

Your ref.: 1. March 2006

Our ref.: IKO -
PEFC07134

Oslo, 2007-12-28

Prolonged endorsement of the PEFC Norway Scheme

Dear PEFC Council,

Your letter of 1 March 2006 confirmed the endorsement of the PEFC Norway scheme to the end of February 2008. Our scheme was endorsed for two years since our forest management standard, the Living Forest standard, at that time still was under revision. During 2006 we managed, however, to obtain an accord among all stakeholders on a new Living Forest standard.

The Living Forest standard for sustainable forest management is the standard incorporated in the Norwegian PEFC scheme. In 1998 and in 2006 the Living Forest process contained all relevant stakeholders: forest owners' organisations, forest industry organisations, labour unions, environmental organisations (among them WWF and SABIMA (biologists' joint organisation) and social groups. The Authorities participated as observers. (For further information see <http://www.levendeskog.no/sider/tekst.asp?id=English>)

In 2006 the Living Forest process was designed according to the PEFC requirements for a standing setting process. But the accord took much longer time than foreseen. In order to obtain consensus among all the stakeholders the speed could not be set by PEFC and the progress was outside our control. The same goes for the necessary follow up of the agreement including the production and endorsement of the vital documents in English translation. (The whole process was documented in Norwegian only.) After the agreement in 2006 we had foreseen the establishment of governing bodies, dispute settling bodies and the translation of vital documents to be finished in early 2007. The act is that important documents are still under translation and endorsement of the Living Forest Council led by persons outside PEFC Norway.

PEFC Norway have asked for speeding of the process and in necessary contributed to finance the remaining translations. We now foresee the completing of the process in the first half of 2008.

Another vital part of the PEFC Norway scheme is our group certification arrangement governed under the guidelines given by Norwegian Accreditation, part of International Accreditation. The group certification arrangement is combining a credible forest

management and cost effective certification. In Norway all production forest is certified under this group certification arrangement, and regardless the size of the forest property. Our group certification arrangement is the key the success PEFC has achieved in Norway.

The group certification system will meet all the PEFC requirements and the present system is part of the follow up of the Living Forest standard setting process. The group certification guidelines build on the Living Forest revision. Norwegian Accreditation (member of International Accreditation) is governing a process where all the Living Forest stakeholders are invited to participate.

Due to the delay in the Living Forest revision and the heavy workload in Norwegian Accreditation the process of revising the group certification guidelines will start early in 2008. We had foreseen the completion of the revision early in the autumn of 2007.

We must add that part of the delay is due to the work done in last part of 2007 connected to proposals of contractor certification that may smooth the way of parties outside PEFC to obtain "light versions" of group certifications build on temporary relations between contractors and their forest property clients. PEFC Norway has worked together with the PEFC Council administration to lay the foundation of PEFC group certification guidelines that more clearly in the future should divide between credible and less credible group certification arrangements.

In order to speed up the process in Norwegian Accreditation PEFC Norway has volunteered to assist in drafting documents and preparing meetings. This will be done from the start of 2008 and Norwegian Accreditation now predicts the process to be completed in autumn 2008.

We strongly apologise for the delay of the Norwegian application for re-endorsement, even though out of our control. The Council and Board of PEFC Norway has therefore in their meeting the 17 December this year decided to kindly apply PEFC Council for a prolongation of the PEFC Norway scheme from the present two year period to an extended period of three years and four months that is a prolongation till the end of June 2009. Within this timeframe we will come forward with an application for re-endorsement as soon as the possible.

Best regards



Ivar Legallais-Korsbakken

National secretary
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