



NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION AND CHAIN OF CUSTODY SYSTEM FOR THE FOREST AND WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRY IN GUYANA.

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS A NATIONAL FOREST MANGEMENT AND CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION SYSTEM?

- It is a system that allows independent, third-party entities to audit and verify that Forest Sector Operators {(FSOs), processors and traders} have in place both procedures and management systems, based on an internationally endorsed standard, to demonstrate that their products have come from sustainably managed forests, including legal sources.

WHAT IS THE PEFC?

- The Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification systems (PEFC) is a globally recognised forest management and chain of custody certification system.
- The PEFC endorses the forest management and chain of custody standards developed by individual countries.
- Currently, the PEFC has the largest area of all forests certified in the world.

KEY BENEFITS FOR GUYANESE STAKEHOLDERS AND WHY IS GUYANA DEVELOPING ITS OWN CERTIFICATION SYSTEM WHEN WE HAVE THE VPA?

- While the VPA will address the core market entry requirement for the EU of demonstrating legality, timber purchasing companies and timber procurement organisations within the EU and elsewhere are also focusing greater attention on the sustainability of products brought to market.
- Unsustainable forest management practices and associated illegal activities result in:
 - increased deforestation and forest degradation, which can impact on the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities;

- loss of revenue by national governments from the forest sector, which can limit their ability to fund and implement national socio-economic activities aimed at poverty reduction and alleviation; and
 - adverse impacts on ecosystem integrity and resilience leading to consequences such as anthropogenic global warming and climate change.
- Procurement policies are becoming more sophisticated and increasingly looking to third-party certification to verify the sustainability credentials of timber products, in addition to legality.
 - Entities involved in the harvesting, processing and exporting of timber products from Guyana therefore, face an increasing need to go beyond the demonstration of legality and show as well that the timber being sold has come from forests that have been sustainably managed.
 - Indeed, in recent years, the GFC has encountered a situation where public procurement agencies in the United Kingdom have specifically requested third-party certification to demonstrate the sustainability, in addition to legality, of greenheart products exported to the UK for public-funded works.
 - The Guyana National Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification system will therefore complement the VPA.
 - Indeed, the development of the Guyana's national forest management and chain of custody standards will draw on the extensive work already done under the VPA.
 - For example, the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) that was used to develop the national legality definition for Guyana, will also play a key role in the development of the new standard.
 - Given the work already done in Guyana as part of the VPA negotiations, and the synergies between the VPA and PEFC standard setting and certification requirements, it is expected that a PEFC endorsed national certification scheme could be developed and implemented before the VPA becomes operational and FLEGT licenses can be issued.
 - Pending full implementation of the VPA, wood producers in Guyana are looking for cost-effective mechanisms which will improve their competitiveness and market access globally, including the EU market.

ADVANTAGES OF THE PEFC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

- A PEFC-endorsed national forest certification system has particular advantages in that:
 - it uses a “bottom-up” approach that focuses on meeting the expectations of local stakeholders on the ground;
 - takes into account local conditions; and;
 - is consistent with national laws and regulations all within a framework of key internationally-recognised sustainability benchmarks.
- The PEFC approach presents an opportunity to develop a globally recognised certification system that is truly reflective of the uniqueness of Guyana’s forest management situation and the particular needs and expectations of the Guyanese people.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THE NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT AND CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION SYSTEM?

- The proposed national forest management standard and certification scheme will cover forest management on all land tenures where forest management for commercial purposes is permitted by law.
- It is intended that certification will be available to both individual forest management organizations and potential group schemes involving multiple forest management entities.
- It is also envisaged that certification will cover non-timber forest products as well as timber produce.
- The certification scheme will also facilitate chain of custody certification for entities purchasing, processing and/or trading in forest products.

WHAT ARE THE DETAILS OF THE PROJECT?

- The project has five 5 phases as follows:
 - PHASE 1 – Establishment of the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) as a certification Governing Body.

- PHASE 2 – Stakeholder consultations through national workshops to develop the scope for the national standards and certification scheme:
- PHASE 3 – Establishment of a broad-based national Technical Working Group (with representatives drawn from the major stakeholder groups) to guide the development of the national standards.
- PHASE 4: – Development of the national standards including documentation, procedures and policy guidelines for a national certification scheme to meet the requirements of key international certification schemes.
- PHASE 5 – Field testing of the standards
- PHASE 6 – Creation of a national forest management and chain of custody certification system.
- We expect the PEFC-endorsement processes to be completed by the end of 2022.
- However, once the standards are developed and endorsed by stakeholders in Guyana, FSOs can start certifying their operations under the Guyana system and issue certificates.
- While the certificates will not immediately have PEFC endorsement, they will have international standing once PEFC’s endorsement for the Guyana system is achieved.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GFC IN THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM?

- The GFC will not issue the forest management and chain of custody certificates.
- This will be done by an internationally accredited certification.
- The GFC’s main role will be as the National Governing Body.
- As the national governing body, the GFC is responsible for:
 - the System’s governance and administration;
 - notifying Certification Bodies;
 - registering certificates and logo usages;
 - handling complaints;
 - undertaking promotions, and/or training activities; and
 - ensuring that requirements for Certification Bodies and for accreditation are developed.

HOW WILL THE STANDARDS BE DEVELOPED?

- Under the PEFC system, the national standards must be developed by stakeholders in Guyana.
- A national technical working group representative of key stakeholders in Guyana will be established to oversee the development of the standards.

HOW WILL THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM WORK?

- Under the third-party certification model one party develops the standards and certification system (GFC, with the endorsement of PEFC);
- The second party (accreditation bodies, themselves accredited by PEFC) is independent of the first party but has responsibility to ensure that certification bodies (the third party) are implementing the certification system in accordance with the system rules.
- The third party (independent certification bodies) evaluates and issue certificates to Forest Sector Operators (FSOs) that demonstrate compliance with the forest management and chain of custody standards.
- Independent third-party certification bodies (CBs) will audit FSOs that apply for certification under the Guyana national certification system, and issue certificates upon satisfactorily meeting the requirements of the national standards (both forest management and chain of custody certification). CBs issuing certificates must be accredited by PEFC.
- Forest management and chain of custody certificates issued by an independent third-party CB under the Guyana national standards endorsed by the PEFC, will be equivalent to international PEFC certificates.
- FSOs certified under the PEFC-endorsed national standards can use PEFC trademarks (including logos) for marketing and promotion nationally and internationally.

WHAT WILL BE THE COST OF CERTIFICATION?

- It is too early to provide definitive costing for certification, however, minimising the costs of certification is a key objective in designing the certification system.

Upcoming Activities/Events

March 2021: Stakeholder Consultation/Engagement Workshop.

For more information and registration contact email: guyanaforestryefc@gmail.com