



Brian Cowan
Minister for Foreign Affairs

“ Slightly more than half of the world's forests are located in developing countries. The loss of such rich and irreplaceable natural resources can greatly reduce the development options of the countries concerned and their prospects of achieving sustainable development. This will be an important issue at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002. I believe that a forest certification scheme like the Forest Stewardship Council is a powerful tool for encouraging responsible forest management. It provides an opportunity for individuals, companies and local authorities to play a role in supporting sustainable development. ”



Toal O' Muire
President of the Royal Institute of the Architects in Ireland (RIAI)

“ In our work as architects, sustainability requires that we think not just of the present, but also of the future: in our day-to-day decisions, in the expression of our intentions through design, and in our approach to the design of buildings, neighbourhoods and regions. ”

Architects normally see timber in carpentry and joinery works after it has been sawn, machined or even shop-primed, so that its provenance is not self-evident and may be difficult to verify. Within the limitations of their responsibilities, architects should nonetheless specify timbers which come from well-managed forests, such as those certified according to the principles of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Architects should seek to raise awareness of issues of forest management not only among their clients, but also in the building industry. ”

Many organisations are now implementing timber specification policies. Such a policy would ideally cover all projects where timber is specified. Having a policy about timber specification is a good way of ensuring that everyone working on a project is clear about what timber is acceptable for use. Numerous groups involved in the construction industry and the timber trade can adapt the timber policy outlined on the next page.

A Policy for Everyone



Domnall Mac Domhnaill
Managing Director
True Temper Ltd.

“ In today's environmentally conscious society it makes sound economic sense to know where your raw materials come from. Independent forest certification and timber labelling is good for business as well as the environment. From here on discerning customers are going to demand credible environmental statements on timber products. To date the only scheme to meet the needs of our company is the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). True Temper Ltd, in Cork, is proud to be the first company in the world to have received FSC certification for our range of garden tools. ”



Niall Sweeney, Manager
Offaly County Council.

“ Offaly County Council are delighted to be the first local authority in Ireland to have formally adopted a timber purchasing policy. This policy was adapted by Offaly County Council in April 2001 and is underpinned by the principle that timber and wood products sourced by the Council will as soon as is practicable, be independently certified, preferably by a certifier accredited by The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), or equivalent, as coming from well managed sustainable sources. We believe that by promoting this policy, where practicable, in our public works contracts we are leading by example in the sustainable development of forests both home and abroad. ”

A Timber Policy for Specifiers and Purchasers

POLICY

Forest management can be environmentally appropriate and socially beneficial, but it can also be environmentally and socially damaging. This policy recognises the responsibility of this local authority/government department/company/organisation/ [YOUR NAME] as a consumer/specifier of forest products to ensure that we have a neutral if not positive effect on the world's forests.

We will give preference to timber and timber products that have been independently certified by a credible, globally applicable forest certification scheme and can demonstrate that the products are derived from well managed sources.

The following criteria must be met within the certification scheme: recognition of indigenous peoples rights, long term economic viability, protection of biodiversity, conservation of ancient woodland, long-term responsible management, regular monitoring, chain of custody and a logo or label which can be used on the products originating from forests which have been certified and which provides the guarantee to the final customer.

GUIDELINES

If independently certified timber proves to be unavailable, contractors will, as a second resort only, use timber from a known source, and will attempt to gain as much assurance as possible that the forest is well-managed and will provide documentation of proof. Flexibility in terms of species specification should be pursued. Documentation must be provided to prove that every attempt has been made to obtain independently certified sources before exploring alternatives.

Without group certification schemes, some small businesses may not be able to achieve certification. If they are growing or using local timber they should still be encouraged and given market opportunities. When group certification schemes are available in the area, suppliers should be encouraged to join such schemes.

Persons with responsibility for specifying timber should inform contractors of their organisation's timber procurement policy. *Guidance should be given to contractors and suppliers as to the background environmental information, which the organisation considers to be the acceptable minimum in order to ensure that its policy is being adhered to.

EXAMPLE:

FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES, THE FOLLOWING COULD BE USED:

This local authority [NAME OF COUNCIL] will give preference to timber and timber products that have been independently certified by a credible, globally applicable forest certification scheme and can demonstrate that the products are derived from well managed sources.

FOR ARCHITECTS THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATION CLAUSE CAN BE USED:

All timber used should carry the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) trademark or other label from an equivalent internationally recognised, globally applicable, independent certification scheme for good forest management.

* Please see Guidance Notes for Contractors on page 41