

News release

FSC meets Dutch criteria

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The Dutch TPAC¹ committee concludes: FSC meets the Dutch procurement criteria for timber. Commissioned by Dutch State Secretary for Infrastructure and the Environment, Wilma Mansveld, TPAC carries out assessments of certification systems for the sustainable procurement policy of the Dutch government. The conclusion is the result of a periodical reassessment of FSC. The international certification system also received a positive judgement in 2008.

A thorough review procedure preceded the judgement. The committee assessed both the current FSC standard as well as the new standard which will come into effect from December 2015. TPAC concludes that both standards meet Dutch requirements.

Points of attention raised by stakeholders were also incorporated in the procedure.² One of the primary points of attention was the quality of forest management in countries where FSC has no national standards and where requirements are partially developed by (local) certification bodies. *"Our comprehensive research revealed that in some cases the wording used by certification bodies was not in line with the FSC requirements,"* remarks Gustaaf Borchardt, TPAC Chair. *"Among others, the topics 'forest conversion'³ and 'the rights of native populations' had our attention, also because of the importance stakeholders attached to these issues. We shared our findings with FSC. FSC then responded by systematically investigating all the standards of certification bodies with regard to these two issues."* It is important to mention that TPAC found no indication that the interpretations of FSC requirements by certification bodies have led to unsustainable situations. FSC continues to meet Dutch procurement criteria both for timber on paper and in practice.

FSC has indeed used the results of the assessment to introduce further improvements. With the new FSC standards coming into effect from December 2015, an unambiguous interpretation of FSC requirements is better guaranteed. In addition, the FSC supervision on certification bodies improved.

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¹ Timber Procurement Assessment Committee

² For every assessment, TPAC invites stakeholders from social organizations, business and industry, and knowledge institutes to share their knowledge and experience with certification systems via an online forum. TPAC investigates the contributions and, once the review has closed, reports on how these are incorporated into the final conclusion about the system.

³ Forest conversion is the conversion of natural forest into another form of land usage such as plantations or infrastructural works.