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FSC POLICY

MODULAR APPROACHES TO FOREST CERTIFICATION

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The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organisation based in Bonn, Germany.

The mission of the Forest Stewardship Council is to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC develops, supports and promotes international, national and regional standards in line with its mission; evaluates, accredits and monitors certification bodies which verify the use of FSC standards; provides training and information; and promotes the use of products that carry the FSC logo.

The FSC Board of Directors approved the following as FSC policy in relation to 'stepwise', 'modular' or 'phased' approaches (referred to collectively as 'modular approaches') to forest certification, at its 37th meeting in June 2005:

- FSC believes that credible modular approaches to forest certification have the potential to make a major contribution to the promotion of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests;
- It is critically important to ensure that modular approaches do not undermine the promotion of sustainable forest management by creating new labels and brands aimed at consumers seeking responsibly managed forest products.
- Credible schemes at a minimum:
 - have the explicit goal of and require the formal commitment to achieving compliance with internationally recognised standards of socially and environmentally responsible forest management at the forest management unit level;
 - specify clear, verifiable, time-bound steps and relevant processes for achieving the goal of responsible forest management at the forest management unit level;
 - require participating forest management operations to meet minimum entry requirements and follow verifiable action plans to ensure continuous progress towards compliance with recognised standards of socially and environmentally responsible forest management at the forest management unit level;
 - require independent verification of compliance with specified standards before any claims are made about the quality of forest management achieved;
 - prohibit any product labeling or marketing to end consumers or the public until and unless internationally recognized standards of responsible forest management have been achieved and independently verified.
- The established international standard for the evaluation of socially and environmentally responsible forest management at the forest management unit level is the *FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship*.
- Currently, the only international standard defining a clear and verifiable step towards compliance with the FSC Principles and Criteria is the "FSC controlled wood" standard *FSC-STD-30-010 FSC Standard for forest management enterprises for non FSC-certified controlled wood* (incorporating recognised requirements in relation to control of illegal harvesting).
- FSC will seek ways to actively promote and support modular ('stepwise', 'phased') approaches to forest certification which meet the above requirements, and invites expressions of interest from any organisation interested in supporting or collaborating in the development and implementation of FSC standards and an associated FSC accreditation facility.
- FSC will review its existing policies and standards and identify opportunities to encourage uptake of modular or stepwise schemes that meet these requirements.