest owners/managers, certification bodies, and products. The information system, which is an important tool for companies to verify the PEFC-certified status of suppliers and customers alike, is available at <http://info.pefc.org>.

**Certified product samples** – PEFC regularly seeks products for display at trade shows, conferences, and exhibitions. Get your products featured at these events by sending us a product sample.

### CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THESE AND OTHER COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

We are always interested in discussing new communication ideas with certified companies. Contact us at +41 22 799 4540 or [info@pefc.org](mailto:info@pefc.org)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Get the best communication value out of your PEFC-certification with the information contained in this guide. This guide and the material it references, plus additional resources and updates are available at [www.pefc.org/communicate](http://www.pefc.org/communicate).

We also invite you to stay up-to-date with PEFC:

- The latest news and information about PEFC at [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org)
- Our newsletter at [www.pefc.org/newsletters](http://www.pefc.org/newsletters) or the PEFC RSS feed at [www.pefc.org/rss](http://www.pefc.org/rss)
- Follow us on
  - Twitter** ([twitter.com/PEFC](https://twitter.com/PEFC)),
  - LinkedIn** ([linkd.in/PEFCInternational](https://linkd.in/PEFCInternational)),
  - Facebook** ([facebook.com/PEFCInternational](https://facebook.com/PEFCInternational)),
  - Youtube** ([youtube.com/PEFCInternational](https://youtube.com/PEFCInternational)),
  - Scribd** ([scribd.com/PEFCInternational](https://scribd.com/PEFCInternational)),
  - SlideShare** ([slideshare.net/PEFC](https://slideshare.net/PEFC))

### CONTACT PEFC INTERNATIONAL

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[www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org)

### CONTACT NATIONAL PEFC MEMBERS

In addition, most national PEFC members maintain websites and newsletters and many also use social media. We invite you to visit the websites of national PEFC members in countries that you are interested in and obtain further information directly from them.