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Refinement of the Malaysian Forest Certification Scheme MTCC with Regard to the Requirements for Public Procurement of Tropical Timber of the City of Hamburg

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Abstract

Global trade with forest resources, especially between developing and industrialised countries, often resulted in an unbalanced distribution of profits and negative consequences for the local population and environment in originating areas. Reliability and credibility concerning social, ecological and economical sustainability therefore are most important features of certification schemes, here with regard to forest resources. In worldwide constraints towards sustainable forest management (SFM) in tropical regions a few national forest certification schemes were developed in recent years. Amongst them the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) which follows a phased approach in line with guidelines of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO). MTCC is an independent non-profit organisation established to plan and operate a voluntary national timber certification scheme in Malaysia. The current scheme in use, the Malaysian Criteria & Indicators 2002 (MC&I 2002), has undergone strong revisal in nationwide fieldtests in 2004. The revised standard (MC&I 2002, version 2004) aims for compliance with the principles of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (FHH) implemented a policy to restrict the import and use of tropical timber to sources which are certified under internationally accepted certification schemes. This includes an evaluation of existing certification schemes and a definition of the specific requirements of FHH concerning SFM. The guidelines for public procurement of tropical timber emphasise the need for credible criteria to demonstrate that the resources derive from legal and sustainable managed sources. Based on former discussions between MTCC and FHH a joint project is launched in 2006. The Federal Research Centre and the University Hamburg will provide scientific support for the evaluation and refinement of the revised standard. Specialists from both countries will form a joint project team that will work independently in cooperation with MTCC and other relevant organisations in Malaysia to assess and refine the given standard. This includes the development of additional indicators and verifiers, if necessary.

Keywords: Hamburg, Malaysian Timber Certification Council, national certification initiatives, sustainable forest management